

Housing Best Value Sub-Committee – 21 July 2005

Minutes of the meeting of the **Housing Best Value Sub-Committee** held on **21 July 2005** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr P F A Webster

Cllr Mrs S A Harper
Cllr T Livings

Cllr P K Savill
Cllr Mrs M S Vince

OFFICERS PRESENT

G Woolhouse - Head of Housing, Health and Community Care
J Bostock - Principal Committee Administrator

ALSO PRESENT

C Adams - Swan Housing Group

31 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

32 DEVELOPMENT OF COUNCIL OWNED LAND AT TYLNEY AVENUE, ROCHFORD

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care on revised proposals for the development of the former playspace at Tylney Avenue, Rochford.

Members welcomed Claire Adams of Swan Housing Group to the meeting. Claire tabled two draft scheme proposals. The first would provide 12 general needs rented units comprising one and two bedroom bungalows and one and two bedroom flats and facilitate 24 car parking spaces overall (18 on site and 6 neighbourhood spaces). The second would provide two less units of accommodation but provide car parking for 27 vehicles overall (21 on site and 6 neighbourhood spaces).

During discussion the following was noted:-

- It was anticipated that Housing Corporation funding of about half a million pounds could be available for a scheme at the site. The bid for funding would need to have been submitted by the end of September.
- Detailed proposals on site amenities such as grass borders and the addressing of aspects such as telegraph pole removal would form part of the planning application stage.

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- Residents of this type of scheme commenced on a six-monthly starter tenancy that then became secure. Whilst there is a 'right to acquire' after a set period, the financial circumstances of most residents meant that it was unlikely to be used. The Council would retain its usual nomination rights. Based on current experience with housing association schemes generally there is a per annum vacancy rate of approximately 10%.
- All Swan Group housing schemes had to be constructed to meet the 'good' rating of the 'Eco-homes standard'.
- The contractors appointed by the Swan Housing Group for such schemes had extensive experience of operating in residential areas where access is tight.
- Should the second proposal involving increased parking find favour, the scheme architects would be asked to consider the possibility of retaining the maximum number of units of two bedroom accommodation.

It was observed that the Warwick Drive housing scheme had demonstrated that it was possible for contractors to operate well in a confined area. The Sub-Committee endorsed the proposed on-site discussions with residents with Swan Housing and District Council officers on hand to provide explanation and answer questions on scheme proposals. It was noted that the Council's mobile exhibition unit might be utilised or, alternatively, a small marquee erected on the site.

Members agreed that, based on the outcome of the public consultation process and the experience of Ward Members, it would be preferable to facilitate a scheme where available parking is maximised. Visits had established that, at times, residents in the vicinity of Tylney Avenue already experienced parking issues and national indices pointed to a likely future increase in car usage.

It was confirmed that further detailed work would be undertaken on the scheme capable of maximising car parking. Arrangements would also be put in hand for on-site consultation on a day probably during the last week of August and an advance leaflet would be issued to all residents in the vicinity of the scheme. The leaflet would include indication that the revised proposals had emanated from the public consultation process.

At the conclusion of consideration of the Tylney Avenue site it was noted that, during discussions between Council officers, the Swan Housing Group and the Housing Corporation, the Swan Housing Group had suggested that the Council might like to consider the possibility of introducing a scheme on Council owned land at Mercer Avenue/Twyford Avenue, Great Wakering which could be suited to the building of two bungalows for rent. Such a scheme could be developed in tandem with the Tylney Avenue site and so gain benefit from reduced site management costs.

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It was noted that detailed consideration of any such proposal would have to be undertaken relatively quickly if Housing Corporation funding was to be sought. Officers confirmed that, in the first instance, arrangements would be made for a visit to the site.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am and closed at 11.09am.

Chairman

Date