



To: Executive Councillor for Housing: Councillor Kevin Price
Report by: Amelia Norman
Relevant scrutiny committee: Housing Scrutiny Committee 20/6/2017
Wards affected: Queen Edith

New Social Housing on Housing Revenue Account Infill Site at Hills Avenue

Key Decision

1. Executive summary

This report provides an update relating to an infill site which was granted scheme specific approval as part of a group of small infill sites at Housing Scrutiny Committee in June 2016. The site is to be brought forward in the Council's social housing programme, to be included in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) garage and small in-fill sites development.

The report requests approval to an updated capital budget for the HRA in relation to the site at Hills Avenue, Queen Edith

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- Approve the site to continue to be investigated to be developed for housing.
- Allocate the capital budget of £249,216 from existing new build budget.
- approve that delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director to enable the site to be developed through Cambridge Investment Partnership (CIP)

3. Background

As the main provider of housing in Cambridge, the reasons why the Council has its own new build housing programme are as follows;

1. Provide additional social housing to meet the shortfall in Cambridge and to replace the loss of social housing through the Right to Buy.
2. Replace some of the Council's existing social housing that no longer meets current day standards and is becoming less popular with residents.
3. Build new house types that will better meet the overall mix of Affordable Housing needed in the future.
4. Improve the energy efficiency of the Council's housing.

The Council has completed 213 new council homes so far with a further 141 to be completed in the coming year. This includes those homes that are significantly progressed on the Quad scheme on the Southern Fringe that will deliver a total of 104 homes.

Officers have identified sites to provide more social housing and have categorised new schemes opportunities in terms of land ownership as follows;

- a. Housing Revenue Account (HRA) land with existing housing
- b. HRA garage and small in-fill sites
- c. General Fund sites
- d. Sites owned by other public sector bodies
- e. Sites in private ownership

As part of the devolution deal Cambridge City Council have committed to providing 500 new homes over 5 years and sites such as this enable progression towards reaching this target.

This report provides details of one small additional site identified by staff which was approved to be incorporated into the already approved development of HRA garage and small in-fill sites. The site was given approval on a programme basis rather than individually. Updated approval is therefore requested for £249,216 budget to deliver this site.

The proposed project is a site previously identified in the 3 Year Rolling Programme. The site does not require the redevelopment of existing housing. The new social housing has been assessed as being for rent at Affordable Rents set at Local Housing Allowance levels.

The site at Hills Avenue has been separated from the large garden of existing stock when the property was recently re-let and the incoming tenant informed of the development proposals.

Appendix 1 provides location plan for this site.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

The capital budget required for the Hills Avenue Site is **£249,216**

As schemes are subject to planning, the costs are indicative, however have been based on recently received budgets on other infill sites.

Based on these indicative viability assessments the budget for the sites is broken down as follows;

Site	Proposed House Type	Number	Indicative Budget	Payback Year
Hills Avenue	3 bed house	1	£249,216	1

The indicative budgets provided above are fully inclusive of works costs and all associated professional fees.

The Housing Revenue Account Mid-Term Financial Review captures the funding available for the ongoing social housing programme. The budget for this scheme will utilise funding of £74,765 (30% of the total indicative scheme costs) from Right to Buy receipts, that must be expended to prevent them from being lost . It is then proposed to utilise devolution grant to fund the remaining 70% of the total indicative scheme costs.

It is possible to bring forward this small site for development, before previously identified schemes that are currently on hold, due to the relatively small financial resource required for delivery. This small site also has the benefit that it does not require any decanting of existing residents or purchase of leasehold properties that impact on the financial costs of the scheme and the timescales for delivery. It is hoped that by including this site in a package of works with other small infill sites that savings can be made to deliver at costs less than those identified above.

As with all new build schemes as schemes are finalised they will only proceed if they can be funded within borrowing and capital funding parameters in the HRA 30 Business Plan.

(b) Staffing Implications (if not covered in Consultations Section)

The schemes will be managed by the Housing Development Agency following liaison with City Homes; the Estates and Facilities Service and the Legal Services Team.

There are no other significant staff implications.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

A series of EQIAs have been undertaken for the Council House Programme, the Housing Development Service and for individual schemes. The EQIAs mainly highlight the benefits of the Council retaining direct control of new housing development itself to ensure a focus on the delivery of housing that meets a diverse range of housing needs. Part of the assessment underlines the need for Affordable Housing to help those most likely to suffer poverty as well as ways in which new Affordable Housing will directly save money for tenants, such as energy saving measures.

(d) Environmental Implications

The social housing will be built in accordance with the Cambridge Sustainable Housing Design Guide, which equates to the equivalent of code Level 4 for sustainable homes.

(e) Procurement

The site will be brought forward through the Cambridge Investment Partnership to maximise value for money and to ensure delivery of the scheme is brought forward in a timely manner.

(f) Consultation and communication

This scheme does not involve the redevelopment of existing residential accommodation. However, neighbouring residents whose homes adjoin the site have been made aware that we are considering the site for redevelopment. No further correspondence has taken place between residents and the Council, but we propose to work closely with neighbouring residents to ensure they are well informed on our development proposals going forward.

Internal communication will be structured around the established groups that meet every Committee cycle and oversee the Council's social housing programme, namely; an officer group; a residents consultative group; and the Members Steering Group.

(g) Community Safety

There are no recognised implications on Community Safety with the proposed developments.

5. Background papers

None

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 provides location plans for the site.

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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