

CABINET (HOUSING) COMMITTEE

9 JULY 2014

WINCHESTER EXTRA CARE SCHEME

REPORT OF HEAD OF NEW HOMES DELIVERY

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RECENT REFERENCES:

[CAB2441\(HD\)](#) –Extra Care Scheme, Bid for Homes and Community Agency Funding 17 January 2013

CAB2511 – Winchester District Car Parking Strategy, 11 September 2013

CAB2538 – Winchester Extra Care Scheme, 4 December 2013

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The report updates Members on the latest position with regard to the opportunity to provide an Extra Care housing scheme for elderly people in Winchester. It outlines the next steps in the process and recommends a preferred development site.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That subject to approval of the project by Cabinet, the Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer) be authorised to submit a planning application for the scheme.
2. That the appointment of PDP, Chartered Architects, as the lead architect for the scheme up to RIBA stage 3 be approved.

TO CABINET:

3. That Cabinet confirms its support for Chesil Street surface car park as the preferred site for the Extra Care scheme.

4. That the Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer), in consultation with the Head of Estates be authorised to proceed to tendering a build contract for the scheme
5. That a further report is brought back to Cabinet, in accordance with the Council's Financial Procedure Rule 6.4, prior to the acceptance of a Tender price, detailing the outcome of the planning application (including consultation with local residents), the estimated final scheme cost and the overall viability.
6. That the Portfolio Holder for Business Services be authorised to appropriate (through the Portfolio Holder Decision Notice process and before commencement of any building works) the Chesil Street Surface Car Park for the purposes of Part II of the Housing Act 1985.
7. That the use of the Harris Bequest to assist in the funding of the scheme be supported in principle, subject to confirmation when the report referred to in 5 above is brought back to Cabinet. .
8. That the Assistant Director (Chief Housing Officer), in consultation with the Heads of Legal and Democratic Services and Estates, and subject to obtaining any special consents that may be required under the Housing Act 1985 and the Local Government Act 1988, be authorised to agree detailed terms and enter into a long lease of the shared ownership properties within the scheme with Sentinel Housing Association.

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REPORT OF HEAD OF NEW HOMES DELIVERY

1. Background and Need

- 1.1. As part of the Council's strategic housing responsibilities, it has been working with Hampshire County Council (HCC) to look at ways of achieving the provision of an extra care housing scheme in Winchester. Winchester's population is ageing and a higher percentage of older people are now choosing to remain as independent as possible rather than agree to move into institutional accommodation. As a result, they may struggle to remain in accommodation which is increasingly unsuitable for their needs and in which it is difficult to provide the care they need. The alternative of purpose-designed accommodation, into which they could move and receive a significant level of care, whilst remaining otherwise independent, provides both a better environment for the individual and potentially frees up family-sized accommodation which is currently in short supply.
- 1.2. The Government's vision for adult social care is for services to be delivered in a way that is more personalised and financially sustainable. All public sector housing providers have to consider how they are to meet the housing needs of their elderly tenants in the future, whilst care providers seek cost-effective ways of delivering care packages. Large scale housing schemes which are specifically for people who also need in-home care is one of the mechanisms for achieving this. District Councils (which have the housing obligation) and County Councils (which have the care obligation) are working together in many locations to achieve schemes of this type for people who are in the affordable housing sector.
- 1.3. Demand for modern purpose-built older persons' accommodation which reflects the changing living patterns will be a particular issue in Winchester District as the number of residents over 80 continues to grow. Based on the latest census data from 2011, there has been a 25% increase in the District's households over the age of 85 since 2001 (and a 45% increase in the 60 to 64 age group). In the St. John and All Saints, St. Michaels and St. Bartholomew's wards, around 11% of the population is currently over 75 years of age, and that is set to increase by around 150 people by 2017.

2. Site Detail

- 2.1. In December 2013, Cabinet authorised further detailed studies into the potential suitability of Chesil Street surface car park as a possible site for an extra care scheme. In parallel with the detailed investigations on the Chesil

Street site, officers continued to assess the suitability of other sites for the scheme. In addition to the technical studies, a community consultation event was held where local residents were invited to take part in hands-on planning workshops and a site walkabout.

- 2.2. To date, the technical studies on ground conditions and ecology, and title searches, have not revealed any major problems with the site's suitability for development. The site does however border a conservation area with a number of listed buildings in close proximity, and this will require any future building to be sensitively designed with high quality materials.
- 2.3. The community consultation event gave local residents the opportunity to share their comments and concerns if the site were to be redeveloped. The key issues that emerged were:
 - Loss of car parking and the impact it could have to local residents and businesses – the nearby multi-storey car park was not felt to be a suitable alternative for design and safety reasons
 - Traffic and narrow pavements along Chesil Street
 - Design of any building
- 2.4. In response to the concerns raised regarding car parking and accessibility a report has been prepared which in summary concludes:
 - That Chesil Street multi-storey does have sufficient capacity for the entire current car parking needs to be met. The issues about suitability and attractiveness of a multi-storey car park have and will be been addressed through a programme of works that will include complete redecoration, new LED lighting to parking areas, stair wells and external areas, and enhanced CCTV coverage. A motorcycle parking area is being created as well as wider parking bays within the ground floor of the multi-storey which will be more appealing to users with young children for example. Furthermore, new internal footways will be created to allow safe access from the site to the Bridge Street crossing (avoiding the narrowest part of Chesil Street).
 - Comments received through the Car Parking usage survey of Chesil Street Surface car park were also made about the impact on designated residents on-street permit parking bays in this area. Residents' parking areas on-street are limited due to the narrow nature of the roads and hence demand for these spaces outweighs supply. As a response, eight additional on-street bays are being provided in Wharf Hill.
 - All of the existing residents on-street parking bays in Barfield Close at the rear of the Chesil Street Surface car park will be re-provided to ensure that there is no reduction in available spaces.

- The residents 'off peak' parking season ticket is currently available for use in the surface car park but not the Multi-storey car park; this will be addressed so that it can be used in the multi-storey.
 - There are a number of recycling bins located in the surface car park which will need to be relocated either into the E Season ticket bays located along Barfield Close or into the Park and Ride sites at Bar End.
 - A further issue raised in the consultation was parking for high sided vans which cannot fit into the multi-storey car park. Surveys are currently being undertaken to determine how many such van spaces need to be accommodated. The E season ticket parking bays along Barfield Close could be utilised for van/ pay and display parking. These bays are currently under-utilised.
 - The design of the Extra Care facility will incorporate a number of parking bays within the development, the use of which will need to be determined. Options include commercial letting to local businesses, permit parking for local residents and lets to residents of the extra care scheme.
 - It has been suggested that traffic entering the City along Chesil Street could be diverted along Barfield Close in order to relieve part of Chesil Street from traffic. The presence of a low bridge (vehicles are restricted to 14' 6") along Barfield Close would make such a suggestion problematic and unlikely to receive approval by the County Council as Highway Authority. The low bridge does not allow two high vehicles to pass without moving into the centre of the road. A high vehicle route has to be maintained into the City Centre from Bar End. Chesil Street is also a main radial route into the City Centre which experiences congestion at peak periods. The introduction of two further junctions/ manoeuvres into and out of Barfield Close would exacerbate this.
- 2.5. With regard to the issue of safety of the footpaths along Chesil Street, the report notes that average traffic speeds along that part of Chesil Street are between 24 and 26mph and that there have been no reported pedestrian casualties in the past 5 years. Alternative access to the City Centre can be made through Wharf Hill and along The Weirs. However, it is recognised that the first part of this route is unsuitable for buggies and the less physically able due to the steepness of the footpath. More importantly, there is (and will be) a Park and Ride bus stop immediately behind the site which is fully accessible and offers concessionary travel into the City Centre and to the Train Station and Hospital. As mentioned above, there will be an improved pedestrian footway through Chesil Street multi-storey to link up with the existing shop mobility route.
- 2.6. The design of the building was also a concern of local residents, as they wish to avoid overlooking and loss of light. Additionally, any building would need to be sympathetic to the local character of the area and not be a monolithic

institutional block. The Council's architects, PDP, have appointed specialist local conservation architects to work with them to design a building that satisfies the high design aspirations, whilst still be able to function as an extra care scheme.

- 2.7. The initial extra care scheme design for the Chesil Street site allows for 20 on-street car parking spaces (replacing the existing 20 spaces on Barfield Close directly adjacent to the surface car park) and a further 26 undercroft spaces beneath the extra care building. These spaces will be available to let at a commercial rate to local residents, residents of the scheme and businesses. There is no on-site parking provision for staff or visitors to the extra care scheme as they would be expected to use either Chesil Street multi storey car park or Park and Ride.

3. Alternative Sites

- 3.1. Officers have considered a number of possible sites to determine which would meet the criteria to make them suitable for an extra care scheme. These are summarised below:

- **Avalon House** – this site is too small to accommodate 50 flats and care facilities whilst respecting the height of the existing building. A letting of Avalon House has now been agreed to Southern Health and works have commenced to refurbish the building.
- **Victoria House** – this site is also too small and cannot be built higher due to right to light constraints for neighbours
- **Abbotts Barton** – has some potentially large sites but these are all too far from the centre of town. The building would be very dominant in local environment and out of context to the area and on the basis of previous debate about development in the area it is not likely to be well supported locally.
- **Cattle Market Car Park** – this site is too far from the City Centre. This location has primarily been identified as being ideal for office development and will be important for the economic development of the City.
- **Middle Brook Street Car Park** – ideal as a City Centre location and the site is large enough to accommodate a scheme. However, the car park has high demand for shopping, social and leisure uses and there is no proposal within the emerging Car Parking Strategy to release this site for other uses. The site will be important City Centre car parking whilst Silver Hill is developed.
- **Cossack Lane Car Park** – site may be large enough but there are significant right to light issues for surrounding business and residential properties. Car parking is also in high demand.
- **Former Bar End depot site.** This is too far from the City Centre and planning policy would support the site be retained for employment uses. Consideration is currently being given to the development of a new leisure centre on the site. If a leisure centre is not built on this site, further consideration will be given to whether the land is developed with a commercial scheme in accordance with the proposals in exempt reports

CAB 2027 and CAB2072, with a view to securing financial benefit for the General Fund.

- **St Peter Street surface car park** – Site is too small and, in addition, many of the surrounding residential properties have access rights across the car park which restrict development.
- 3.2. In addition to the sites which were identified listed above, officers have recently met with representatives of St Johns Charity to discuss any proposals they may have to increase the supply of extra care and possible sites. The Council has also considered its own existing sheltered accommodation in the City Centre and whether that is suitable for redevelopment. Both options were ruled out as alternatives, as St Johns had no suitably sized sites and, with regard to the Council's stock, all of the properties are let and very popular. In order to facilitate an extra care scheme, these would need to be demolished, and the current tenants rehoused amongst other schemes in Winchester whilst the development took place. Whether the displaced residents would qualify for one of the extra care flats would be dependant on their care requirements.
- 3.3. The Chesil Street surface car park and Chesil multi-storey were identified in the Council's Car Park Strategy (CAB2539 refers) as having spare parking capacity and that there is scope to consolidate parking provision without an unacceptable impact on car parking provision locally. In summary, the best site for the scheme, accepting it has some limitations with regard to access, is Chesil Street surface car park
4. Next Steps
- 4.1. If Cabinet confirms its support for Chesil Street surface car park as the preferred site for the Extra Care scheme, Officers will instruct PDP Architects to commence detailed design work, with a view to submitting a planning application in early October 2014. As part of the preparation of the planning application, the Council will conduct further consultations with the local residents and businesses (to be carried out by JTP planning consultants). The community consultation has provisionally been planned for early September 2014 where the initial design can be displayed and local residents' comments and concerns can be aired. Appropriate changes can then be made to the design prior to submission in October 2014.
- 4.2. The current indicative timetable is that the planning application will be determined by the Planning Committee in February 2015 (assuming submission in October this year). Running concurrently with this process, the build works will be tendered, with a view to reporting the results back to Cabinet (Housing) Committee in March 2015. At that stage, formal approval for the scheme and budget will be sought in accordance the Financial Procedure Rule 6.4.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

5. COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND PORTFOLIO PLANS (RELEVANCE TO)

- 5.1. Developing new homes is a key priority of the Council as it seeks to promote active communities. It also facilitates the District's economic prosperity

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. In order for the scheme to proceed, the Council will need to ensure that it has the resources available in the HRA New Build capital programme to meet the expected costs. Some of the capital funding would come from Homes and Community Agency (HCA) grant, from Hampshire County Council and from the provider of shared ownership units. It is also considered that this scheme is an appropriate use of the Harris Bequest recently made to the Council (report CAB 2283 refers). The HCA grant element has now been confirmed and a timetable of key development milestones has been supplied to them. They will closely monitor the project to ensure that the grant is drawn down promptly and in accordance with the conditions
- 6.2. The HRA Council New Build programme that was presented to Cabinet (Housing) Committee on 28 November 2013 includes provision of £10.883m for the gross cost of this scheme. As the recommended site is a General Fund (GF) asset, this sum includes the estimated cost of transferring the land from the GF so that the GF receives appropriate value for the site. The best way of achieving this is under consideration, given the new HRA self-financing rules and the need to remain within the debt cap. A further report will be brought to Cabinet in due course. The total contributions from other parties are estimated at £4.45m, leaving the HRA to meet a net cost of £6.433m.
- 6.3. As noted earlier, a full development appraisal will be prepared when firmer costings are available and a specific site determined. The most recent financial appraisal of the scheme (May 2014) based on the initial information indicates that it meets the Council's viability criteria; however, build costs are increasing above inflation at the present time and this is a significant risk factor. Viability assessments are updated whenever there are significant changes to the scheme. This happens throughout the development process as the design evolves.
- 6.4. As the site in question is currently in use as a car park, it will be necessary to consider the impact on the General Fund. The Car Parking Strategy has identified that the demand for off-street parking in this part of Winchester Town could be met using the adjacent multi-storey car park alone. As noted in paragraph 6.2 above, the General Fund will receive appropriate value from the HRA for the changed use of the surface car park. It is recommended that the Chesil Street surface car park is appropriated from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account immediately prior to development commencing on the site. This will allow the GF to benefit from car park income for the maximum period. It is recommended that the Member authority for the appropriation of the land is sought through the Portfolio Holder Decision

Notice process, and that Cabinet authorise the Portfolio Holder for Business Services accordingly.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 7.1. The significant financial risk involved at this stage is the preparation of a planning application and associated technical work because, like every application submitted to the Council, approval of the scheme cannot be guaranteed. However, early pre-application engagement with the Council's Development Management Team will help to manage and minimise this risk.
- 7.2. As part of the conditions related to the HCA grant the Council has provided an indicative timetable for the development of the extra care scheme. Variation from this timetable needs HCA approval or there is a risk funding offer will be withdrawn

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Hampshire County Council Executive Decision Record 3772

http://www3.hants.gov.uk/councilmeetings/advsearchmeetings/meetingsitems/summary.htm?tab=1&item_ID=3772

APPENDICES

None.