

Housing Best Value Sub-Committee - 11 December 2003

Minutes of the meeting of the Housing Best Value Sub-Committee held on **11 December 2003** when there were present:-

Cllr P F A Webster (Chairman)

Cllr K A Gibbs
Cllr T Livings

Cllr P K Savill
Cllr Mrs M S Vince

VISITING MEMBER

Councillor C J Lumley

OFFICERS PRESENT

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

ALSO PRESENT

Trevor Burns and Lyn Macdonald of the Swan Housing Group

18 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2003 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

19 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Sub-Committee noted its additional terms of reference.

20 DEVELOPMENT OF COUNCIL OWNED LAND

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care on the outcomes of the public consultation meetings held regarding four potential development sites and the determination of a course of action.

Members gave detailed consideration to each of the four sites set out in the report in turn:-

(1) Hambro Close, Rayleigh

Mr Burns confirmed the original proposals for this site, which would involve four units of supported accommodation for young people at risk. He advised that persons allocated to the units would be known by Essex County Council

Social Services and that they could be in the accommodation for up to two years pending a move to more permanent housing.

A key issue emanating from the public consultation meeting in respect of this site had been parking spaces. Whilst four spaces had been proposed, Swan would now look to increase the number available. Swan would also work on re-aligning the building to increase site accessibility and reduce its appearance in the context of the existing scale of the building in the close, but this would be dependant on planning requirements.

Responding to questions, officers advised that:-

- The Swan Group had achieved specific funding in relation to young people at risk. There was no possibility of changing the proposed use within the approved funding. Any proposal in the future to change the use would have to be submitted to the District Council.
- As with the other sites, this site would be subject to the statutory planning process.

(2) Warwick Drive, Rochford

Mr Burns confirmed the original proposals for this site, which would involve two units of move-on accommodation.

Issues associated with parking and a possible risk of flooding had been raised during the public consultation meeting. With regard to parking, Swan proposed to increase spaces from two to four. With regard to flooding, Swan would undertake a full risk assessment during the planning application stage.

(3) Tylney Avenue , Rochford

Mr Burns confirmed the original proposals for this site, which would involve a mix of properties, both rent free and for sale.

A key issue emanating from the public consultation meeting had been parking space provision. Whilst 21 spaces had originally been proposed, Swan were now proposing 28 spaces on site and, in addition, 6 for neighbourhood parking at the site entrance. If a nearby verge could be acquired, a further 4 to 5 spaces could be created.

Responding to questions, officers advised that it was estimated that the four properties for sale would be sold at market value of approximately £135,000 each. There was no external funding available for this project. The income from sales was to be the funding vehicle to fund the other elements of the scheme.

The Sub-Committee noted that officers were currently investigating whether, historically, a property at this location had been the subject of a covenant

relating to playspace provision. Any decision on the site would need to be subject to the outcome of that investigation.

(4) Hardwick House and Adjacent Land

Mr Burns confirmed the original proposals for this site, which would involve a new elderly persons scheme and general needs accommodation in a refurbished block.

In view of comments raised during the public consultation meeting, Swan now proposed to revise proposals so that, instead of thirty units (16 two-bed/14 one-bed), there would be twenty-two (8 two-bed/14 one-bed). Public consultation had also identified parking as an issue. A reduction in units would mean that twenty-two spaces could be provided within the property curtilage with existing green areas retained. Parking spaces used by existing bungalows could be retained and a through path. Swan would seek to designate spaces to individual flats.

Responding to questions, officers advised that:-

- All residents in the existing sheltered scheme had been offered an opportunity to move to a preferred location as part of the previously agreed relocation package.
- The Council would have no capital or revenue liabilities for any of the proposed developments. The District's contribution was the provision of land and, for the Hardwick site, an empty building. Revenue grant monies would be paid to the service provider.

It was noted that Swan had already submitted a planning application for a new build adjacent to Hardwick House. The Housing Corporation was keen to see early scheme delivery and Swan would hope to submit planning applications in time for consideration by the Planning Services Committee on 19 February 2004. In this regard Swan intended to submit planning applications the moment a decision on the sites was reached.

At the conclusion of discussion on the above four sites, the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care reported that Essex County Council had recently advised that it would be prepared to provide revenue funding for three years to facilitate the introduction of six units of supported accommodation for people with learning difficulties at Bardfield Way, Rayleigh. It was noted that the demand for supported housing for people with learning difficulties was high. It was also noted that County funding would be on the same terms as that likely to emanate for pipeline schemes under supporting people.

The Head of Housing, Health and Community Care confirmed that, unless any proposals for the Bardfield Way site reached planning consent stage by 19 February, the monies now available would be lost in favour of other parts of the county.

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During debate Members recognised that, whilst there could be merit in furthering this matter, it was important to ensure full public consultation was undertaken prior to a decision on this site or the site at Tendring Avenue, Rayleigh which had also been postponed due to pipeline delays. A public consultation meeting would be organised early in the new year. It was agreed that a press release should be issued following any Council decision on the various sites. The Head of Housing, Health and Community Care confirmed that a letter would be sent to all interested parties quickly following any decision.

The Sub-Committee endorsed the observation of the Chairman that the contribution of Trevor Burns and his colleagues had been invaluable in the process of considering the way forward on the various sites. It could also be recognised that recommendations made by the Sub-Committee were unanimous. Responding to questions, the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care advised that he hoped to bring a report on definitions of affordable housing and key workers to the Sub-Committee early in the New Year.

RECOMMENDED to Council:-

- (1) That, subject to additional provisos emanating from public consultation and set out below, development now proceed on the proposed housing schemes at Hambro Close, Rayleigh; Warwick Drive, Rochford; Tylney Avenue Rochford and Hardwick House (and adjacent land), Rayleigh:-

Scheme	Additional Proviso
Hambro Close, Rayleigh	An increase in parking availability at the site and a review of building alignment to increase site accessibility and reduce its appearance, both of these being dependant on planning requirements.
Warwick Drive, Rochford	An increase in parking spaces from two to four and the commissioning of a flood risk assessment during the planning application stage.
Tylney Avenue, Rochford	The introduction of twenty-eight parking spaces within the site curtilage and six spaces for neighbourhood parking. If possible, acquisition of a nearby grass verge to facilitate the creation of a further four to five parking spaces .

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Scheme	Additional Proviso
Hardwick House and Adjacent Land, Rayleigh	A reduction from thirty to twenty-two units (8 two-bed/14 one-bed). The provision of twenty-two designated car parking spaces within the property curtilage with green areas retained. Retention of the parking spaces used by existing bungalows and the through path.

- (2) That the land designated in respect of the four sites in (1) above be transferred to the Swan Housing Group at nil cost, subject to planning permission and:
- For the Hardwick House scheme - supporting people revenue funding.
 - For the Tylney Avenue scheme – conclusion of the investigation into a possible covenant and any necessary statutory notice provisions relating to the former playspace.

on such terms and conditions as the Head of Legal Services considers appropriate in accordance with the general consent and to secure the provision of the approved housing scheme.

- (3) That the possibility of achieving three-year funding from Essex County Council to achieve a scheme at Bardfield Way, Rayleigh be pursued, subject to there being a full public consultation meeting in advance of the finalisation of proposals.
- (4) That a press release be issued on 19 December setting out the Council's final decisions. (HHHCC/HLS)

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and closed at 11.21am.

Chairman

Date