

Committee: Housing Board

Agenda Item

Date: 24 April 2014

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Title: Development Site – Ravens Crescent,
Felsted

Portfolio Holder: Doug Malins – Housing Development
Manager

Key decision: **Yes**

Summary

1. This report provides the Housing Board with a detailed development appraisal for the site at Ravens Crescent, Felsted.
2. This site has been identified as having potential for the development of Council owned homes, as part of our on-going development programme.

Recommendations

3. That the Housing Board:
 - a. Recommends to Cabinet that the site is progressed to the planning application stage, having regard to the estimated costs associated with this work.

Financial Implications

4. Financial provision for the development of new Council owned homes is included within the Housing Revenue Account.
5. The Indicative cost for this proposal has been calculated. This indicative cost will be updated as the proposal is developed towards the submission of a planning application. The final cost will be known following the tender process for the selection of a building contractor.

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.
 - Oxbury and Company Feasibility Report for the Re-Development at Ravens Crescent, Felsted – April 2014

7.

Communication/Consultation	Existing tenants, local residents, Parish Council and external agencies
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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	Felsted
Workforce/Workplace	There are sufficient resources in the housing team to manage the project

Situation

8. The site is 0.45 hectares and is located behind the properties 18 – 22 Ravens Crescent, Felsted. The site is currently used as play space, although there is no play equipment on site, and usage is minimal.
9. The site has very narrow access to the side of No's. 20 and 21 Ravens Crescent, which will be unsuitable for the proposed development. Therefore, it is proposed that the main body of the site (plots 2-14) will be accessed by the side garden of 19 Ravens Crescent, which is a home owned by Uttlesford District Council. The tenant has been approached and is willing to give up part of her garden to acquire the required access width. The tenant has requested that her boundary is reinstated with a close board fence, and that certain internal improvement works to her home are carried out as part of the development.
10. Plot 1 on the attached sketch layout (2 bedroom 4 person bungalow) is proposed for the rear garden of 18 Ravens Crescent. This Council owned property was recently void which has enabled the garden to be reduced in size to allow the construction and access to this new home.
11. The site is level and currently a well maintained grassed area. There is a mature boundary made up of trees and hedging to the South-East and South-West boundaries of the site. The proposed scheme allows for the retention of these. There is an overhead electricity pole in the proposed entrance to the site (adjacent No. 19 Ravens Crescent) that will need to be relocated. This has been allowed for in the construction cost estimate, and will be progressed with the electricity company.

12. The site is currently leased to the Parish Council as play provision. This lease expires in 2016, but in any case, the lease can be terminated by the Council on the service of 6 months written notice. At the time of writing this report, the Housing Development Manager has arranged to meet with the Parish Council on the 16th April 2014, and will verbally update Members as to the outcome of those discussions.
13. Rees Pryer architects have been appointed to provide a sketch scheme for the site to provide homes which meet Housing Quality Indicators, Lifetime Homes, Building for Life and Code for Sustainable Homes level 3, and incorporate a fabric first approach. Their proposal is attached to this report.
14. The attached sketch layout provides for a development of 14 homes comprising 1 x 2 bedroom 4 person bungalow, 4 x 1 bedroom 2 person houses, and 9 x 2 bedroom 4 person houses. The total construction cost (including all fees) is estimated to be £1,400,500.
15. The architects have contacted the planners prior to completing their sketch and have incorporated their requirements for; parking, rear garden sizes and bin collection provisions with in their proposal.
16. In order to submit a full planning application it will be necessary to appoint the designated architects to undertake the planning application, however an arbocultural survey and ecological survey will be necessary as part of this process. It will also be necessary to obtain a Site Investigation report which can be undertaken by the engineers. The conclusion of negotiations with the tenant at No 19 Ravens Crescent are also critical to the development proposals.
17. Prior to achieving planning permission for the scheme, it is intended to keep costs to a minimum. The essential costs can be summarised as follows:
- Architectural Fees £17,800.00
 - Topographical Survey £750.00
 - Engineers £3,200.00
 - Arbocultural Report £500.00
 - Ecological Survey £620.00
 - Planning Fee £5,390.00
 - **Total costs** **£28,260.00**
18. The site condition, design proposals, costs and risks have all been investigated and show that the development is viable. The build costs are at a reasonable level despite the length of the accesses, service connections and the need to relocate an electricity pole. Costs could increase further if issues are found within the ground, and it should be noted that it is likely that an Archaeological Survey will need to be undertaken prior to development.
19. Taking all aspects of the scheme into account, we believe this to be a highly deliverable development site that will provide 14 new homes for people in housing need.

Risk Analysis

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
No 19 not allowing their side garden to be used for access.	1 Tenant already been approached and is supportive	4 Unable to access site for development purposes	Negotiations with the tenant to be concluded
Parish Council not supportive due to the site being used as a play area	2 Parish Council have been approached	2 Lease can be terminated	Communication with the Parish Council to be on-going throughout the development process.
Not achieving planning permission	1 Planners supportive	4 Development not possible	Pre-planning discussions with planners

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.