

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Agenda Item**

**Date:** 14 July 2016

**12**

**Title:** Development Site – Sheds Lane, Saffron Walden

**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Julie Redfern

Key decision: **Yes**

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## Summary

1. This report provides detail relating to the proposed development of two garage sites at Sheds Lane, Saffron Walden.
2. The sites have been identified as having potential for the development of council owned homes, as part of the council's on-going development programme.
3. The Housing Board considered options for the sites at its meeting 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016 and recommends to Cabinet that the sites are progressed through the planning application stage

## Recommendations

4. It is recommended that Cabinet:
  - a. Authorises the sites at Sheds Lane to be progressed through the planning application stage
  - b. Notes the design options considered by the Housing Board for these sites

## Financial Implications

5. Financial provision for the development of new Council owned homes is included within the Housing Revenue Account. The development of these sites will also enable the use of Right to Buy capital receipts.
6. The Indicative cost for the schemes has been calculated by our consultant Quantity Surveyor having regard to site constraints and the prevailing market conditions. These indicative costs should be regarded as an estimate at this stage, and could be subject to change as further survey work is carried out, and the detailed designs are finalised. The final cost will only be known following the tender process for the selection of a building contractor.

## Background Papers

7. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

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Communication/Consultation	Existing tenants, local residents, Town Council and external agencies
Community Safety	Appropriate precautions would be taken during works
Equalities	Equality and diversity is a key issue for the Council with regards to housing provision
Health and Safety	During the management of the project all risks will be constantly reviewed, revised and managed
Human Rights/Legal Implications	Legal team have been consulted
Sustainability	An opportunity to construct new thermally efficient homes for people in housing need.
Ward-specific impacts	Saffron Walden
Workforce/Workplace	There are sufficient resources in the housing team to manage the project

## Situation

9. The sites are made up of two separate garage areas located on Sheds Lane in Saffron Walden. The land is currently used as parking courts comprising 50 garages in total which are constructed with concrete bases, concrete panel walls and a corrugated asbestos roof. However many are in a poor condition and at the time of starting this process, 12 of the garages were not in use.
10. Of the 38 garages in use, 24 were rented by owner-occupiers, with 14 rented by Council tenants. Garages of this age are generally too small for modern cars, and as such the majority of the usage was for storage. Notice to Quit has been served on all of the tenants, and alternative garages have been offered to those who want them.
11. The sites have excellent access directly onto Sheds Lane.
12. Saunders Boston architects have been appointed to undertake sketch schemes for the sites. For the Northern site (site B on the attached plan), they are proposing 2 x 2 bedroom 4 person houses. For the Southern site (site A on the attached plan), they are proposing 3 bedroom 5 person fully wheelchair compliant bungalow. Indicative unit type layouts are also attached to this report.

13. The 3 bedroom wheelchair compliant bungalow is being proposed to meet the specific needs of a particular family, where it is not possible to adapt their Council home to meet their needs, both now and for the future.
14. A Planning Pre-Application has been made and a favourable response received. The key issues that need to be considered are access, overlooking of adjacent dwellings and the loss of car parking. This will all be dealt with as part of the Design and Access Statement.
15. Topographical, Asbestos and Ecology surveys have already been undertaken. Services enquiries have also been made. Ground condition, demolition and structural surveys are due to be undertaken, along with a drainage strategy.
16. The construction costs for this development have been estimated at **£518,000 (£173,000 per dwelling)**. Whilst this sum does appear higher than expected, given the 'Abnormal Costs' attributed to this scheme, it is not perceived to be unreasonable. If the abnormal costs are stripped out, the estimate falls to **£464,000 or £155,000 per dwelling**, which does not seem unreasonable under current market conditions.
17. The abnormal costs include the track hoist (including addition joists) and carport to the bungalow, demolition of the garages, breaking out of the whole concrete slab and additional works to the access "bell mouths". A 10% contingency has also been included because of the early stage of this scheme. The estimate will therefore be updated as more detailed information is available, and the designs developed in more detail.

## Risk Analysis

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Not achieving planning permission	1 Planners supportive	4 Development not possible	Pre-planning discussions with planners
Underground services identified	2 Investigations to be carried out	3 Diversions possible but cost implications	Investigations to be undertaken at the earliest stage
Further "abnormal costs" identified.	2. Surveys being undertaken	3 Potential cost implications	Contingency already included with cost estimate

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.