



CAERPHILLY HOMES TASK GROUP – 3RD JULY 2014

SUBJECT: DISPOSAL OF HRA LAND ADJACENT TO FORMER GREENHILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

REPORT BY: INTERIM CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The report is seeking the views of Members prior to its presentation to Cabinet on proposals to declare the land (outlined in red on the attached plan) adjoining the former Greenhill Primary School site (outlined in blue on the plan) surplus to operational requirements.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 This report has been submitted to inform Members of the Caerphilly Homes Task Group of proposals to declare a parcel of HRA land as surplus to requirements so it can be utilised to support the Council's Local Development Plan for the provision of new housing.
- 2.2 The parcel of HRA land adjoins the former Greenhill Primary School site, which has been offered to United Welsh Housing Association for the purpose of developing new housing. Our Planning Department has advised on the benefits of incorporating this parcel of land into the development.
- 2.3 The site is identified in the Local Development Plan for Housing (HG1.37). The site will be determined in accordance with the relevant policies contained within the adopted Local Development Plan.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 The contents of this report link to the following key strategic objectives:-

“To meet housing requirements through the provision of a range of good quality, affordable housing options.” (*Aim 5: Affordable Housing – Local Housing Strategy*)

“To provide good quality, well-managed homes in communities where people want to live, and offer people housing choices which meet their needs and aspirations.” (*Aim 6: Housing Management - Local Housing Strategy*)

“To promote sustainable and mixed communities that are located in safe and attractive environments.” (*Aim 11: Community Regeneration - Local Housing Strategy*)

There is a need to increase the number of affordable homes for purchase or rent (*Improving Lives and Communities – Homes in Wales – April 2010*)

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Cabinet approved a report seeking the disposal of the former school site to United Welsh Housing Association at its meeting on 15th September 2009. The new Greenhill School in Gelligaer was completed on 9th May 2011. Discussions are currently underway with United Welsh Housing Association for the development of an affordable housing scheme.
- 4.2 As part of pre-application discussions on the former school site, Planning has recently advised that consideration should be given to the incorporation of the HRA site adjacent to the former school (outlined in red on the plan). This site is approximately 0.27 hectares and is identified in the Local Development Plan for Housing (HG1.37).
- 4.3 The current rear lane access to this parcel of land is unlikely to be suitable to serve a separate residential development and therefore the site can only be accessed through the adjoining former school area. Therefore, this parcel of land should be developed as part of the adjoining development in accordance with Policy CW15 of the LDP, which states *“development proposals will not be permitted if they prejudice the implementation of wider comprehensive re-development or constrain the development of any adjacent site for its allocated land use”*.
- 4.4 Property is normally sold on the open market but there are cases when this is not practicable, such as this one where it is evident that the property can, realistically, only be sold to a single party (for the reason given above). In such cases, under the Council's approved Protocol for Disposal of Property, the Head of Performance & Property Services can, in consultation with the Acting Director of Corporate Services and the appropriate Cabinet Member, decide not to invite competitive bids.
- 4.5 There are, under that Protocol, consultation procedures to be undertaken by Corporate Property Services prior to such a decision being taken. The initial step is that appropriate internal consultation will take place.
- 4.6 Following consultation within Caerphilly Homes, officers are content that the site is surplus to operational requirements. There is an ongoing review of all HRA land. This is a major undertaking, which is being addressed on an estate basis. The intention is to develop a set of recommendations in consultation with residents for the rationalisation and future use of the land assets. This will link to the environmental programme that is part of WHQS. However, in the interim decisions will continue to be made on individual parcels of land when opportunities arise. The land identified in this report is considered to have residential potential and one objective of the HRA land assets review is to identify sites to increase housing provision
- 4.7 The site is identified in the Local Development Plan for Housing (HG1.37). The site will be determined in accordance with the relevant policies contained within the adopted Local Development Plan.
- 4.8 Ward Members have been consulted on this proposal, and one has raised concerns about the loss of this open space that has been used by local children as a recreational area for many years; In line with standard procedures, two Public Open Space notices were placed onsite, and in the local press on the 9th and 15th April 2014 regarding the proposed disposal of HRA land outlined in red on the plan. The closing date for receipt of objections was the 25th April and three letters of objection were received which supported the concerns of the local ward member.
- 4.9 Any future development of this site would need to take into account policies, CW7 and CW10 of the LDP.
- 4.10 Policy CW7 states that:

Proposals for development on areas of open space within settlements will only be permitted where:

- A The amount of open space remaining in the neighbourhood would still be adequate to serve local needs
- B The site has no significant value as a recreational resource or an area of visual amenity

Policy CW10 of the LDP states that

All new housing sites capable of accommodating 10 or more dwellings or exceeding 0.3ha in gross site area will be required to make adequate provision for:

- A Well-designed useable open space as an integral part of the development;

And

- B Appropriate formal children's play facilities either on or off site and
- C Adequate outdoor sport provision either on or off site,

To meet the needs of the residents of the proposed development.

- 4.11 The loss of public open space was taken into consideration when the site was identified for residential development in the LDP. Officers are confident that there is sufficient public open space in the Gelligaer area. A plan outlining the levels of public open space in an around the proposed development site is provided (Appendix 2)
- 4.12 The guidance to the General Consents, recommends that a Council's External Auditor be consulted before seeking to rely on the legislation. Consultation has taken place with Pricewaterhousecoopers (PwC). PwC does not have any objections to the disposal.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 An EqlA screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's Equalities Consultation and Monitoring Guidance and no potential for unlawful discrimination and for low level or minor negative impact have been identified, therefore a full EqlA has not been carried out.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The disposal will produce a capital receipt that will be used to support the WHQS programme.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no personnel issues arising out of this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 Other than those noted in the report, there are no views expressed as a result of consultation that differ from the recommendation.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the site is declared surplus to requirements of the HRA.

- 9.2 That the Head of Performance & Property determine the terms of disposal pursuant to the approved Protocol.
- 9.3 The report is submitted to full Cabinet for approval.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To maximise the capital receipt generated from the sale and to deliver affordable housing in an area of housing pressure.
- 10.2 To deliver a receipt to be used for the benefit of the Council's WHQS Programme.
- 10.3 Paragraph 8.1(iii) of the Disposal Procedure in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution states that the Head of Performance & Property Services can, in consultation with the Director of Corporate Services and the appropriate Cabinet Member, decide not to invite competitive bids in those cases where it is evident that a property can, realistically, only be sold to a single party.

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 The enabling Statutory Power for this decision is the Housing Act 1985. The power is the responsibility of Cabinet.
- 11.2 Local Government Act 1988: "GENERAL CONSENTS A & B FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY ASSISTANCE FOR PRIVATELY LET HOUSING 2004"

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	Cllr Wynne David	-	Local Ward Member – St. Cattwg
	Cllr Hefin David	-	Local Ward Member – St. Cattwg
	Cllr Graham Hughes	-	Local Ward Member – St. Cattwg
	Stuart Rosser	-	Interim Chief Executive
	Shaun Couzens	-	Chief Housing Officer
	Phil Davy	-	Head of Programmes
	Nicole Scammell	-	Acting Director of Corporate Services
	Gail Williams	-	Head of Legal & Democratic Services (Interim)
	Colin Jones	-	Head of Performance & Property Services
	Graham North	-	Public Sector Housing Manager
	Pauline Elliott	-	Head of Regeneration and Planning
	Tim Stephens	-	Development Control Manager
	Rhian Kyte	-	Team Leader Strategic and Development Planning
	Lesley Allen	-	Principal Accountant
	Kenyon Williams	-	Private Sector Housing Manager
	PwC	-	External Auditors

Background Papers:
Local Development Plan

Appendices:
Appendix 1 of 2 Plan of HRA Land (outlined in red) and development site (outlined in blue)
Appendix 2 of 2 Plan identifying the levels of public open space