

# Affordable Housing Development Update

**Cabinet**

**Date: 18<sup>th</sup> October 2017**

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Author: Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety  
Head of Housing Services

Wards: All

Parishes Affected: All

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## **1. Purpose and Reasons**

- 1.1 This report seeks to provide an update to Cabinet on the Affordable Housing Development Programme and to seek approval the Head of Housing Services to be authorised to use Housing Revenue Account resources to develop sites set out in the report.
- 1.2 The recommendations contribute to Pledge 7 of the Council's Vision: to build new affordable homes and Pledge 9 to develop brownfield sites as they become available.

## **2. Cabinet is recommended to:**

- 2.1 Authorise the Head of Housing Services to -
  - 2.1.1 Complete the construction of the Penhill United Reform Church site at a cost of £2,066,000, supported by grant funding from the Shared Ownership and Affordable Housing Programme 2016 – 2021.
  - 2.1.2 Complete the construction of assisted living bungalows at Linden and Bembridge Avenue at a cost of £2,030,000, supported by Department of Health grant funding of £30,000 per unit.
  - 2.1.3 Spend £340,000 additional Department of Health grant funding to further enhance the assisted living homes at Hawthorns in Gorse Hill, Linden Avenue in Pinehurst and Bembridge Close in Park North to minimise future care costs.
  - 2.1.4 Complete the decant and demolition of existing buildings on Queens Drive, and develop plans in readiness for a Planning Application at an initial cost of £2,000,000.
  - 2.1.5 Design and carry out a consultation on a potential assisted dwellings development on Council land at Ventnor Close. Early design work will cost £30,000.

## **3. Detail**

- 3.1 Developments at Sussex Place, Brookfield Highworth and Townsend House have been completed, totalling 65 units. Development is underway at Hawthorns, Royal British Legion and Cranmore Avenue, comprising a further 52 units which

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Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from James Graham, 01793 464474, [jgraham@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:jgraham@swindon.gov.uk).

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will be completed this year. This will complete the Council's development using grant funding from the Affordable Homes Programme 2015 – 2018.

## Penhill

- 3.2 Demolition of the Penhill United Reform Church was brought forward because the site had been targeted by vandals and was unsafe. Planning Permission has been granted and a successful tender awarded. The site comprises 13 units, including an existing manse house which will be refurbished. Grant funding of £30,000 per unit has been applied for from the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016 – 2021.

## Supported Living units for Adult Social Care

- 3.3 Facilitating works on 11 assisted living dwellings at Linden Avenue and Bembridge Close have begun, and grant funding of £30,000 per unit has been applied for from the Care and Support Specialised Housing fund. The total works cost is £2,030,000. This includes an additional 1 unit at Bembridge Close from previous reports.
- 3.4 It is noted that the experience of such bungalows elsewhere in the Borough is that they promote independent living and help to reduce pressure on the Adult Social Care budget. In addition, these new units could free up to 11 homes for families that are in need of accommodation, resulting in the Council making more efficient use of its stock.
- 3.5 The Council successfully bid for £340,000 from the Department of Health to further enhance the assisted living dwellings at Hawthorns, Linden Avenue and Bembridge Close. Additional features are due to be added, such as smart sensor and alarm systems to help vulnerable people live independently. This money needs to be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018 on 35 units at Hawthorns, Linden Avenue and Bembridge Close only.

## Queens Drive

- 3.6 The Queens Drive site stands out as the key element of the Council's affordable housing development programme. The site is also one of Swindon's most significant and exciting regeneration areas in recent times. It is a complex site and considerable progress has been made since the initial report to Cabinet in December 2016 (Cabinet minute 68, 2016/2017 refers). Survey work is being carried out ahead of demolition. Tenants in the 'T' blocks are moving out, and the accommodation is being used temporarily as emergency accommodation for homeless households.
- 3.7 Design work has been taking place for the Queens Drive site, given its prominence further design work has been required to meet the expectations of such a high profile redevelopment. It is anticipated that a suitable design with full

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cost detail will be brought back to Cabinet later this year, ahead of a Planning Application before the end of the financial year. 2 flats have been repurchased, and discussions with the owners of 2 more have taken place.

- 3.8 The budget requested for enabling the Queens Drive site to progress to the next stage is £2.0m. This comprises £0.64m for purchasing 4 flats, £0.56m for statutory home loss and disturbance allowances for tenants and £0.8m for demolition work, surveys, design and planning fees. This will ensure that a cleared site can be provided ready for the construction phase to begin.
- 3.9 In order to support these costs the Council successfully bid for £104,000 grant funding from the Estates Renewal Fund by the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), which contributes to some of the early costs associated with the project, such as survey works, and design fees. The HCA are also keen to support the Queens Drive project with grant funding from the Shared Ownership and Affordable Homes Programme 2016 – 2021, which if bids are successful will contribute to the capital costs of the scheme. An application for approximately £30,000 per unit grant funding will be made once planning permission has been received.

## Ventnor Close

- 3.10 Ward Members were approached in 2014 for views on potential development at Ventnor Close in Haydon Wick. Feedback in 2014 was unsupportive of a high density 2 storey development, the new proposal has taken this into account and subject to approval from Cabinet, a fresh consultation will be undertaken for a low density bungalow development retaining as much green open space as possible. There are 8 units of grant from the Department of Health available for assisted living dwellings, which would meet the brief for this consultation. Therefore, we propose to consult on a design, which if successful we can carry out surveys and more detailed design work ahead of a Planning Application. If the development is feasible, a report will be brought back to Cabinet for agreement.

## **4. Alternative Options**

- 4.1 The Council could choose to retain the existing buildings at Queens Drive and re-let them to tenants. However, this would mean forgoing an opportunity to provide modern accommodation.
- 4.2 The Council could choose not to proceed with assisted living bungalows. This could mean further pressure on already pressed Adult Social Care budgets.

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## 5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

### Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The projects listed require funding of £6,126,000, which will come from the Housing Revenue Account and will be funded by borrowing against future rents, and a total of £1,164,000 of grant funding from the Homes and Communities Agency and Department of Health.
- 5.2 Works for the projects will be tendered out in line with Council contract standing orders.

### Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.3 The Housing Department has worked within the relevant legislation to ensure that residents affected by development have been treated lawfully.

### All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.4 None

### Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 A Diversity Impact Assessment has been carried out on the Housing Development Programme, and there are no adverse implications for consideration. A copy of the DIA is available from the report author.

### Risk Management

- 5.6 A risk register has been done for each project and forms part of the standard project management approach.

## 6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Director of Finance (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

## 7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None.

## 8. Appendices

- 8.1 None

## 9. Key Decision/Decision in Cabinet Work Programme

- 9.1 This is not a Key Decision and it is on the Cabinet Work Programme for September 2017.