

5th March 2019

Community, Health & Housing Committee

Garage Site Redevelopment Proposals

Report of: *Angela Abbott, Housing Services Manager*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council owns a range of garage sites across the Borough, including those that are disused and hard to let. Members previously agreed that Officers should identify the potential redevelopment of sites that provided an immediate opportunity for new affordable housing.
- 1.2 Officers have identified two potential sites. One site is at Brookfield Close, Hutton and the second at Sir Francis Way, which is located in Brentwood, very close to the Town Centre. Both sites provide excellent potential for redevelopment.
- 1.3 The Brookfield Close redevelopment site would replace properties that do not meet the current decent home standard.
- 1.4 To formally establish the viability of each site a technical report is required, in the form of an initial feasibility study, which will outline potential on both sites, and inform in terms of quantum and tenure mix.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the Committee formally approves delegated authority for the Housing Services Manager to commission an architect to prepare an initial feasibility report relating to both sites, up to a limit of £20,000.**
- 2.2 That the feasibility report outcomes are reported to the next Community, Health & Housing Committee.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 Housing Services has been monitoring structural movement on 13 bedsit bungalows, 1 two-bedroom bungalow and an associated hall at Brookfield Close, Hutton. The area of land incorporates both the line of properties and the garage site.
- 3.2 Due to significant subsidence and disrepair issues these properties are now unable to be re-let and will require demolition as long-term occupation is no longer tenable.
- 3.3 The Brookfield site properties were post-world war two builds and would not meet the current 'Decent Homes standard'. Re-building or adaptation of the properties would not be cost-effective. Current site layout does not reflect maximisation of potential.
- 3.4 Increasingly the properties have been used as 'temporary accommodation' for homeless households, to meet statutory duties. The principal reason for this has been difficulties in re-letting the properties as permanent accommodations. Applicants have refused the properties, not wishing to accept due to them being small bedsits with limited internal space and being of outdated design and build.
- 3.5 The Brookfield site offers an opportunity to develop new affordable housing at a key location within the Borough. Re-development would allow for a higher build standard and better land usage.
- 3.6 The Brookfield garage site consists of 47 garages which are also falling into structural disrepair. The garage site is to the immediate rear of the property line, but is enclosed, effectively creating a void space which attracts fly-tipping and anti-social behaviour.
- 3.7 The site at Sir Francis Way is a small area located within an existing HRA-owned development, which has been identified as having capacity for additional properties on a currently unused area of land.
- 3.8 The build of properties at both sites will focus on sustainability and 'future proofing', geared towards easier adaptations where required. The brief will also include greater use of design to produce economically and ecologically improved accommodations within the blue and green environment.
- 3.9 The potential re-development sites would create a mixture of housing tenures, with new and improved existing parking for residents.

- 3.10 Any current residents who will have to leave their current accommodation will be dealt with as per adopted Decant procedures in line with the Decant Policy.

4. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options:

- 4.1 The redevelopment proposals will contribute to Housing Services' Housing Strategy implementation and will create a model for future affordable housing development within the Borough.
- 4.2 A feasibility report will allow Officers to create tailored site-specific proposals for later submission to the committee.
- 4.3 Without a feasibility report to inform the development plan the evidence base for advancing new affordable housing site proposals would be potentially ill-founded.

5. Reasons for Recommendation:

- 5.1 Identified issues of housing need; parking provision; anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping would be captured in an enhanced strategic approach, rather than having to be dealt with in a reactive and un-coordinated manner.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Consultation with 'Tenant Talkback' will be conducted once there are specific site-led proposals for consideration following review of the feasibility reports.

7. References to Corporate Plan

- 7.1 The Council's Corporate Plan aims to:
- To deliver safe and comfortable homes which are efficient and sustainable.
 - Manage our stock to recognise the limited resources available and supporting those in greatest need.
 - Review the future delivery of housing services to provide the best outcomes for Brentwood residents.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

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- 8.1 Feasibility costs arising on the sites stated within this report, will be met from within existing budgets in the Housing Revenue Account.
- 8.2 The redevelopment proposals from the feasibility report can be funded from the Affordable Housing Development Capital Programme. This programme allows 30% of the total development costs to be funded from the retained right to buy capital receipts. The remaining 70% will be funded from the Council either through a revenue contribution from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) or through the HRA borrowing the required funds.
- 8.3 The redevelopment proposals will require a financial business model to be recommended to Policy, Projects and Resources Committee to allow drawdown from the Affordable Housing Development Capital Programme.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Gina Clarke, Corporate Governance Lawyer & Deputy Monitoring Officer

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Both sites are held in the Council's Housing Revenue Account. Legal advice will be required in relation to the subject matter of this report if following the receipt of the feasibility report, it is proposed that the Council proceed to redevelop the sites. The Council would also need to consider whether any rights of access have been established on the sites or there are any existing leases or licences, and how it would affect any proposed redevelopment.

Once there are specific site-led proposals for consideration following review of the feasibility reports, consultation of those who would have a potential interest in the subject matter would need to be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage. Sufficient reasons need to be given for any proposal to enable them to have an intelligent consideration and response. Also, adequate time must be given for consideration and response. The responses of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account by the Council in finalising any proposals.

8.3 Planning Implications

Name & Title: Phil Drane, Director of Strategic Planning

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Both land at Brookfield Close, Hutton; and land at Sir Francis Way, Brentwood are located within the existing urban area as defined in the Brentwood

Replacement Local Plan (2005), unchanged in the emerging Brentwood Pre-Submission Local Development Plan (2019). The principle of residential redevelopment would be acceptable subject to details of any planning applications that would need to satisfy planning policies within the Council's Local Plan, including impact on surrounding areas or properties. The potential for intensification of sites to provide for more residential dwellings is likely to be acceptable given the borough's housing need and context of national policy, again subject to the proposal satisfying planning policies (both national and local). Land at Sir Francis Way is adjacent to the Green Belt boundary, which may be a consideration as part of any development proposal.

8.4 Parks Department Implications

Name & Title: Stuart Anderson, Facilities Manager

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This is a relatively small development when compared to others in the Borough and so there is little concern about the impact it will have on the surrounding open spaces, there is also no effect on open space either adjacent to or on the development site itself and so there are no objections from a parks and open spaces perspective to the principle of this proposal.

8.5 Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

None.

Background Papers (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

None.

Appendices to this report

Appendix A and B.

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