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**Date: 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022**

Dear Sir/Madam,

A special meeting of the **Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee** will be held via Microsoft Teams on **Thursday, 10th February, 2022 at 5.30 pm** to consider the matters contained in the following agenda. Councillors and the public wishing to speak on any item can do so by making a request to the Chair. You are also welcome to use Welsh at the meeting, both these requests require a minimum notice period of 3 working days.

This meeting will be recorded and made available to view via the Council's website, except for discussions involving confidential or exempt items. Therefore the images/audio of those individuals speaking will be publicly available to all via the recording on the Council website at [www.caerphilly.gov.uk](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk)

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CHARRY'.

**Christina HARRY**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

## AGENDA

Pages

- 1 To receive apologies for absence.
- 2 Declarations of Interest.

Councillors and Officers are reminded of their personal responsibility to declare any personal and/or prejudicial interest(s) in respect of any item of business on this agenda in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000, the Council's Constitution and the Code of Conduct for both Councillors and Officers.

**A greener place Man gwyrddach**



To receive and consider the following Scrutiny reports: -

3	Residential Development Proposal - Former Oakdale Comprehensive School.	1 - 10
4	Welsh Government Lease Scheme Proposal.	11 - 20
5	Proposed Re-Development of the Former Ty Darran Care Home, Risca.	21 - 28

### **Circulation:**

**Councillors** M.A. Adams (Vice Chair), J. Bevan, D. Cushing, C. Elsbury, R.W. Gough, L. Harding, A.G. Higgs, G. Kirby, Ms P. Leonard, Mrs G.D. Oliver, B. Owen, Mrs D. Price, J. Ridgewell (Chair), Mrs M.E. Sargent, W. Williams and B. Zaplatynski

And Appropriate Officers

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## **SPECIAL HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH FEBRUARY 2022**

**SUBJECT: RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL – FORMER  
OAKDALE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND  
HOUSING**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed Caerphilly Homes development opportunity at the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site and seek approval in principle to develop the site for Caerphilly Homes' first, flagship, mixed tenure residential development (subject to receipt of a detailed cost plan (to be presented via a separate report in early Summer 2022).
- 1.2 Subject to confirmation from the District Valuer approval is sought to appropriate the site from the General Fund into the HRA by the end of the financial year 21/22 in order that Social Housing Grant can be drawn down from Welsh Government to part fund the acquisition. The valuation from the District Valuer is not expected until early February 2022.
- 1.3 The report is seeking the views of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee prior to its presentation and final, in-principle approval from Cabinet.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The site of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School was vacated in 2016 and cleared as a result of demolition in 2019.
- 2.2 In 2019, following the creation of a dedicated Strategy and Development team, Caerphilly Homes began the process of exploring the potential viability of the site for residential development. Willmott Dixon were procured as development partner and carried out an initial feasibility study.
- 2.3 On the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020, Cabinet made a decision to sign a Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) with Willmott Dixon to move to the next phase of development, in order to undertake detailed site investigation work and a detailed development appraisal. With over 100 development appraisals undertaken, this work is now almost concluded, and a report will follow in summer 2022 which will include a detailed cost plan and a detailed development proposal.

- 2.4 The site is particularly challenging, not least because of the significant difference in levels on the site and the number of constraints including the need to retain trees and provide ecological enhancements.
- 2.5 The site currently falls within the General Fund and will need to be appropriated to the HRA prior to development by Caerphilly Homes. As a result, a valuation has been requested from the District Valuer and is expected early February 2022.
- 2.6 The site is included in the Programme Development Plan (PDP) to obtain SHG acquisition funding to part finance the appropriation from the General Fund to the HRA for this financial year. However, in order to draw down Social Housing Grant (SHG) acquisition funding by the end of the financial year, the valuation has to have been undertaken, approved by Cabinet and outline planning permission obtained.
- The valuation is expected early February 2022.
  - The report is scheduled to be discussed by Cabinet on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February and Planning Committee on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022.
- 2.7 The timescales are tight, and it is vital that Caerphilly Homes meet these timeframes in order to achieve outline planning permission with the in-principle support of Cabinet.
- 2.8 There is no doubt that this site represents an exciting opportunity for Caerphilly Homes' first, flagship, mixed tenure, development. However, there are a number of challenges that must be overcome in order to maximise the development opportunities.
- 2.9 The relocation of the existing MUGA is one consideration that has yet to be determined however, the valuation request to the District Valuer includes this area of the site so that alternative options can be fully reviewed and developed.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Members consider the content of the report and support, in-principle, the development of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site by Caerphilly Homes. Support is subject to, the receipt and presentation of a detailed cost plan which will be available in summer 2022.
- 3.2 Members support the principle of appropriating the site from the General Fund to the HRA at a cost to be determined by the District Valuer.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To deliver the Council's ambition of building 400 new affordable, zero carbon homes by 2025. This site contributes a considerable proportion of this target
- 4.2 To meet an ever-increasing need for affordable homes in Caerphilly County Borough, as identified through the Local Housing Market Assessment process, whilst also supporting the foundational and circular economies, creating great places, mitigating the impact of climate change, addressing fuel poverty and creating a new housing led economic catalyst.

- 4.3 To contribute towards the Welsh Government target of delivering 20,000 affordable low carbon homes by 2026.
- 4.4 To mitigate the impact of climate change and meet the Council's commitments contained in its Decarbonisation Strategy – Reduce, Produce, Offset, Buy (2020).

## **5. THE REPORT**

### **Background**

- 5.1 On 9<sup>th</sup> September 2020, Cabinet approved the signing of a Pre-Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) with Willmott Dixon to undertake the feasibility work necessary to understand the development potential of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site.
- 5.2 In order to undertake feasibility work, Willmott Dixon sought to determine the Council's 'Needs, Musts and Wants' in relation to the site. This has resulted in the undertaking of over 100 different development appraisals containing different variables and tenure mix.
- 5.3 In early discussions the following 'Needs, Musts and Wants' were identified as a requirement:
- The site should seek to accommodate a minimum of 100 homes.
  - At least 50% of the homes must be affordable (to comply with Welsh Government policy). The definition of 'affordable' in this context refers to both social rent and Low Cost Home Ownership housing.
  - The site should include market sale homes (% to be determined according to viability).
  - Homes should be future ready / net zero carbon (recognising the climate emergency and to comply with the Authority's ambition to deliver a zero carbon borough by 2030 and a Welsh Government ambition by 2050).
  - Employ the use of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) which reduce the requirement for wet trades, are precision manufactured in a factory environment and are quicker to assemble on site (policy requirement).
  - Homes should meet the Welsh Government's Beautiful Homes and Space Standards as a minimum (policy requirement).
  - The SuDS solution should be value engineered to ensure lower maintenance costs.
  - Support the foundational and circular economies through the development of a local supply chain (Caerphilly post Covid-19 recovery and support local economic growth) and the creation of new employment and training opportunities for local people engaged in Welsh Government funded employment support programmes delivered by the Council.
- 5.4 Willmott Dixon were asked to examine the viability of the site utilising a mix of different tenures ranging from 10% affordable up to 70% and also to run a series of appraisals to examine the cost that would result from meeting various energy efficiency targets including net zero carbon and EPC A.

- 5.5 Due to the desire not to have to retrofit properties in the future and the Council's commitment to delivering a zero carbon borough by 2030, it was deemed appropriate to seek to deliver affordable homes with the highest standard of energy efficiency possible. As a result, all affordable homes built on the site will be delivered to net zero carbon standards).
- 5.6 The development appraisals undertaken by Willmott Dixon on behalf of Caerphilly all factor in the higher costs of the materials associated with delivering a net zero carbon scheme.
- 5.7 In relation to the market sale properties on the site, Willmott Dixon have undertaken research which suggests that private purchasers of market sale homes are not yet prepared to pay a premium for energy efficient homes. Green mortgages are new to the market and currently there is a limited take up. As a result, it is proposed that market sale homes on the site will be constructed to EPC A standard and prospective buyers will be able to purchase 'green' add-ons which will increase the energy efficiency of their home and potentially lower fuel costs if they wish. This area of work is subject to further research and may change in the future.
- 5.8 Caerphilly Homes intends to develop new homes for market sale to help create balanced and sustainable developments and to help to cross subsidise the delivery of affordable homes. The HRA cannot subsidise the delivery of homes for market sale, hence, Caerphilly Homes has to ensure that where new homes are developed for market sale they are attractive to prospective purchasers.
- 5.9 All appraisals undertaken have been based upon the use of a steel framed MMC (modern methods of construction) solution which has been manufactured in Caerphilly by Caledan Ltd. This method of construction was pioneered on the Caerphilly Homes Innovative Housing Programme funded demonstrator developments at Trecenydd and Trethomas.
- 5.10 The use of the steel framed MMC solution developed in collaboration with Willmott Dixon, Caledan and Caerphilly Homes is the preferred construction solution on this site and has been adopted by Willmott Dixon as part of their corporate construction solutions arm, 'Collida'.
- 5.11 Caerphilly Homes intend to enter into discussions with the Procurement Team and the SCAPE framework manager to ensure the development and continuation of the scheme through the SCAPE construction framework.

### **The Site – Challenges and Opportunities**

- 5.12 The topography of the site presents a number of significant challenges largely resulting from the 26m drop from the top of the site to the bottom, the levels and natural plateau's within the site which directly influence the capacity, layout and eventual SAB solution. The levels on the site have also been identified as a particular challenge by the Welsh Government Technical Scrutiny team who are having significant input into the evolving design and layout of the scheme.
- 5.13 The site boundary currently includes the MUGA area which borders the road frontage to the site. It is proposed to relocate the MUGA to an alternative location in Oakdale

thereby enabling the provision of between 8 to 12 affordable homes. It also improves the frontage of the site, street scene and place making aspects on Oakdale Terrace along the junction with Penmaen Estate. The preferred location for the new MUGA is still to be determined. It will also help increase the marketability of the development to prospective owner occupiers.

- 5.14 There is no doubt that given the views across the valley from this site and the retention of the majority of category A and B trees on the site, that this is a prime development site for a flagship Caerphilly Homes development. The design and place making principles adopted on the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site will influence the design standards that Caerphilly Homes, as a developer, will adopt in the future across all its development sites.
- 5.15 Caerphilly Homes have been working closely with colleagues in Planning and Regeneration to ensure that 'place making' lies at the heart of the development and a 'Team Caerphilly' approach has been adopted since the inception of the project.

### **Pre-Construction Activities**

- 5.16 Whilst the Pre-Construction Services Contract (PCSA) was signed in September 2020, the intrusive site investigation and ecological survey works did not commence until March 2021. Between September 2020 and March 2021 a desktop exercise was undertaken to examine the existing documentation and survey information that was available for the site and to run a series of viability scenarios. In essence, this was an academic exercise as until the detailed site investigation work was undertaken it was impossible to determine the number of units that may be accommodated on the site, the Sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) solution required and a potential layout.
- 5.17 Detailed site investigation and extensive ecology survey work took place throughout Summer 2021 and as a result, throughout the Autumn of 2021 work concentrated on evolving the design and layout of the site together with exploring engineering and access options together with an emerging SuDS solution with the aim of submitting an outline planning application (with all matters reserved) in December 2021.
- 5.18 An outline planning application with all matters reserved was submitted on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021. It is anticipated that the outcome of the application will be determined by Planning Committee on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022.
- 5.19 Securing outline planning permission (with all matters reserved) will enable Caerphilly Homes to draw down Social Housing Grant (SHG) funding to part finance the acquisition and appropriation of the site from the General Fund to the HRA by the 31 March 2022 which is the deadline for the draw-down of Social Housing Grant.
- 5.20 In order to determine the amount of grant to be applied for it is necessary to obtain a re-valuation of the land. A valuation was requested by Property Services and provided by the District Valuer on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020 however, the valuation undertaken at that time did not take into account: the extent of the abnormalities on the site, the commuted sums resulting from a SAB approved scheme or the proportion of affordable housing. The original valuation requested by Property Services assumes a clean site and a policy compliant level of affordable housing as a minimum. The initial valuation of the site was £1,785,000.
- 5.21 The revised valuation of the site, will now take into consideration the known abnormalities and constraints together with the planned provision of 50% affordable housing. The revised valuation is awaited from the District Valuer and is expected

mid-February 2022.

- 5.22 A decision by Cabinet to appropriate the site from the General Fund to the HRA is required as soon as possible in order to draw down Social Housing Grant for the acquisition of the site.
- 5.23 Running in parallel to the planning application and the valuation is the Welsh Government Technical Scrutiny process. This process is mandatory (where LA's and housing associations are seeking access to SHG) and requires Caerphilly Homes to involve the WG Technical Scrutiny team in the inception and evolving design of any SHG funded scheme. The WG Technical Scrutiny Team comprise a number of experienced Architects who are responsible for ensuring the quality of SHG funded developments through advising on aspects of the Design Commission for Wales Place Making Charter, Welsh Government's Beautiful Homes and Spaces (July 2020) and Building Better Places (July 2020) guidance.
- 5.24 Caerphilly Homes have engaged the Technical Scrutiny team in the evolving design and development of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School and are currently in the process of receiving feedback.

### **Conclusion**

- 5.25 There are a number of critical timeline issues directly impacting upon Caerphilly Homes' ability to move this site forward and to draw down SHG in line with Welsh Government guidelines.
- 5.26 The SHG is for acquisition funding and has to be drawn down by 31 March 2022. It will part fund the appropriation of the site from the General Fund to the HRA.
- 5.27 To meet the 31 March 2022 deadline, Caerphilly Homes require receipt of the valuation undertaken by the District Valuer (expected early February 2022) and a Cabinet approval to appropriate the site prior to 31 March 2022.
- 5.28 Cabinet has been scheduled for the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022. Hence, the timelines for receipt of the valuation and the Cabinet decision, followed by a decision from the Local Planning Authority are extremely tight.
- 5.29 It is important to note that the application for outline planning permission with all matters reserved means that the design, tenure, access and place making aspects of the scheme are all 'reserved' for later determination and have yet to be finalised. There is still flexibility to discuss all options relating to the scheme before the proposals are finalised and the reserved matters are submitted in summer 2022.
- 5.30 Pending approval, Caerphilly Homes intend to work closely with colleagues in Procurement and the SCAPE Framework Manager to maintain the momentum of the project and facilitate the move from pre-construction into the construction phase of the SCAPE process.
- 5.31 It is imperative that the 'Team Caerphilly' approach to Caerphilly Homes' developments is maintained. The continued involvement of the SAB, Highways, Ecology, Planning and Place making teams is critical to the success of this flagship development.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

6.1 There are a number of assumptions that are pertinent to the report:

- 1) That outline planning permission will be secured.
- 2) The valuation from the District Valuer will be received early February.
- 3) The deadline for SHG drawn down will be met.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

7.1 To be completed when the detailed report is brought forward with the cost plan in summer 2022.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The redevelopment of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site is included within the HRA business plan and also the Planned Development Programme (prepared on behalf of Welsh Government), which identifies SHG allocations for both the Council and HA's. The appropriation of the site from the General Fund to the HRA is identified for 21/22 in the PDP as acquisition funding.

8.2 SHG funding is also indicatively identified in the PDP for the construction phase but is subject to change pending determination of a construction method and a detailed cost plan.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no personnel implications resulting from the development of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School site.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

10.1 Comments received from Consultee's are reflected in the report.

10.2 Ward member comments are reflected in Appendix 1.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

11.1 Local Government Act 1972, Housing Wales Act 2014

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Consultees: Cllr J Ridgewell, Chair Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr M Adams, Vice Chair Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee  
Cllr Shane Cook, Cabinet Member for Social Services & Housing  
Cllr Philippa Marsden, Leader  
Cllr Roy Saralis, Ward Member – Penmaen  
Cllr Ben Zaplatynski, Ward member - Penmaen

Christina Harray, Chief Executive  
Dave Street, Corporate Director for Social Services & Housing  
Ed Edmunds, Corporate Director of Corporate Services and Education  
Mark S Williams, Corporate Director of Environment and Economy  
Nick Taylor-Williams, Head of Housing  
Rhian Kyte, Head of Planning and Regeneration  
Marcus Lloyd, Head of Infrastructure  
Mark Williams, Head of Property  
Liz Lucas, Head of Customer and Digital Services  
Robert Tranter, Head of Legal Services/Monitoring Officer  
Stephen R Harris, Head of Corporate Finance & S151 Officer  
Fiona Wilkins, Public Sector Housing Manager  
Derek Morris, Principal Procurement Officer  
Anwen Cullinane, Senior Policy Officer – Equalities, Welsh Language and  
Consultation  
Chris Boardman, Development Manager  
Mark Noakes, Development Manager  
Mark Jennings, Principal Housing Strategy Officer  
Lesley Allen, Principal Group Accountant (Housing)

## **Appendix 1 – Ward Member Comments**

Both Penmaen ward members have been involved in the dialogue regarding the potential development of the former Oakdale Comprehensive School since early 2021.

Ward members are supportive of the development in principle however, concerns have been raised, with regard to the need to ensure the relocation of the MUGA to an appropriate location within the Oakdale community.

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## **SPECIAL HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH FEBRUARY 2022**

**SUBJECT: WELSH GOVERNMENT LEASE SCHEME PROPOSAL**

**REPORT BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND  
HOUSING**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the current request from Welsh Government for Local Authorities to express an interest in the Leasing Scheme Wales (LSW) in meeting their duties under Part 2 of the Housing Wales Act 2014.
- 1.2 The report is seeking the views of Scrutiny Committee of whether CCBC should express an interest in the Leasing Scheme Wales or to decline the expression of interest and remain with its current Private Sector Scheme - Caerphilly Keys. A report will be taken to Cabinet for decision on 23rd February 2022, which will outline the views of Scrutiny Committee.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 Members will be aware that in August 2018 the Housing Solution Team Launched its own private sector leasing scheme Caerphilly Keys.
- 2.2 In 2019 Welsh Government asked Local Authorities to express an interest in adopting a pilot of the WG lease scheme to ensure that Local Authorities have access to Private Sector Accommodation to discharge their Statutory Duty.
- 2.3 CCBC at that time made the decision not to express an interest in the pilot as a result of the local authority having its own Private Sector Scheme under the umbrella of Caerphilly Keys.
- 2.4 Welsh Government have now produced a LSW offer for Local Authorities and asked all whether they wish to express an interest in adopting this scheme.
- 2.5 Should CCBC wish to adopt the LSW scheme then it would need to disband the current private sector model Caerphilly Keys. This model currently supports the Housing Solutions Team in meeting its statutory obligations in discharging Homelessness duties in the private rental sector.
- 2.6 The report outlines the current proposal from WG regarding the LSW offer to Local

Authorities.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

3.1 Members are requested to consider the report and agree on which of the two pathways the Housing Solution team should adopt to take forward its private rented sector scheme.

#### **Option 1**

- To express an interest in Leasing Scheme Wales (LSW) and take this forward as the Council's private sector pathway and disband Caerphilly Keys

#### **Option 2**

- Decline to express an interest in the LSW on the grounds that CCBC has a successful PRS scheme in place with Caerphilly Keys.

3.2 Option 2 is the preferred option as detailed below in the report.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 Having considered the Welsh Government proposal and undertaken a comparison with Caerphilly Keys, there is no opportunity for both models to operate at the same time. They would be in direct competition, in an already highly saturated private rental market. Therefore, the preference of officers is to choose to continue with Caerphilly Keys and not express an interest in the LSW.

4.2 The key reasons for this are:

- Well established trusted model, running for the last 3.5 years
- A good portfolio of private landlords already on board with the scheme
- A variation of lease lengths and ability to charge varying rents above and at, the LHA rate is working
- There are no contractual maintenance obligations for CCBC
- Tenancy support is available via the scheme to promote tenancy sustainability
- Further offers to secure additional properties by some landlords already on the scheme have been made to Caerphilly Keys
- Partnership working with DWP is in place for Caerphilly Keys tenants which allows issue with DWP benefits to be swiftly addressed to prevent homelessness and financial difficulties.
- Survey feedback from the current Caerphilly Keys landlords is that the LSW incentives aren't attractive and they would not switch to the LSW scheme putting at risk vulnerable residents
- Any areas of LSW which we believe will improve Caerphilly Keys can be considered going forward such as minimum tenancy lengths for additional tenant security

### **5. THE REPORT: LEASING SCHEME WALES – THE PROPSAL / OFFER**

5.1 The Leasing Scheme Wales (LSW) is designed to increase access to affordable and good quality private rented accommodation

- 5.2 The Scheme will support those who are at risk of Homelessness or homeless as defined under the Housing Wales Act 2014
- 5.3 The Scheme will provide tenants with longer term security of accommodation in the PRS sector at a local housing allowance (LHA) level.
- 5.4 The scheme is intended to complement and act as a resource for Local Authority Homelessness Teams seeking to move households on from temporary accommodation.
- 5.5 Those tenants who are housed under the scheme will be provided with a High Level of support to help maintain their tenancies and reduce the risk of repeat / future homelessness by addressing their support needs quickly and responsibly.
- 5.6 Through LSW, local authorities will acquire quality properties for a period between 5 – 20 years, providing regular rental income to property owners at the local housing allowance rate, less a management fee equivalent.
- 5.7 All properties will be assessed for their suitability by the Local Authority to ensure they meet the required standard as outlined in the Scheme Requirement.
- 5.8 Under the Lease Agreement Local Authorities will take on specific obligations in relation to the maintenance of the property and the rent which it pays the owner.
- 5.9 The rent under the lease agreement will be less than that which the local authority will receive from sub-letting the property.
- 5.10 The Local Authority will receive rent at the LHA rate and under the terms of the lease it will pay at a rate which is an agreed percentage less than LHA rates.
- 5.11 The Financial difference in rent values charged to tenants and paid to property owners will be retained by the Local Authority and used to help fund maintenance obligations.
- 5.12 At the end of the lease term the property will be returned to the owner in its original condition subject to reasonable wear and tear over time and as per the lease agreement.
- 5.13 Local Authorities are expected to market the scheme and to be in line with Welsh Government's communication and marketing guidelines.
- 5.14 Local Authorities are required to identify and secure properties for the scheme which Meet the requirements of the scheme.
- 5.15 Model Lease Agreements will be provided by Welsh Government to local authorities
- 5.16 Local authorities will need to ensure landlords have the required insurance and mortgage arrangements in place to enable them to participate in the scheme
- 5.17 The property owner would usually be liable for building insurance and that cover is in place for the term of the lease to mitigate against any risk
- 5.18 Properties accepted onto the scheme must meet required minimum standards
- 5.19 A renovation incentive can be offered to landlords where their property does not meet

the minimum standard or to improve the property's EPC rating

- 5.20 The renovation incentive will be no more than £5,000
- 5.21 Renovation incentives will only be offered to landlords who sign up to LSW.
- 5.22 The Local Authority will be responsible for drawing up and agreeing specification / scope of works required and costings.
- 5.23 If a grant is approved then local authorities can claim the amount of grant from Welsh Government.
- 5.24 Should the property owner activate a break clause within their lease contract then the property owner will be expected to repay the grant amount in full.
- 5.25 The Local Authority will take responsibility to administer this process.
- 5.26 Empty properties can be brought into the scheme.
- 5.27 Empty properties will be eligible for higher grant values in relation to the renovation incentive and properties would be eligible for a grant up to a maximum of £25,000.
- 5.28 Grants for over £10,000 will require Welsh Government approval.

#### **Model and Lease Agreements**

- 5.29 Model Lease / Bare Contractual and Incentive agreements will be provided to use by the Local Authority.
- 5.30 The Local Authority will have no discretion as to the amount of rent payable to the owner and is the equivalent of the LHA rate less a percentage equivalent to a management fee.
- 5.31 Local Authorities will not be able to supplement the LHA rent to owners as an added incentive.
- 5.32 The Management fee retained by the Local Authority can be used to help fund maintenance or other running costs.
- 5.33 Local Authorities will be required to let properties at the LHA rate and this will be paid either weekly or monthly by the tenant to the local authority.
- 5.34 Welsh Government have agreed to subsidise certain losses that the local authority may accrue through the operation of the scheme.
- 5.35 The exact elements of funding available would be confirmed in any rent offer letter issued to the Local Authority.
- 5.36 Eligible losses could include staffing costs, tenancy support costs, capital and revenue losses.

#### **Caerphilly Keys – Caerphilly County Borough Council Scheme**

- 5.37 Caerphilly County Borough Council Housing Solutions Team launched Caerphilly Keys Private Rented Scheme in 2018 to meet its statutory requirements in

discharging its duties into the PRS sector in line with the Housing Wales Act 2014.

- 5.38 Caerphilly Keys helps landlords find long term tenants for their properties promoting tenancy sustainability and to assist with reducing repeat homelessness.
- 5.39 Through Caerphilly Keys the team provide a service that matches tenants to a property and then continue to support both landlord and tenant throughout the lifetime of the tenancy to address any tenancy or welfare support needs that may arise to ensure the tenancy is sustainable.
- 5.40 The Caerphilly Keys Scheme formulates part of the Housing Solutions Team and has its own dedicated officers to manage and work with the scheme.
- 5.41 Caerphilly Keys currently does not enter into any formal contract with a landlord and the success of the scheme has been built on hard work and building excellent and trusting relationships between dedicated officers and landlords.
- 5.42 There are no financial costs attached to Caerphilly Keys that the Local Authority currently has to consider apart from its staff salary costs which are already set within the service areas budget.
- 5.43 Caerphilly Keys tenants are initially offered a six-month assured shorthold tenancy and following this the tenancy can either run as a periodic tenancy or landlords will issue further assured shorthold tenancies for an agreed length of time with the tenant.
- 5.44 Whilst Caerphilly Keys does not enter into any formal lease agreement for the property with the landlord there is an understanding between the landlord and Caerphilly Keys that we are looking for properties for longer term letting rather than short term Our current property portfolio highlights this as we have had tenants in a property under the scheme since the scheme was launched in 2018.
- 5.45 Whilst rent levels for properties are not always set at the LHA rate, all properties taken onto the scheme have to be considered to be a reasonable and affordable rent so we can ensure we can tenant match and promote access to affordable accommodation
- We have 33 properties on scheme which are set at LHA rate
  - We negotiate with landlords to let the property at 10-15% under the market level rent
  - Rents vary from £360pcm for a 1-bedroom flat – £700pcm for a 4-bedroom property in Penpedariheol.
- 5.46 All properties /landlords that are taken onto the Caerphilly Keys scheme are Rent Smart Wales registered and inspections of properties are undertaken to ensure they are fit for purpose and suitable for the scheme.
- 5.47 The portfolio has grown in its capacity year on year. Since its original launch in 2018 and now there are 103 properties operating under Caerphilly Keys that range from 1-4 bed properties.
- 5.48 All 103 properties will have tenants that have either been prevented from being homeless or their homeless situation relieved in accordance with the duties under the Housing Wales Act 2014.

- 5.49 The Scheme has supported nearly 95 households into properties via this private rented scheme to date, 61 of these households were single person households.
- 5.50 All property/ tenancies, apart from 5 properties, still have the original tenant in situ at the property, of which the longest standing tenant has been in their tenancy since August 2018.
- 5.51 The Scheme currently has 7 properties pending tenant matching for January 2022 and 6 x 1 bed that will be in the portfolio by March 22. (these are included in the 103 total portfolio figure).
- 5.52 Financial assistance has been secured through Welsh Government Covid 19 Phase 2 Homelessness funding for remedial works to be carried out at 6 x 1 bed properties to assist the local authority in its discharge of duty into the private rented sector for households homeless who are in temporary accommodation.
- 5.53 Caerphilly Keys has its own dedicated tenancy support officers who visit and address any tenancy or support related issues to prevent any tenancy breakdown.
- 5.54 Caerphilly Keys expanded its service in February 2020 and employed a support worker to assist with any tenancy and welfare support need issues that may arise and to assist in the prevention of any breakdown of tenancy and to help promote tenancy sustainability.
- 5.55 In December 2020 the DWP awarded a grant to CCBC which provided Caerphilly Keys with its own dedicated DWP officer who works in partnership with tenants of Caerphilly Keys / Landlords and Caerphilly Keys Officers to tackle DWP benefit issue and to promote access to training and employment opportunities to assist in the prevention of Homelessness and to maximise access to employment.
- 5.56 In October 2021 Caerphilly Keys launched its own Website and from this we have received 12 landlord contact details and the team are currently in the process of following these contacts up and seeing what property options may be available to bring onto the scheme.
- 5.57 The website has had 381 hits since it was launched in October 2021.
- 5.58 In December 2021, in partnership with funding from the DWP, a digital Van was placed in the Borough for five days and to date this has resulted in one landlord contacting Caerphilly keys to discuss the potential of bringing on line 9 single person accommodation units.
- 5.59 Partnership arrangements are in place between Caerphilly Keys and the Local Authority Empty Properties team to maximise bringing empty properties within the borough back into use and to enhance the property portfolio.
- 5.60 A survey has been undertaken with the landlords registered with Caerphilly Keys regarding the LSW proposal and all landlords have advised that if CCBC move across to the LSW scheme then based on current proposal they would not wish to transfer across.
- 5.61 This would mean that we would lose the current portfolio built by Caerphilly Keys since 2018 and that tenants could possibly be served Notice at a later date as Caerphilly Keys would no longer be supporting the tenants.

## **Conclusion**

- 5.62 The report outlines for members the current proposal from Welsh Government on the Leasing Scheme Wales and how the LSW will be managed and run by local authorities.
- 5.63 The report outlines for members the current Private Rented Sector Scheme via Caerphilly keys and the property portfolio that is currently being managed by the Housing Solutions Team to meet its statutory obligations and further highlights the success of this scheme to date.
- 5.64 The report highlights for members the feedback received from current landlords who are working with Caerphilly Keys with regards to any possible transfer across to the LSW scheme.
- 5.65 The comparison review of both schemes has led officers to recommend to cabinet that CCBC continue with the Caerphilly Keys model and declines to express an interest in LSW.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 The Report has had to assume based on the LSW proposal and guidance that any financial losses the Local Authority could incur linked to staffing costs, capital costs, revenue costs and tenancy support costs would be eligible for refund from Welsh Government.
- 6.2 Feedback from Caerphilly Keys landlords detailed in the report, leads us to assume that if the decision is to take forward the LSW scheme, then the Housing Solutions team will be working with a blank property portfolio and would not be able to transfer the properties currently attached to the Scheme.
- 6.3 That there will be landlords within the borough who are willing to work with the scheme.
- 6.4 It is difficult at this time to conclude what financial impact the scheme could have on the authority for repairs and maintenance.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 Please see attached Integrated Impact Assessment and key highlights below.  
[Link to Integrated Impact Assessment](#)
- 7.2 Linked to the Well-being of Future Generations Act the proposal will have a positive long-term impact in sustaining communities and will allow households who have experienced homelessness to have access to longer term stable accommodation that is affordable to them and meets their longer-term housing need.
- 7.3 Housing Wales Act 2014 -Part 2, allows for the statutory discharge into suitable private sector accommodation to alleviate and prevent homelessness. By providing such stable accommodation this will have a positive impact on any households wellbeing and should prevent any re occurrence of Homelessness.

- 7.4 The proposal allows the Housing Solution Team to discharge its statutory duty into the private rented sector thus preventing homelessness and any recurrence of Homelessness.
- 7.5 Housing Wales Act 2014- Part 2, confirms the duty on statutory and non-statutory services to co-operate and assist the local authority in preventing homelessness. The Caerphilly Keys scheme has its own dedicated support workers and this allows the service to address any tenancy or wellbeing issues before they escalate and in addition the workers are able to sign post to any other key agencies like that of specialist debt advice / mental health services via referral pathways set up by the local authority supporting people team.
- 7.6 The Caerphilly Keys scheme consults with its landlords, tenants and staff in its development and information is used from the Housing Solution Team to inform decision making around housing need and demand when considering working with landlords and taking on properties.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 At this time it is difficult to gage any financial impact on the local authority should the LSW scheme be adopted where maintenance of properties / rent loss etc is concerned.
- 8.2 Resources and Finances will need to be available for the local authority to be able to carry its obligations as set out under the LSW and whilst salary and other costs can be claimed via WG it is not clear to what value or percentage.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There will need to be a range of personnel available to manage the WG Lease Scheme which will vary from property surveyors, officers to inspect properties, maintenance officers, finance / administration staff, in conjunction with the current team who manage the day-to-day tenancy management of the scheme.
- 9.2 Currently there are no personnel implications for Caerphilly Keys as there are already dedicated officers recruited.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

- 10.1 There are no consultation responses that have not been reflected in the report.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 There is no Statutory Power placed on a local authority to provide a private rented landlord/ tenant scheme
- 11.2 Housing Wales Act 2014 Part 1 Outlines the regulation of private rented accommodation
- 11.3 Housing Wales Act 2014 -Part 2, allows for the statutory discharge into suitable private sector accommodation to alleviate and prevent homelessness.

11.4 Housing Wales Act 2014- Part 2, confirms the duty on statutory and non-statutory services to co-operate and assist the local authority in preventing homelessness.

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Consultees:

- Cllr John Ridgewell - Chair Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
- Cllr Mike Adams - Vice Chair Housing & Regeneration Scrutiny Committee
- Cllr Shayne Cook - Cabinet Member for Social Care and Housing
- Dave Street - Corporate- Director for Social Services and Housing
- Nick Taylor-Williams - Head of Housing
- Robert Tranter - Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer
- Stephen Harris - Head of Financial Services & Section 151 Officer
- Fiona Wilkins - Housing Services Manager
- Jane Roberts -Waite - Strategy & Co -ordination Manager
- Lesley Allen - Principal Group Accountant (Housing)
- Shelly Jones - Supporting People Manager
- Sadie O'Connor - Senior Housing Advice Officer
- David Francis - Senior Allocations Officer
- Lee Clapham - Emergency Housing Manager
- Byron Jones - Caerphilly Keys Officer
- Claire Davies - Private Sector Housing Manager
- Rhian Evans-Maclean - Principal Housing Officer

Background Papers: Housing Wales Act 2014  
Welsh Government Leasing Scheme Wales Guidance

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## **SPECIAL HOUSING AND REGENERATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 10TH FEBRUARY 2022**

**SUBJECT:            PROPOSED RE-DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMER TY  
DARRAN CARE HOME, RISCA**

**REPORT BY:        CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES AND HOUSING**

### **1.        PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1        The purpose of this report is to outline the proposed Caerphilly Homes development opportunity at the former Ty Darran care home site and seek approval in principle to develop the site as an innovative later living scheme for people.
- 1.2        Subject to confirmation from the District Valuer approval is sought to appropriate the site from the General Fund into the HRA prior to the end of the financial year 21/22 so that Social Housing Grant can be drawn down from Welsh Government to part fund the acquisition. The valuation from the District Valuer is not expected until early February.
- 1.3        The report is seeking the views of the Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee prior to final, in principle approval from Cabinet.

### **2.        SUMMARY**

- 2.1        The Ty Darran residential care home in Risca, closed in 2010 and the re-development of the site has been delayed pending improvements to adjacent river flood defences which have now been completed. The traditionally constructed building remains in place and the building envelope is in reasonable condition however, internally the condition of the building is poor.
- 2.2        In early 2020, the Council began discussions with the Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB ) about the possible redevelopment of the site in conjunction with a site adjacent to Ty Darran currently occupied by Risca Health Centre; with the intention of creating a combined residential / health hub.
- 2.3        To assist with these discussions, Caerphilly Homes appointed Pentan Architectural Consultants, based in Cardiff via a Welsh Procurement Alliance (WPA) framework to help develop a new and exciting residential, later living offer for the Ty Darran site.

- 2.4 Pentan Architectural Consultancy have been a critical partner in helping to facilitate discussions with the ABUHB and also in working collaboratively to influence the evolution of the scheme design.
- 2.5 Unfortunately, discussions came to a close with the ABUHB when it became apparent that the timelines that the ABUHB and Caerphilly Homes were working to were not aligned. As a result, Caerphilly Homes moved forward in spring 2021 to examine the viability of the Ty Darran site and its development potential without the involvement of the ABUHB.
- 2.6 Caerphilly Homes are planning to decommission Waunfawr House (Crosskeys), St Mary's Court (Risca) and Castle Court (Crosskeys). As a result, 47 tenant households from these schemes are currently waiting to move into the new 'later living' accommodation scheduled to be built at Ty Darran.
- 2.7 The Ty Darran site currently falls within the Council's General Fund hence, Caerphilly Homes will need to purchase the site at the value determined by the District Valuer and appropriate it into the HRA. A valuation has been sought and is expected to be received mid-February.
- 2.8 The valuation of the site is critical to ensuring the draw-down of SHG (Social Housing Grant) by the end of the financial year 21/22 to part fund the appropriation of the site from the General Fund to the HRA.
- 2.9 In addition, securing outline planning permission is also a condition of drawing down SHG for the appropriation of the site. An outline planning application was submitted on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and a formal response is awaited.
- 2.10 The Ty Darran outline planning application is scheduled to be considered by Planning Committee on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022.
- 2.11 Caerphilly Homes' intention is, subject to outline planning permission being granted, to submit a reserved matters planning application in summer 2022. This will be pre-empted by a report to Scrutiny and Cabinet which provide the full detail on the proposed scheme and a detailed cost plan.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Members consider the content of the report and support the development by Caerphilly Homes of the former Ty Darran site in principle, subject to the receipt and presentation of a satisfactory cost plan which will be available in early summer 2022.
- 3.2 Members support a decision to appropriate the site from the general fund to the HRA in principle at the cost to be determined by the District Valuer. The revised valuation is expected to be received early February 2022.
- 3.3 Members support the proposal to move to the next stage of the project in order to determine the most suitable procurement route for the detailed design and construction phase of the project.

### **4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To ensure that tenants currently occupying Waunfawr House (Crosskeys), St Mary's

Court (Risca) and Castle Court (Crosskeys) are accommodated as per the commitment made to tenants following Cabinet in September 2018.

- 4.2 To deliver the Council's ambition of building 400 new affordable, zero carbon homes by 2025.
- 4.3 To meet an ever-increasing need for affordable homes in Caerphilly County Borough, as identified through the Local Housing Market Assessment process, whilst also supporting the foundational and circular economies, creating great places, mitigating the impact of climate change, addressing fuel poverty and creating a new housing led economic catalyst.
- 4.4 To contribute towards the Welsh Government target of delivering 20,000 affordable low carbon homes by 2026.
- 4.5 To mitigate the impact of climate change and meet the Council's commitments contained in its Decarbonisation Strategy.

## **5. THE REPORT**

- 5.1 In September 2018, Cabinet approved the recommendations contained within a report entitled Remodelling and Reclassification of Older Persons Accommodation. The report set out the future of older persons' accommodation within the county borough and noted that Waunfawr House (Crosskeys), St Mary's Court (Risca) and Castle Court (Crosskeys) would be decommissioned and that they would not benefit from WHQS improvements.
- 5.2 The costs of remodelling the schemes were deemed to be prohibitive and as a result, the report noted that consideration could be given to developing a new build replacement sheltered housing scheme on an alternative identified site in the same locality e.g. Ty Darran. Such a scheme was considered to be a good long-term investment as it would provide a modern facility meeting the aspirations of current and future tenants. It would incorporate appropriate accommodation and accessibility standards with up-to-date technology and also be designed to provide flexibility in order to adapt to changing needs and demands. At the time it was 'anticipated this could be a joint venture with Health and Social Services to provide a community hub approach'.
- 5.3 It was also noted in the report that 'a commitment could be given to rehousing the displaced tenants to the new scheme giving them the opportunity to remain in their existing community'. At the time of the report in September 2018, there were 69 tenants that were likely to be displaced as a result of the schemes being decommissioned. There are currently 47 tenant households in the three schemes awaiting transfer to the new Ty Darran later living development.
- 5.4 In January 2020, following the establishment of a dedicated Strategy and Development team within Caerphilly Homes, Pentan Architects were appointed via the WPA to assist with the undertaking of a comprehensive feasibility study and development appraisal of the former Ty Darran care home site in order to determine a suite of design options which would indicate the likely number of homes and the layout that could be accommodated. Pentan were commissioned to undertake an initial feasibility study (RIBA stages 0-2) followed by a more detailed development appraisal which would take the project up to the submission of a planning application (RIBA stage 3).

- 5.5 At the time, the ABUHB agreed to part fund the cost of the commission on the basis that the options for the Ty Darran site and the adjacent Risca Health Centre would be explored on the basis of the two sites combined with a view to creating a collaborative residential/health hub.
- 5.6 Despite efforts on the part of both the ABUHB and Caerphilly Homes to agree a joint proposal it became apparent in March 2021 that the two organisations were working to different service configuration timelines and priorities. As a result, it was agreed that Caerphilly Homes would explore with Pentan Architects the development options in relation to the former Ty Darran care home site only.
- 5.7 By March 2021, Pentan Architects had undertaken a substantial amount of work to identify the constraints on the site and had determined that because of the existing culvert running along the north eastern boundary, the major sewer running through the site, and the existing flood zone in the south east corner of the site, 40% of the potential developable area was undevelopable.
- 5.8 These constraints have impacted upon the number of homes that can be accommodated within a new development and have influenced the evolving layout and emerging SuDS strategy.
- 5.9 At the outset of the project, Caerphilly Homes were very clear in relation to their ambitions for the re-development of the site and mandated in the contract awarded to Pentan the following:
- A flagship, later living development (60+ although there could be exceptions to this on medical grounds) which would set the standard for future provision of older person's accommodation.
  - Minimum of 40 homes.
  - Apartments should exceed minimum space standards and offer flexible accommodation to accommodate working from home, overnight stays, hobbies etc.
  - The buildings should utilise MMC (Modern Methods of Construction) and a fabric first approach to achieve net zero carbon.
  - Take into account and facilitate independent living and cohesion with the existing community.
  - Include bright and spacious communal areas that will also encourage use by the local community and intergenerational activities.
  - Include space that is flexible enough to accommodate community events and additional services that could be provided (i.e. a community café, drop-in surgeries etc).
  - High quality, accessible outdoor amenity space and communal allotments.
  - Adequate parking, ease of access and accessibility taking into consideration Lifetime Homes' principles.
- 5.10 The design of the buildings and surrounding environment will be unlike any similar provision offered within the county borough. The scheme has evolved to consider all of the above and has been designed to set the standard and the ambition for Caerphilly Homes' later living accommodation in the borough.
- 5.11 The site currently falls within the Council's General Fund and will need to be appropriated to the HRA. Caerphilly Homes are seeking Social Housing Grant (SHG) from Welsh Government to part fund the acquisition. In order to claim SHG for this

purpose, outline planning approval has to be secured and a valuation by the District Valuer received and agreed by the end of March 2022.

- 5.12 Outline planning permission (with landscape, appearance and scale reserved) was submitted on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and a response to the application is expected shortly. Planning Committee is scheduled for the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2022.
- 5.13 The District Valuer is in the process of undertaking a valuation of the site and the outcome is expected by early February 2022.

### **Conclusion**

- 5.14 There are a number of critical timeline issues directly impacting upon Caerphilly Homes' ability to move this site forward and to draw down SHG.
- 5.15 The SHG is for acquisition funding and has to be drawn down by 31 March 2022. It will part fund the appropriation of the site from the General Fund to the HRA.
- 5.16 To meet the 31 March 2022 deadline, Caerphilly Homes require receipt of the valuation undertaken by the District Valuer (expected early February), a Cabinet approval to appropriate the site and outline planning permission.
- 5.17 It is important to note that the application for outline planning permission with matters reserved means that the design, access and place making aspects of the scheme are all 'reserved' for later determination and have yet to be finalised. There is still flexibility to discuss options relating to the scheme before the proposals are finalised and the reserved matters submitted in early summer 2022. Caerphilly Homes intends to engage potential residents in an initial discussion in the first instance shortly.
- 5.18 Cabinet is scheduled for the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022. Hence, the timelines for receipt of the valuation and the decision from the Local Planning Authority are extremely tight.
- 5.19 Pending approval, Caerphilly Homes intend to work closely with colleagues in Procurement to extend the contract with Pentan Architectural Consultancy; determine a construction procurement route and explore with specialists the technological and material options available to develop a net zero carbon, non-combustible, flagship, care ready, later living development.

## **6. ASSUMPTIONS**

- 6.1 There are a number of assumptions that are pertinent to the report:
  - 1) That outline planning permission will be secured.
  - 2) The valuation from the District Valuer will be received early February.
  - 3) The deadline and conditions for SHG drawn down will be met.

## **7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 To be completed when the detailed report is brought forward together with the cost plan in summer 2022.

## **8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The redevelopment of Ty Darran is included within the HRA business plan and also the Programme Development Plan (PDP) prepared by the Council, which identifies SHG allocations for both the Council and housing associations. The appropriation of the site from the General Fund to the HRA is identified for 21/22 in the PDP as acquisition funding.
- 8.2 SHG funding is also indicatively identified in the PDP for the construction phase but is subject to change pending determination of a construction method and a detailed cost plan.

## **9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There are no personnel implications arising from the report.

## **10. CONSULTATIONS**

- 10.1 Comments received as a result of consultation are reflected in the report.
- 10.2 Comments received from ward members are included in Appendix 1.

## **11. STATUTORY POWER**

- 11.1 Local Government Act 1972, Housing Wales Act 2014

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Consultation

Chris Boardman, Development Manager

Mark Noakes, Development Manager

Mark Jennings, Principal Housing Strategy Officer

Lesley Allen, Principal Group Accountant (Housing)

## **Appendix 1 – Comments from Risca West Ward Members**

Comments have been received from Risca West ward members who are both supportive of the re-development of the former Ty Darran care home site by Caerphilly Homes for later living accommodation.

Members have requested that the design is sympathetic to the surrounding area and that access to and from the site is considered.

Members raised concerns with regard to the timescales that have to be met to draw down SHG.

A query was raised as to whether ward members can be involved in the procurement of the construction partner. The ward member has been advised that the Strategy & Development Team will be guided by advice from Procurement and Legal colleagues.

Ward members have requested that they are regularly appraised of progress.