

Committee: Community Committee

Agenda Item

Date: September 6th 2007

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Title: Housing Policy – Land at Ashdon

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Planning Policy Manager, 01799 510543

Item for decision

Summary

1. This report asks Members of the Committee to make a decision on a Council owned piece of land at Ashdon.

Recommendations

2. That the land is leased to the Parish Council for 10 years with a break clause after 5 years and then every year after this.
3. That the land be used as open space for free play.

Background Papers

4. 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:
 - (a) Letters from Ashdon Parish Council to Suzanna Clarke
 - (b) Officer correspondence to Parish Council

Impact

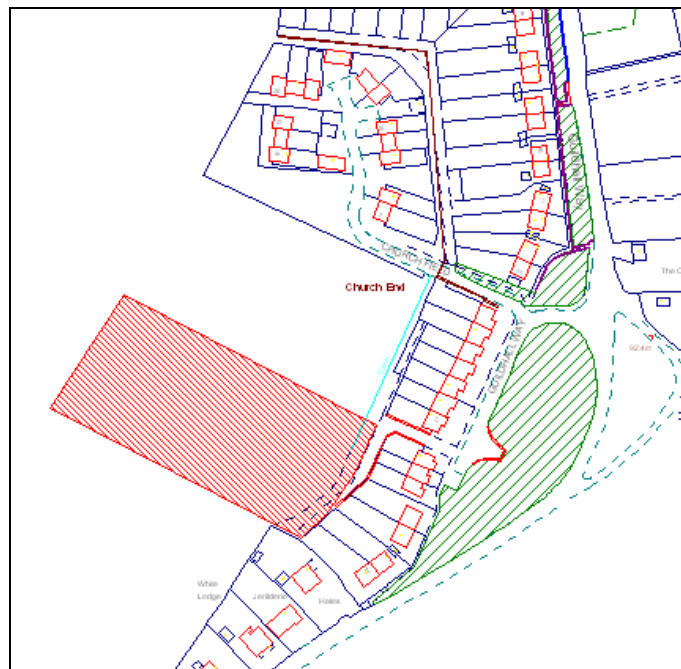
5.

Communication/Consultation	Consultation with Ashdon Parish Council
Community Safety	None
Equalities	N/A
Finance	The land concerned is a Council asset
Human Rights	N/A
Legal implications	Required relating to land issues
Sustainability	None

Ward-specific impacts	Impact on the village of Ashdon
Workforce/Workplace	No impact

Situation

6. Officers were approached by Ashdon Parish Council in September 2006 requesting that a piece of land owned by Uttlesford District Council could be leased for play space. The land is approximately 6000m sq as hatched on the plan below.



7. The Parish Council put forward a proposal that the land be leased from the Council and used for the provision of a football pitch, tennis court/s and netball hoops. It was requested that the land be leased for a 50 year period.
8. This proposal was put before Community Committee in March 2007 and Councillors asked that the Parish Council and Officers met to further discuss this proposal and bring a further report before Committee before the end of the year.
9. Officers have since met with a representative from the Parish Council and Cllr Chamberlain to further discuss this proposal and also held a site meeting to look at the land and access issues.

10. It was agreed that Officers would bring a proposal back to the Parish Council about the length of lease thought possible and then the Parish Council would then put a proposal to the Committee.
11. Officers would like to propose that the land is leased to the Parish Council for 10 years with a break clause after 5 years and then every year after this. A Housing Needs Survey would have to be carried out before the land can be taken back by the District Council for the development of affordable housing.
12. The Parish Council proposal is attached.

Risk Analysis

13.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Land is required for affordable housing before the 5 years is complete	Low	Low	A discussion would be had with the parish council to discuss the situation, a housing needs survey would be carried out and back ground works completed.

ASHDON PARISH COUNCIL LEASE REQUEST

Context of request:

Ashdon has produced its parish plan this year. It has recently been adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by Uttlesford. One of the key issues that has come out in the plan is the lack of recreational space for children of all ages and also adults, especially at the top end of the village where there has been large scale development of affordable housing over the last seven years. The parish council are currently in the process of taking over responsibility for the small green within the development and are applying for grants to add to the seed monies that Ashdon Parish Council has provided in order to fund the provision of play equipment for younger children so that they can play in a safe, fenced environment whilst being monitored from the surrounding houses.

However, there is no space near to the housing with the largest concentration of children for them to kick balls around and generally let off steam. Therefore Ashdon Parish Council has approached UDC to request that they be allowed to lease the land adjacent to the development still owned by Uttlesford for use as recreational space. A recent survey among the householders in Guildhall Way, Walden Road and Churchfields/All Saints Close gave wide support to the use of the land for that purpose.

Ashdon Parish Council would like to use the land to provide a general recreation area in which older children can let off steam and play football and netball. We would intend to provide two goalposts and a netball/basketball hoop. There will be no lighting, and no formal games or supporting structures.

Issues:

Access

There is potential access for pedestrians through the All Saints development either by providing a footpath access from the visitor parking spaces or by walking through the paved area. Residents have been consulted via the Residents Association and no objections have been raised to date. Access for cutting and management of the area would be via the field entrance.

Parking

We do not anticipate a great need for parking as the purpose of using this area of land is that it is less than two minutes walk from over 95 properties, although we would see the visitor parking spaces as being of possible use. There is also larger scale parking available within three minutes walk at the Fallowden Lane car park.

Potential need

Ashdon has taken a high level of affordable housing over the last fifteen to twenty years, and we are now in the position of having 46 out of a total housing stock of 360, with an additional 35 properties still council owned within the village. 22.5% of our total housing stock is either affordable or social housing. We are unable to find anywhere in Uttlesford with a comparable percentage. The latest development was completed last May and in this context we think it very unlikely that any further affordable housing for Ashdon people will be needed within the time frame of the Local Core Strategy currently in process.

Change of use

Having consulted with UDC Planning department, if permission is granted, Ashdon Parish Council would need to apply for change of use to amenity land, which we would be happy to do.

Ashdon Parish Council proposes that:

UDC leases the land to Ashdon Parish Council for a period of not less than 10 years, with a review at five year intervals.

Any future development would need to be in response to genuine local housing need as evidenced by a housing needs survey.

Ashdon Parish Council will undertake to drain, fence and maintain the land in good condition at its own expense.

Ashdon Parish Council will not install any permanent structures on the site.

Ashdon Parish Council will apply for change of use at its own expense.

The Parish Council Proposal will:

Support LCS strategic objectives SO8 and SO24, and meet the core strategy policies DC3 and LC2.

Fulfil the need for local recreational space for older children as identified in the parish plan, and in the Play4Play report commissioned for Essex.

Improve and enhance the land until it returns to UDC at a future date.

***Gail Skillings
Chairman
20th August 2007***