

Meeting: Housing Committee
Policy and Resources
Council

Date: 22 March 2007
29 March 2007
12 July 2007

Report of: Director of Housing & City Support

Subject: Disposal of Uneconomic to Repair Garages and vacant land to a Registered Social Landlord

Ward(s) affected: North Portslade, Hangleton & Knoll, Moulescoomb & Bevendean, Hollingbury & Stanmer, Hanover & Elm Grove

1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1 To seek authority for the disposal of council owned garages and vacant land at Plumpton Road, Natal Road, Hardwick Road, Mountfields and Flint Close to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) to provide affordable housing following demolition of the existing buildings as appropriate.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Housing Committee recommend to Policy & Resources Committee disposal of garages and land at Plumpton Road, Natal Road, Hardwick Road, Mountfields and Flint Close to an RSL to provide new affordable housing.
- 2.2 That Housing Committee recommend Policy & Resources Committee approve the capital receipt be used for the Council's enabling role for the provision of affordable housing.
- 2.3 That Housing Committee recommend Policy & Resources Committee increase the Capital programme by £500,000 accordingly.

3. Information / Background

- 3.1 A report was prepared for Housing Management Sub Committee 29 November 2005 setting out the Council's options:
- To undertake such works as are necessary to repair the garages and surrounding area, at an estimated cost of £44,900. (2005 figure)
 - To demolish the garages and develop the site for affordable housing, subject to the necessary consents, delivering approximately 12 units of affordable housing for the city.
- 3.2 This meeting was cancelled and the report not considered. Subsequently at its meeting 17th January 2006 Housing Management Sub Committee agreed the report on sale of land and related assets owned by the Housing Revenue Account agreeing not to dispose of any assets or land until the outcome of the ballot on stock transfer was known.
- 3.3 Downland HA has an allocation of £548, 950 Social Housing Grant for these sites but all were put on hold pending the outcome of the ballot.
- 3.4 Downland could not now achieve the required start on site for these schemes to remain in their current programme however they are willing, subject to the outcome at Committee, to commit to re-bidding for grant either at the next bid round or as an in-year bid, and to forward fund these schemes if approved.
- 3.5 The proposed development of these sites would deliver a mix of bungalows and family sized houses, at Flint Close 2x2 bed houses, 1x2 bed disabled adapted bungalow, Hardwick Road 4x2 bed houses including 1x2 bed disabled adapted house, Natal Road 1x 1 bed bungalow, Plumpton Road 2x2 bed houses, Mountfields Road 2x3 bed houses. All the homes will be built to lifetime homes standard.
- 3.6 As they stand these sites continue to be a source of blight on local neighbourhoods and have become magnets for anti-social behaviour, flytipping and vandalism.

4. Further Information

Flint Close (North Portslade Ward)

- 4.1 17 out of 28 garages are let at Flint Close, the remaining 11 are hard to let. There have been no formal discussions about the potential closure of this site with licencees to date however if the recommendation to dispose is approved the Council would serve notice and would seek to offer an alternative garage nearby. There are ongoing problems with vandalism and misuse. The area is unsightly with potholes between the garages. There is not much demand for the garages and therefore we lose money on garages we are unable to let.

Hardwick Road (Hangleton Ward)

- 4.2 The 23 garages at Hardwick Road are all empty and cause serious management problems. A source of vandalism, anti social behaviour and regular fly tipping, they are considered to be a liability rather than resource.

Natal Road (Moulescoomb & Bevendean Ward)

- 4.3 The 4 garages at Natal Road are all empty and boarded up. It has not been possible to let the garages in their current condition as major repairs are necessary. There are high levels of anti social behaviour. In a recent incident 80 tyres were dumped at Natal Road costing £320 to remove.

Plumpton Road (Hanover & Elm Grove Ward)

- 4.4 The unused housing land at Plumpton Road is essentially a piece of waste ground behind locked gates.

Mountfields (access from Hinton Close, Hollingbury Ward)

- 4.5 The small plot of housing land at Mountfields is attracting antisocial behaviour and associated costs.
- 4.6 In February the Anti-Social Behaviour Housing Officer, Community Warden and police inspected the site because of a number of problems including fly tipping, children getting into the electricity substation, and the quantity of glass presenting a significant risk for the children. Officers have real concerns that with the summer approaching there will an increase in

children playing on the site, rubbish cleared accumulates again, a more long term solution is required

4.12 Photographs of the sites are available

5. Financial Implications

5.1 In 2005 consultants advised that the cost of bringing the existing garages up to a useable standard would be £44,900. The loss of rental income collected on the garages was estimated at £21,833 per annum.

5.2 In 2005 it was estimated that the value of these sites if sold to an RSL for affordable housing would be in the region of £500,000.

5.3 100% of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital receipts can be used for housing purposes, either for the provision of new affordable housing or for the improvement of housing stock to help meet the decent homes standard. If the receipt were not used for housing purposes then only 50% (£250,000) would be available for use by the authority, with the remainder going back to Central Government under the new pooling arrangements

5.4 A request has been made for the valuation to be updated to reflect market movements and the development potential.

6. Consultation

6.1 Ward Councillors and local Residents' Association Chairs were consulted on the outline proposal prior to the report drafted in 2005 and were broadly positive welcoming the fact that there would be more consultation at the point plans were drawn up.

6.2 Ward Councillors were further contacted in the week beginning 5 March 2007 and were broadly supportive of the proposal to take this report forward.

6.3 Local communities will be fully consulted on the details of any proposed development as part of the Planning Application and approval process.

Meeting/Date	Housing Committee 22nd March 2007 Policy and Resources 29th March 2007 Council 26 April 2007	
Report of	Director of Housing & City Support	
Subject	Disposal of uneconomic to repair garages & vacant land to a Registered Social Landlord for the Provision of affordable housing	
Wards affected	North Portslade, Hangleton & Knoll, Moulescoomb & Bevendean, Hollingbury & Stanmer, Hanover & Elm Grove	
Financial implications		
Financial implications are set out within the report. The disposal of the site to an RSL will realise a capital receipt estimated to be £500,000. 100% of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital receipts can be used for the provision of new affordable housing or towards improving the housing stock to help meet decent homes standard. If the receipt were not used for this purpose, only 50% (250,000) would be available for use by the authority, with the remainder going back to central government under the new pooling arrangements. <i>Finance Officer consulted: ...Monica Brooks Date ..13th March 2007</i>		
Legal implications		
No land held for housing purposes can be disposed of without the consent of the Secretary of State. (Section 32 Housing Act 1985). According to the Council's constitution, authorisation for the disposal of any land held by the Council requires the approval of Policy and Resources Committee. However, any proposal for the transfer of housing land, which requires the consent of the Secretary of State, must be referred to full Council with recommendations. A number of the garages referred to in the report are currently let. The agreements authorising their use constitute property for the purposes of Article 1 of the First Protocol of the European Convention on Human Rights. This article provides that no one shall be deprived of his possessions except in the public interest and in accordance with the law. It is considered that the public interest in redeveloping these sites outweighs the individual users' rights. <i>Lawyer consulted: Liz Woodley Date 13 March 2007</i>		
Corporate/Citywide implications	Risk assessment	
These proposals support the priorities of the Council by developing new units of affordable housing and improving the environment for local people.	Many of the garages are in poor disrepair and are hard to let.	
Sustainability implications	Equalities implications	
It is clear that the existing garages cannot be refurbished at a reasonable cost. Demolition of the garages by an RSL will allow for the redevelopment of much needed affordable housing to which the council will receive 100% nomination rights	In the event that these garages are demolished and the site is redeveloped, it will be possible to discuss how best the new homes could be tailored to meet the current housing need in the city	

Implications for the prevention of crime and disorder

Many of the garages are a magnet for vandalism and anti social behaviour with regular fly tipping incurring additional costs. Redevelopment will make this a safer place

Background papers

1. Disposal of Uneconomic to Repair Garages and vacant land to a Registered Social Landlord 29 November 2005
2. Sale of land and related assets owned by the Housing Revenue Account 17 January 2006

Contact Officer

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