

Committee: Health and Housing
Date: 3 March 2005
Agenda Item No: 4
Title: Fees and Charges Review
Author: Diane Burrige (01799) 510580

Summary

- 1 A review of our fees and charges appropriate to this committee has been undertaken and the proposed revised charges are attached to this report.

Background

- 2 Fees and Charges have not been subject to annual review or inflationary increase and in some instances have fallen behind those of other providers.

Review of policy/structure

- 3 A benchmarking exercise has been undertaken and some opportunities for improvement in our pricing policy have been identified under the following headings.

(1.) Pest Control

To be consistent with the charging for rat and mice treatment in commercial premises a commercial rate is now proposed for wasp treatment.

(2.) Border Inspection Post

Our benchmarking exercise has shown a diverse structure of fees. Any pricing structure for this service should recoup the cost of provision and it is recommended that we move to the per consignment charge operated by East Midlands Airport. This is simpler than the weight related structure and closer reflects the evenness of the work involved.

(3.) Micro-chipping of pets

It is proposed that a new rate is established to offer this service at a lower charge to residents in receipt of means tested benefit and those aged 65 years or over. The Animal Warden is keen to take a more pro-active approach to encourage pet owners to have their pets micro-chipped. Keeping the service affordable and offering promotional events will support this aim.

Revised Fees and Charges

- 4 Benchmark data has been analysed and is shown on the attached spreadsheets. Each sheet shows our 2004/5 charges and a summary of current charges from other providers under headings of “Highest”, “Lowest” and “Average” over the benchmark range. The fees charged by Uttlesford have not been included with these ranges.

In consultation with our officers, utilising their knowledge of services a recommended fee is offered in the final column.

RECOMMENDED that,

- a) Members approve the pricing policy additions and changes.
- b) Members consider and approve the proposed fees and charges for 2005/6.

Background Papers: None.

Committee: Health and Housing
Date: 3 March 2005
Agenda Item No: 5
Title: Private Sector Housing Survey
Author: Will Cockerell (01799) 510581

Summary

- 1 This report advises Members of progress in commissioning a survey of the condition of the private sector housing stock

Background

- 2 Further to the budget progress which was approved at the full Council meeting on the 15 February 2005, £80 000 has been allocated to carry out a full Private Sector Housing Survey. At a previous meeting of the Committee it was agreed that the Committee would be provided with a progress report after the budget had been set.
- 3 Appended to this report is a draft notice that, it is proposed, will be placed in an appropriate technical journal inviting expressions of interest. The prospective tenderers will be supplied with a detailed specification which will include a requirement to present the results of the survey to Members.
- 4 This survey will be an opportunity to obtain a considerable amount of information on the condition of the private sector housing stock including unfitness levels, compliance with the decent homes standard, and thermal efficiency, and will help the Council plan policy development and inform the Housing Strategy Statement.
- 5 The survey will be conducted in accordance with the Government's Good Practice Guide on Collecting, Managing and using Housing Stock Information.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee endorses the placement of the advertisement as outlined in the report.

Background Papers: Housing Strategy Statement 2005
Papers re. Budget process 2004/05

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSE CONDITION SURVEY

Uttlesford District Council in NW Essex is looking to commission a house condition survey of the private sector housing stock and invites expressions of interest from suitably experienced organisations.

The survey is primarily intended to provide information on the levels of unfitness but we are also interested in obtaining information in relation to the decent homes standard, energy efficiency, an updated profile of the physical condition of the stock and information on tenure types.

Uttlesford is a mainly rural location with a population of approximately 70 000 and 27 500 households, over 85% of which are in the private sector.

We wish surveying work to commence during the Spring of 2005 and the report by the end of the calendar year.

If you would like to be considered or require further information please contact:
Will Cockerell, Principal EHO, Uttlesford DC, Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 4ER wcockerell@uttlesford.gov.uk, 01799 510581
The closing date for expressions of interest is the 25th March.

Committee: Health and Housing Committee

Date: 3 March 2005

Agenda Item No: 6

Title: RENT DEPOSIT SCHEME

Author: Judith Snares (01799) 510671

Summary

- 1 This report advises the Committee on the progress made to date regarding the introduction of a Rent Deposit Scheme (RDS) in Uttlesford and recommends that the Council works in partnership with King Street Housing Society to deliver this scheme.

Background

- 2 In November 2004 members agreed in principle to the setting up and funding of a Rent Deposit Scheme within Uttlesford subject to funding being available following the budget setting process for 2005. This has now been achieved and £25,000 has been made available for such a scheme.
- 3 Officers have carried out extensive research into Rent Deposit Schemes to identify a scheme that would be suitable for Uttlesford.
- 4 The research has shown, that within present staffing resources, it would not be practical for the Council on its own to run a RDS. However it would be feasible to run a scheme working in partnership with an agency already experienced in running such schemes with neighbouring Authorities.
- 5 Following discussions and subsequent recommendations from South Cambridgeshire Council and East Cambridgeshire Council, King Street Housing Society has been identified as a suitable partner organisation for Uttlesford. It is likely that a scheme could commence in the early part of the new financial year
- 6 Appended to this report (Appendix 1) is an outline of the basic proposal from King Street on how a RDS would work within Uttlesford.
- 7 There are minor points within this document that still need to be clarified and detailed working agreements will also need to be resolved, if the Committee is minded to approve the Scheme.

- 8 The Council's Housing Support Officer will work with King Street in tailoring the scheme to the Uttlesford District, and will have ongoing input into the scheme and will carry out the necessary monitoring.

The Way Forward

- 9 As previously stated it is envisaged that the Scheme will be launched in the early part of the new financial year and discussions will take place to facilitate this.
- 10 The Council will also bid for extra resources for the Scheme from money earmarked by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for schemes aimed specifically at preventing homelessness. If successful this would enable more people to be helped by the Scheme.
- 11 If approved a report on the progress of the Rent Deposit Scheme will be submitted to Members at a future meeting.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee approves the setting up of the Rent Deposit Scheme in partnership with King Street Housing Society as outlined in the report.

Background Papers

Rent Deposit File 2004/5
Report to Committee 2004/5

KING STREET HOUSING SOCIETY – Rent Deposit Scheme Proposal

The Society has been managing rent deposit schemes and meeting targets for South Cambridgeshire District Council for two years and for East Cambridgeshire District Council for the past year.

Additionally, we have been managing Private Sector Leasing Schemes since 1991 and provide services to Cambridge City, South Cambridgeshire District and Huntingdonshire District Councils. Consequently, we are able to offer extensive experience of working with the private rented sector to meet housing need.

We propose the following Scheme in Uttlesford District in the belief that it will reward the partners' success, encourage the clients' self-determination and manage the financial and reputational risk to ensure the Scheme's growth and sustainability.

THE CLIENT

- This will be a Deposit Guarantee *Partnership* of Council, Society as Council's agent, client and landlord.
- The Council will select and nominate clients to the Scheme according to the Council's own selection criteria. The Society would expect to assist families, couples, or singles according to the Council's selection process and the capacity of the market place.
- Clients will be strongly encouraged to actively engage in the process. We will not foster the expectation that we will find the client a home and both the Council and the Society will put the onus on the client to search for their home. Supporting this approach the Society will, of course, actively engage with the private sector in a variety of ways to maximise opportunities for the client.
- The Scheme will be designed to *facilitate access* to the private rented sector. There will be initial advice and support to both client and landlord but there will be no continuation of that support once the tenancy has commenced. There will be no outreach support provided by the Society. This approach recognises budgetary constraints, the decreasing likelihood of funding through sources such as Supporting People, the importance of using what funding there is to establish tenancies and the realities of financial and reputational risk. Crucial decisions will need to be made about the suitability of clients for the Scheme. We recognise, however, that there may be opportunities to find homes for clients with greater needs with landlords who understand the issues and where other agencies provide the support.

FINANCING THE SCHEME

- Management of financial and reputational risk will be shared by the Council and the Society, in a spirit of partnership, in the interests of everyone including the clients and the landlords. The Society proposes to carry out basic credit searches and will make decisions in the interests of clients, landlords or the Council as it sees fit. We will not pass unreasonable risk onto to landlords and jeopardise the long-term future of the Scheme.
- The Council should pay for and the Society should be rewarded for success. We propose that an annual fee is paid to the Society to pay for advertising and publicity including the production of tenant and landlord guides, general Scheme administration and non-productive time spent working with clients and landlords. We propose a first year fee of £7500 plus VAT and a review of that fee on an annual basis. Additionally, the Council will pay £175.00 plus VAT for each successful placement. The Council will pay for successful placements as and when they happen and will retain some control of the budget. The Society will have greater incentive to produce results.

THE DEPOSIT

- The Council and the Society will agree a limit to the amount of deposit which can be guaranteed without recourse to the Council for consent. As a common requirement for a deposit is one and a half times the monthly rental we would suggest a figure of £950 but we will take your advice on this. When a successful placement is carried out the Society will invoice the Council for the placement fee and the full amount of deposit. The deposit will then be placed in an accumulating fund, which will always and precisely cover the Society's financial risk.
- The deposit agreement between landlord, tenant and Society will be for a year initially with the proviso that it could be extended for further years with the Council's consent. The tenant will be encouraged to save a deposit of their own over that period and the driver for that saving will be the finite term of the guarantee support. The Society will not, however, hold money for tenants.
- Administration fees charged by agents and rent in advance to landlords will only be paid with the Council's consent, as these will necessitate up front cash payments. If the Council does consent to such payments the Society will pay in the first instance to avoid delay and then recover the cost by invoice.
- The Society will provide annual performance reports and quarterly statistics in accordance with the brief which will include reports on end of tenancy settlements. It is the hope that over time a proportion of the deposit money paid into the accumulating fund will remain unspent, as landlords will not always need to claim against the guarantee or indeed only claim against part of it. This money can then be recycled paying for further placements in the future. In theory a budget, which only increases year on year in accordance with inflation, will be able to fund an increasing number of placements

because of the impact of recycling. Recycling is already happening under the South Cambs scheme.

THE TARGETS

- The Council's budget for 2005/2006 is £25,000. If we agree an annual fee of £7,500 we are left with £17,500 to fund deposits and placement fees. If we make an assumption that an average deposit will be around £800 and we agree a placement fee of £205.63 (inclusive of VAT) our first year target could realistically be between 15 and 20 placements. Recycling should produce year on year increases in the financial capacity of the Scheme providing for increasing targets. The Society is not yet, however, able to comment on the market capacity. Your advice on the above deposit assumption may alter these target figures but this is the mechanism we propose to use to set them.

MARKETING THE SCHEME

- The Society will engage with the private sector market to maximise opportunities for clients generally and to identify specific lettings opportunities. We could do this in a number of ways.
- Advertisements and articles placed in local press, newsletters etc.
- The establishment of a database of landlords to whom we can direct publicity material i.e. perhaps negotiate with Housing Benefits to enclose leaflets in their mailings.
- We will produce information guides for landlords which we can distribute at Landlord Fora, in response to general enquiries and which we can use as flyers in appropriate outlets.
- Finally, we will talk to lettings agencies to see if there is any business potential in that quarter. In Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire we now work with "Scheme friendly" agents. It is quite probable that these agents will be able to assist in Uttlesford district.
- Housing Benefit can be a deterrent, especially where agents are concerned and we would be keen to explore the possibility of fast tracking of claims with Housing Benefits if it is necessary.
- It is important to market the Scheme carefully and we would want to offer a package to landlords rather than simply rely on goodwill. Our package will include the deposit guarantee itself, the role of "honest broker", free advice, free credit checks, free tenant sourcing etc.

THE PROCESS

- The Council will select clients for inclusion in the Scheme according to its own selection criteria, which will include risk assessment. They will give the client an overview of the Scheme, issuing the Guidance booklet produced by the

Society, and emphasising that the client should ideally find a potential letting in the first instance but can contact the Society by telephone for advice on how to do this.

- The Council will email agreed details of the client to the Society who will immediately write to the client introducing itself and inviting contact by telephone for advice and/or personal contact where a potential letting has been identified.
- The Society will keep and update lists and records as appropriate providing the Council with the required statistical returns.
- Once a potential letting has been identified the Society will arrange an interview with the client. During this interview the Society will establish details of the proposed letting and make sure it is viable. We will aim to balance needs with aspirations, look at issues of affordability particularly, but not only where Housing Benefit is an issue and will use our existing links with the rent officer service to offer guidance. We will arrange for pre tenancy determination applications as necessary. The credit search will also be arranged at this point. This will also be the opportunity for the Society to contact the landlord and ensure that the landlord is aware of, and comfortable with the proposal. It also presents the opportunity to ask relevant questions about the property and its preparedness for letting and ensure that the landlord is aware of the basic requirements i.e. gas certifications, smoke detectors, condition etc.
- Once viability has been established we will agree to meet client and landlord at the property to check inventories, photographs and, if all parties are happy, to sign tenancy agreements and guarantee agreements.
- This is where the Society's initial involvement will end. The management of the tenancy and any issues arising out of it are matters for the tenant and the landlord. Tenant and landlord can take advice from the Council, or advice agencies if necessary.
- At the end of the tenancy, or preferably at the point at which notice is served by either party, the Society will be informed. If there are any issues arising all three parties will meet at the property to agree a settlement.
- If the Society has to pay against the deposit guarantee the Society cannot offer formal debt recovery action. It may be more appropriate for the Council to use its own debt recovery procedures. The client will be made aware of this at the outset. The Council may also want the Society to point out to the client that a non-recovered debt may adversely affect any future application to the Council for assistance with housing.

GENERAL

- The Society will create all the necessary forms, letters, publicity and guides and submit them to the Council for approval.

- As well as the statistical returns the Society would wish to see quarterly progress meetings with the Council.
- The Society would allocate named officers to the Scheme including a lead officer.

Nick Charlton
Housing Services Manager
King Street Housing Society

Committee: HEALTH & HOUSING
Date: 3 MARCH 2005
Agenda Item No: 7
Title: RIGHT TO BUY POLICY CHANGES
Author: Roz Millership (01799) 510516

Summary

- 1 This report informs the Committee of the key Right to Buy (RTB) provisions contained in the Housing Act 2004, and proposes necessary procedures in order for the Council to comply.

Key Points

- 2 The main changes to the RTB scheme, which took effect from 18 January 2005, are summarised as follows:
 - The qualifying period has been extended from 2 years to five years (tenancies entered into before 18th January 2005 remain unaffected by this change – in effect creating a two tier RTB system).
 - The period within which the discount must be repaid if the property is re-sold has been extended from 3 to 5 years.
 - Repayment of the discount is now at the Council's discretion and is based on a percentage of the value of the property rather than the cash discount received.
 - RTB no longer applies where there is a clear intention that the property in question will be demolished.
 - A tenant's Right to Buy can be suspended by a court order if the tenant, or a person living in or visiting the tenant's property has behaved antisocially.
 - "Deferred re-sale agreements" will now trigger the repayment of discount as soon as they are entered into.
 - Landlord's right of first refusal – RTB owners who wish to resell within 10 years must offer first refusal on their properties to the Council or an alternative social landlord nominated by the Council. This will be a charge on the property.
 - Landlords have a responsibility to advise tenants on the implications of the RTB and home ownership.
 - The Council may now serve a notice to complete after 3 months. Currently this notice cannot be served earlier than 12 months.

- The Rent to Mortgage scheme will be abolished from 18 July 2005.

Major Implications for the Council

- 3 Repayment of the discount:** Under the old provisions of the Act if the RTB purchaser disposed of the premises within three years of acquiring it they were liable to repay the discount to the Council. The amount of the repayment depended on when the disposal occurred. Under the new provisions of the Act this period has been extended to 5 years for all applications received after 18 January 2005. The Act also makes it clear that the Council now has the discretion not to demand that former tenants should repay part or all of the discount they received. It is difficult to conceive of a particular circumstance that would justify the exercise of this discretion, however, it may possibly arise at some future date on extreme compassionate grounds.
- 4** It is necessary for the Council to have arrangements in place to accommodate this new regulation. In this context it should be noted that a decision not to demand repayment would lead to a net cost to the public purse. It is suggested, therefore, that this discretion should be delegated to the Executive Manager Housing Services or the Chief Executive acting with the advice of the Executive Managers of Corporate Governance and Finance and Asset Management. Any decision will be subject to an audit trail. The consideration process should be open, fair, consistent and transparent bearing in mind that decisions may be subject to judicial review.
- 5** For information there have been 15 relevant disposals of this type which have required repayment of discount over the last 3 years. These have resulted in a capital receipt of £165,000. This figure is likely to grow because the period within which the discount must be repaid if the property is re-sold has been extended from 3 to 5 years.
- 6 Right of first refusal:** In order for the Council to be able to enforce this right a covenant will need to be inserted in the lease or transfer. RTB owners who wish to resell within 10 years must then offer first refusal on their properties to the Council or an alternative social landlord nominated by the Council. Should the Council decide to take up this right the purchase price paid would be based on the market value and agreed at the time of the offer.
- 7** As the Council has a responsibility for re-housing applicants (including the homeless) the ability to acquire back a RTB property or nominate a social landlord to do so will be of benefit where shortages of a certain type of accommodation are identified. However this new provision is only likely to have a marginal effect in curtailing the rapid growth in demand for affordable housing in the district. Even where a property on offer meets the Council's objectives, house market prices are likely to mean that in general re-purchase will be beyond the Council's reach. This is because Housing Capital receipts are earmarked well in advance.

- 8 It should be noted that currently there is no grant funding which can be used to subsidise the repurchase of properties and the Council does not now have the flexibility to be able to recycle 100% of their capital receipts from sales. This is because as from 2007/08 the Council will only retain 25% of the receipt with the balance being forwarded to the Government.
- 9 In addition timescales to exercise this right are exceptionally short (2 weeks) particularly when considering the difficulties in securing finance, therefore procedures and funding will need to be in place before the Council can take advantage of this new legislation.
- 10 If the Council decides not to exercise this right the re-sale restrictive covenant will need to be released when the property is sold on. It is felt that in such circumstances other appropriate social landlords should become involved. Accordingly this may be the correct time to embark on negotiations with interested housing associations to see if a procedure can be adopted.
- 11 **Information about the RTB:** The Council must prepare a document that contains information about the RTB and home ownership. The Secretary of State will specify some of the information to be contained in the document however the Council will have the discretion as to the detail and how the information is set out. This document must be published and sent to all secure tenants and should also be available, free of charge, to anyone asking for a copy.
- 12 The document must be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. There will be budget and staffing resource implications as this is a new area of work resulting from the Housing Act. The Committee are requested to note this requirement which will be the subject of a revised budget estimate at the half way stage of the 2005/06 financial year or be the subject of a housing virement before that date.

RECOMMENDED

- The new RTB procedures are noted.
- Discretion not to demand all or part of the discount received should be exercised by the Executive Manager of Housing Services or the Chief Executive in consultation with the Executive Managers of Corporate Governance and Finance and Asset Management.
- Officers investigate and agree, subject to satisfactory arrangements, partnership working with social landlords to enable the repurchase of appropriate RTB properties. A monitoring report on the outcome will be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.
- That a budget be identified to fulfil the Council's obligations regarding the supply of information concerning RTB and home ownership.

Background Information:- The Housing Act 2004

Committee: HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE
Date: 3 MARCH, 2005
Agenda Item No: 8
Title: HOUSING SERVICES STRUCTURE
Author: Rod Chamberlain (01799) 510508

Summary

- 1 This report advises the Committee of a proposed new structure relating mostly to the Property Services element of Housing Services and recommends its adoption.

Background

- 2 In recent years there have been a number of changes in the way the Council provides the Housing Service. However, the fundamental way the Planned Services and Ad Hoc Repairs sections operate has not been reviewed for many years.
- 3 Following extensive discussions between the Executive Manager (Housing), the Planned Services Manager and the Repairs Manager it has been concluded that the current structure is inappropriate for the delivery of first class services in the future.
- 4 Accordingly, it is now felt an appropriate time for a major review to be undertaken and the reasons for this are as follows:
 - a) The day-to-day work of the sections now significantly overlap.
 - b) Need to hit the maximum of the Decent Homes Standard by 2007.
 - c) Better working arrangements could create SMARTER working and improved customer care practices and provide better value for money.
 - d) Request received from Planned Services Manager for early retirement on the grounds of efficiency of the service.
 - e) Senior Surveyor plans to retire in December 2005.
 - f) Two vacant posts.
 - g) New regulations (electrical, heating, asbestos & legionella management) require new specialist skills in the future.
 - h) There is currently a need to employ long-term agency staff to assist with the type and volume of work carried out.
 - i) There could be opportunities to streamline the delivery of some other non-housing work.

The Changes

- 5 Appended to this report is a chart (Appendix 1) outlining the current arrangements and the proposed new changes. Also appended (Appendix 2) shows a new proposed 'family tree' for the Property Services side of the Housing Service. Other than the proposed early retirement of the Planned Services Manager (for the efficiency of the service) all existing staff within the two sections would be absorbed in the new structure. It is expected that the new structure will result in some Job Evaluation applications. It is expected that the cost to the Housing Revenue Account (taking into account new posts, deletion of some existing posts and job evaluations) should be neutral. If the current agency fees are added into the equation it is expected there will be significant savings on 'salary related' costs when the new arrangements are fully operational in early 2006. Any short term costs regarding to the proposal would fall on the Housing Revenue Account (either within existing budgets or from reserves)

Consultation

- 6 The details of these proposed changes have been carefully considered and endorsed by the Council's Executive Management Team at its meeting on 31 January. Subsequent to this the details of the proposals have been the subject of consultation with relevant staff. UNISON have been supplied with all relevant information. No significant issues have been identified that require being brought to the Committee's attention.

Planned Services Manager

- 7 Assuming the Planned Services Manager leaves the Council's service in September 2005, he will have served the Council for over 30 years. There is a separate report concerning the request of the Planned Service Manager in Part 2 of the agenda for the meeting which Members of the Committee may wish to note when considering this report.

The Way Forward

- 8 If the Committee approve the proposed changes a project plan of implementation will be prepared in consultation with interested parties. It is hoped that the new structure will be partly operational by either 1 July 2005 or 1 August 2005, headed by the current Repairs Manager, and be fully completed by January 2006. The Planned Services Manager would assist with the complex transitional arrangements.

Housing Management

- 9 It is thought that this would also be an appropriate time to merge the Housing Management & Rent Sections as often work regarding rent arrears chasing covers both sections. Currently the Rents Section consists of two officers. It is expected that this change will result in the part-time Rent /Admin. Support

Officer post (currently vacant) being deleted. Again the staff on these sections have been consulted and have raised no objections to the proposals.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee approves the proposed new structure, relating to the Housing Services as outlined in the report.

Background Papers: None.

IMPACT OF CHANGES	
Current Post	Proposed changes and notes
1) Planning Services Manager	Post to be deleted. Postholder has requested early retirement for efficiency of service.
2) Repairs Manager	To move into the post of Building Services Manager being responsible for both Planned and Ad-Hoc Repairs.
3) Senior Surveyor	Officer plans to retire December 2005. Duties will be carried out within the new Surveyors team.
4) - Surveyors x 3 (Planned Work) (Currently one post vacant) - Surveyor (Environmental Works)	Continue with 3 Surveyors but with revamped duties. One to become a Senior Surveyor. - New post of Mechanical Surveyor (to deal with new compulsory regulations relating to domestic and commercial heating installations and service contracts) - New post of Electrical Surveyor (to deal with new compulsory regulations relating to electrical installations and specific service contracts)
5) Repairs Officer x 3 (Currently one post vacant)	Continue with a team of 3 but with revamped duties. One to become a Senior Repairs Surveyor and new post of Surveyor to lead on asbestos management issues.
6) Repairs Assistants x 3 (one post job share)	One to become Senior Repairs Assistant to deal with increasing administrative work (Vacancy to be ring fenced).
7) Part-time Rent/Admin. Officer	Post to be deleted following the merging of the Housing Management & Rents Sections. New section to be headed by Housing Management Manager.

Committee: HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE
Date: 3 MARCH, 2005
Agenda Item No: 9
Title: HOUSING SERVICES – SERVICE PLAN 2005 - 2008
Author: Rod Chamberlain (01799) 510508

Summary

- 1 This report provides the Committee with the updated Service Plan for Housing Services for 2005 – 2008.

The Current Position

- 2 Earlier in the financial year the Committee received details of the draft Service Plan relating to Housing Services.
- 3 The Service Plan has now been updated for the period 2005-2008 following the recent budget process and also takes into account recent policy decisions made by the Committee.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee endorses the Housing Services Service Plan 2008 - 2008

Background Papers: Quality of Life Corporate Plan 2004 – 2005
Draft Service Plan 2005 – 2008
Service Plan 2004 – 2005

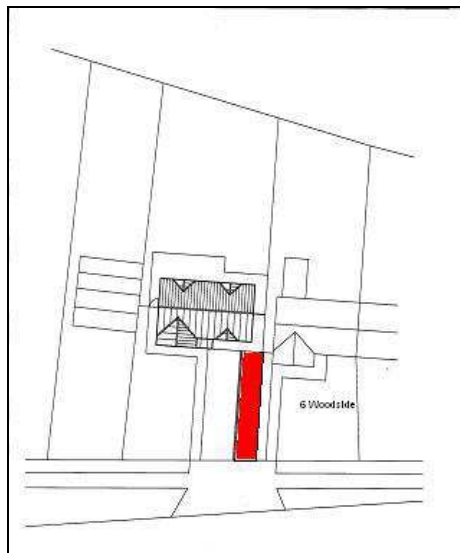
Committee: HEALTH & HOUSING
Date: 3 MARCH, 2005
Agenda Item No: 10
Title: WOODSIDE, RICKLING (VEHICULAR ACCESS)
Author: Roz Millership (01799) 510516

Summary

- 1 This report advises the Committee of a request for a review of the decision relating to vehicular access to 6 Woodside, Rickling.

Background

- 2 The Committee has received previous reports on the issue of the tenant of 6 Woodside obtaining vehicular access to his front garden. This dwelling is currently in the Right to Buy process. Previous reports have related to vehicular access via the vacant Council owned building plot adjacent to No.6. A plan of the site is shown below.



The Committee's recent decisions on this matter were as follows:

9 September, 2004 'the Committee agreed, in principle, to sell the plot of land at Woodside subject to -

- (i) the agreement of the parties in relation to access for No.6 Woodside
- (ii) at a price specified by the District Valuer and subject to terms and conditions being agreed '

6 January, 2005 'Resolved that access to 6 Woodside be arranged via the removal of the front garden hedge'.

- 3 Officers interpreted the earlier decision that if the loss of value to the vacant plot was significant this would warrant the Council, as one of the parties, not to proceed. The District Value indicated that a shared driveway would make a large difference to the value of the plot.

The Way Forward

- 4 Following the later decision of the Committee the tenant requested a further review of the situation and this has the support of one of the local Members.
- 5 Further discussions have now taken place between all the interested parties and a compromise position has been arrived at which will allow a strip of land at the front of the vacant plot being sold, at a price determined by the District Valuer, to the tenant of No.6. This will not affect the eventual access to a dwelling built on the vacant plot meaning a shared driveway can be avoided.
- 6 The District Valuer has indicated that this arrangement will not have a significant change to the value of the plot therefore any adjustment will be a factor to negotiate with the tenant at No.6 so that the Council does not lose any capital receipt.
- 7 The above proposals will be subject to the success of a fresh planning application.

RECOMMENDED that the Committee reviews the request of the tenant of No. 6 Woodside in light of further information outlined in the request.

Background Papers: Reports to Committee September, 2004, January, 2005.

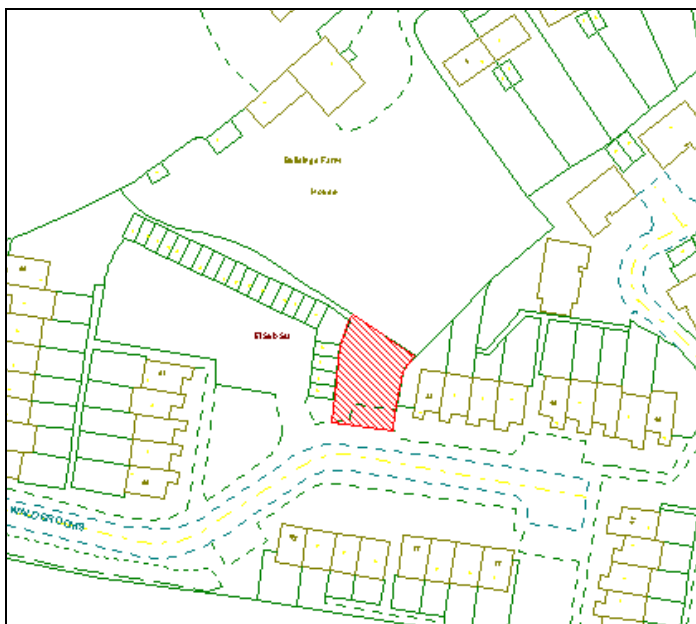
Committee: HEALTH AND HOUSING
Date: 3 March 2005
Agenda Item No: 11
Title: LAND AT WALDGROOMS, GREAT DUNMOW
Author: Roz Millership

Summary

- 1 This report advises the Committee of a request for it to sell an area of Council owned land at Waldgrooms in Great Dunmow to provide an access road to potential development land at Buildings Farm House.

Background

- 2 The Council has received a request from a developer to indicate in principle if it is prepared to enter into negotiations to sell an area of Council owned land in Waldgrooms, hatched on the plan below. The Council land is currently open greensward and extends to approximately 265m². The land would be used to provide an access road to land surrounding Buildings Farmhouse, subject to planning approval.



- 3 At present the developer is carrying out a feasibility study to ascertain if the site at Buildings Farmhouse is appropriate for potential housing. Any scheme would be subject to current planning regulations.

- 4 A planning application has not been submitted at this stage since the developer has indicated he cannot proceed without first establishing that access will be available to the site. The Council owned land is in effect now the only access to the site and the Committee is therefore being asked to indicate whether, in principle, it is prepared to enter into negotiations regarding this land. It is too early to indicate what type or numbers of units the developer has in mind for the site. The site is currently within the development limits of Great Dunmow.
- 5 Any future sale would, however, be subject to conditions should a planning application by the developer be successful. The land would not be valued until such time that planning is approved since this would have an influence on the value of the Council's land.

Recommended

That the Committee indicates whether or not it is prepared to enter into negotiations regarding the sale of the area of land in question.

Background papers

Communication from Developer - Feb 2005

