

Committee: Housing Board
Date: 11 December 2020
Title: Development Update
Officer: Judith Snares, Housing Strategy and
Operations Manager

Summary

1. This report provides the Housing Board with an update on the proposed development by the HRA across the District.
2. The sites/schemes detailed in this report have been identified as having potential for the development of new council owned homes, as part of the council's on-going development programme.

Recommendations

3. That the Housing Board:

Notes the contents of this report

Financial Implications

4. 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.
5. The Indicative costs for the developments have been estimated by our consultant Quantity Surveyor. These costs are currently estimates which will be updated as further detailed information becomes available. They do, however, take account of known site constraints and prevailing market conditions. The final cost will only be known following the tender process for the selection of a building contractor.

Background Papers

6. Plan proposals for some sites have been provided with this report

7.

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	Various as detailed in report
Workforce/Workplace	There are sufficient resources in the housing team to manage the project

Situation

The Moors, Little Easton

8. Work is progressing well on this site which will deliver 8 affordable rented 2 bed houses and 8 social rented 1 bed flats. There has been a small delay because of the Covid 19 crisis but the site will now hopefully complete by the end of June 2021

Thaxted Road, Saffron Walden

9. A contractor has now been appointed after a competitive tendering process. The builders are DCH who are also building The Moors. They have started on site. This site will deliver 14 homes with a completion date of Jan 2022.

Batholomew Close, Great Chesterford

10. We have just completed the tender process to appoint a contractor and will be starting on site early in the New Year. The new contractor will be responsible for submitting a construction management plan for approval by Planning Officers. We are still awaiting Planning's response to our application to change one of the 2 bedroom bungalows on this site to a 3 bed bungalow specifically adapted to meet an identified family's needs.

Parkside, Saffron Walden

11. Tenants from this site are currently being assisted into alternative accommodation and are being provided with appropriate support and compensation to help them do so. Several are awaiting the completion of the refurbishment of Hatherley Court and will be moving there, hopefully at the beginning of the New Year. This will leave only two households still to find an alternative property. The Architects for this project have developed a scheme of 24 flats for the over 60s with a mixture of 1 and 2 bedrooms, and also including 2 wheelchair standard flats. The current budget estimate is £3.5 million, and this will be continually reviewed as our proposal for the site is firmed up. The next step is further discussions with planning and then the submission of a planning application in the New Year

Gold Close, Elsenham

12. This site is a small parking area at the above location where the proposal is to construct a 3 bedroom fully wheelchair compliant bungalow for an identified family in housing need. The bungalow has been designed in partnership with the family and their Occupational Therapist to ensure that it meets their requirements now and into the future and planning permission has now been gained. We are currently in the process of getting the detailed plans drawn up so that we can then get quotes from building firms for the construction of the property. The construction estimate is £220,000.

Auton Croft, Saffron Walden

13. This site is an area of open space in the ownership of UDC. It is accessed via the affordable housing development at Auton Croft. Architects are now ready to submit a planning application for this site. The scheme will consist of 14 dwellings, 1, 2 and 3 bedroom houses, and a 2 bedroom wheelchair compliant bungalow. The homes will be heated by Air Source Heat pumps and PV panels will be provided on the roofs where appropriate. The current estimated build cost is £2.1 million.

St Mary's Close, White Roding

14. This Council owned site is an area of disused open space on an existing Council House development. Architects have yet to be appointed to progress this site, but we estimate that it has capacity to deliver up to 12 new rented Council homes. We have established that there is a covenant from the 1930s on this piece of land in favour of the local vicar. This was to protect the Church and the Vicarage from overlooking. In the intervening years a very well established hedge now obscures both buildings from this piece of land. The council's solicitor has approached the Church Commissioners with regards to having this covenant removed. We do not expect this to be refused but it may delay further work until this matter can be resolved.

Alexia House, Great Dunmow

15. The proposal here is to demolish the existing building to provide new self-contained apartments for older people. As with Parkside, the existing tenants are being assisted in finding alternative homes and currently we only have 8 households left in the building. We have now appointed architects who will be asked to come up with proposals for this site. A budget of £2.5 million has been proposed for this scheme.

Walden Place

16. We have now consulted with residents, local Members and the Town Council on the proposals to detach the listed building from the rest of the sheltered scheme and build 3 new flats and new communal facilities. These plans are now ready to be submitted as a planning application.

Unidentified Sites

17. We continue to work with Planning colleagues on a project to identify possible development sites that can potentially deliver a further 70 to 80 council homes within the next 5 years. Planners are drawing up a shortlist of sites that have planning potential, these will then be passed to housing so that we can open up negotiations with the landowners or their agents.

Risk Analysis

18.

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.