

**Committee:** Community and Housing Committee

**Agenda Item**

**Date:** June 18<sup>th</sup> 2009

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**Title:** **HOUSING POLICY – GARAGE SITES  
DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

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Item for decision

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## Summary

- 1 This report asks Members of the Committee to consider the disposal of garage sites for affordable housing schemes at Newport, Wimbish and Chrishall. If these sites are used for new affordable housing it will contribute towards one of the Council's priorities.

## Recommendations

- 2 That progress is noted by the Committee.
- 3 That sites at Newport, Wimbish and Chrishall be made available for disposal to a Registered Social Landlord partner for affordable housing development subject to planning consent being obtained.
- 4 In principle, that land be handed over at nil or less than best consideration for affordable housing subject to full financial details being provided to Members in a future report which will detail the actual terms of the sale.
- 5 That members reject the request from Newport Parish Council to take over one of the sites identified for development at Frambury Lane, Newport to provide a village car park as this detracts from the council's corporate priority of providing affordable housing.

## Background Papers

- 6 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.

Reports and Minutes to:

- Community Committee 2006/08
- Housing Strategy Working Group 2005/06
- Housing Initiative Task Group 2007/09
- Consultation with Parish and Town Councils

## Impact

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|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Communication/Consultation | Consultation has taken place with the appropriate Parish Councils and Ward Members  |
| Community Safety           | Safety needs to be considered if building work goes ahead   |
| Equalities                 | Equality and diversity is a key issue for the Council with regards to housing provision   |
| Finance                    | Could bring in a capital receipt to the Council<br><br>Sale at less than best consideration for affordable housing would mean foregoing a capital receipt |
| Human Rights               | N/A   |
| Legal implications         | Required relating to land issues  |
| Sustainability             | The developments will be built to Sustainable Homes Level 3   |
| Ward-specific impacts      | Additional housing in the the villages of Newport and Chrishall and Wimbish   |
| Workforce/Workplace        | Significant project for the Housing Enabling team   |

## Situation

- 8 As the Committee will be aware the Council owns various sites throughout the district, some with Council built garages for rent and some where residents pay rent and provide their own garages.
- 9 In 2007 the Community Committee agreed some of the sites could be considered for development for potential affordable housing.
- 10 Work has been ongoing regarding sites that were identified for development or possible sale and previous sites that have been put forward for development are progressing well, with the scheme in Broomfields, Hatfield Heath due to complete in August 2009. The scheme at Coney Acre, Rickling is about to start on site and Waldgrooms, Great Dunmow will be submitted for planning in the next couple of weeks.
- 11 Due to the impact of the credit crunch a further programme to develop some of these small Council owned sites is now being sought.

- 12 There is a significant need for affordable housing in the District as evidenced by the Housing Waiting List and Housing Needs and Market Assessment, and developing further sites would contribute to meeting that need. The Committee are therefore asked to consider that sites at Newport, Wimbish and Chrishall be made available for disposal at nil or less than market value to a Registered Social Landlord partner for affordable housing development subject to planning consent being obtained. Should planning permission be obtained full financial details will be provided to Members in a future report which will detail the actual terms of the sale.

- 13 Details of the sites for consideration are as follows:

#### **Frambury Lane, Newport**

- 14 Two council owned sites in Frambury Lane have been identified. Site 1 can accommodate one large detached house and Site 2 can accommodate five bungalows, of which one can be purpose built for occupation by the disabled. A housing need has been identified for those with physical disabilities and the Council does not have the resources to fully adapt Council owned stock.
- 15 Alternative option: Officers have also recently been approached by Newport Parish Council with a request to take over the larger area of land at Frambury lane (Site 2) to use as a village car park.

#### **Pinkneys, Chrishall**

- 16 A site has been identified in Pinkneys, Chrishall which currently attracts anti social behaviour. Properties surrounding the site are Council owned and occupied by elderly residents who are concerned when young people hang around the site late at night. The site could accommodate 3 x 2 bed houses for rent.

#### **Wimbish**

- 17 The site at Tye Green, Wimbish was not chosen for redevelopment when originally presented to Committee, however a site behind the area has been identified as a potential rural exception site.
- 18 Hastoe Housing Association, one of the Council's partner Registered Social Landlords, are providers of rural housing and are currently in negotiation with the landowner of the field to the South of the garage site. If the scheme goes ahead it will provide a highly sustainable affordable housing development known as PassivHaus, which attracts high build costs.
- 19 Hastoe has requested that the Council consider allowing them access on to the potential development land through the existing garage site. Six Council owned garages would need to be demolished to allow access to the land however these will be re-provided elsewhere on the site, at Hastoe's own cost.

- 20 An architect is currently drawing up plans for the development, but because of the high build costs of this type of development Hastoe have informed Officers that to ensure the development is viable, the land would need to be provided at nil value.

### Risk Analysis

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| Risk  | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigating actions  |
|---|------------|--------|---|
| Planning permission is turned down                | 1          | 1      | Close working with Planning to ensure that a compliant scheme is submitted.                               |
| The Council will fail to meet local housing needs | 3          | 3      | The sites identified are transferred at nil at nil or less than best consideration for affordable housing |

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.