

FORMER PLAY AREA AT TYLNEY AVENUE, ROCHFORD

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report invites Members to consider proposals for the potential development of the former play area at Tylney Avenue, Rochford.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Some Members may recall that in late 2000 three Housing Associations namely, Estuary, Swan and Springboard were asked to submit outline proposals for the development of social rented housing on five Council owned sites in the District, including Tylney Avenue, Rochford.
- 2.2 During earlier discussions, Members had indicated that the site should be developed for elderly persons housing.
- 2.3 The proposals for all five sites, which were submitted by the three Housing Associations, were evaluated and Swan's proposals represented best value for money. Their outline proposal provided for 15 one bedroom bungalows for elderly persons. However, feedback from the Housing Corporation suggests that any bid is unlikely to receive Housing Corporation funding, particularly in the light of the results of the Housing Needs Study and knowledge of current demand.

3 HOUSING NEED

- 3.1 The problem is that there is limited demand for elderly persons' accommodation in Rochford Town. At present, there are only 18 elderly applicants on the Housing Register who have expressed a wish to be accommodated in bungalows. They have indicated that Rochford is an area of preferred location, but not necessarily first choice. However, the majority of these are owner-occupiers and not necessarily in high housing need.
- 3.2 There is, however, an increasing need for 1 and 2 bedroom properties for general needs renting and the provision of bungalow accommodation in particular would be an attractive proposition to a number of client groups, including those who are disabled and who need support from a full-time live-in carer. The Housing Needs Study identified that there is a shortage of wheelchair accessible accommodation in the district.

- 3.3 There is also a need for key worker housing at below market level rents, which could form the balance of this scheme.
- 3.4 The mix of dwellings could therefore address a range of one and two bedroom needs of the District.
- 3.5 It is likely that the three Housing Associations will be interested in submitting further outline proposals to develop this site in accordance with any changed brief which the Council may agree.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is unlikely that Housing Corporation funding will be approved for 2003/04, despite the selected Association receiving the land at nil cost.
- 4.2 It may be possible for the Association to contribute funding from their own reserves, although this is by no means certain. The Council may be able to consider supporting the Association by contributing funding from its Capital Programme through Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LASHG), a funding mechanism which Members may recall is currently subject to a review by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The letting of some of the properties to key workers also reduces the overall social housing grant needed to make the scheme viable.

5 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Tylney Avenue is situated in the Rochford Parish.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The development of the site would address some of the community safety issues presently being experienced by residents adjoining the former play area. Any problems are likely to increase if the site remains undeveloped.

7 RECOMMENDATION

It is proposed, that the Committee **RESOLVES**

- (1) That the Tylney Avenue site be redesignated from the provision of elderly persons housing to the potential development of general needs housing for rent, to include a mix of 1 and 2 bedroom bungalow accommodation, as indicated in the report.
- (2) That Estuary, Springboard and Swan Housing Associations be invited to submit outline proposals.

- (3) That, failing any expression of interest, or funding, in respect of the Housing Associations schemes, to dispose the site on the open market. (HHHCC)

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Background Papers:

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