

## Meeting of the Executive

29 September 2016

Report of the Assistant Director of Housing and Community Safety

## New Council Homes – Newbury Avenue

### Summary

1. This report provides an update on the additional consultation carried out at the Executive's request following concerns raised by a small number of residents regarding the approved planning application to build 9 apartments at Newbury Avenue.

### Recommendations

2. Executive are asked to:
  - a) **Approve Option 1** to bring forward development of 8 new bungalows.

**Reason:** To ensure that further account of residents concerns are considered and a development scheme brought forward which meets the council's and the communities needs.

### Background

3. On the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2013, Cabinet considered a report which set out proposals to deliver a first phase of new council homes and sought approval for the council to pursue development of a number of sites within the Housing Revenue Account that would deliver between 50-70 homes. A table of sites was included which set out the proposal to redevelop Newbury Avenue (garage court) for an indicative 9 apartments.
4. Following the local elections in May 2015, a change of administration took place and at the Executive meeting on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2015, Members considered a report which sought approval to include new council housing as part of the ongoing project to demolish and replace Ordnance Lane homeless hostel.
5. The Executive Member presented the report and also drew attention to the status of the current building programme approved in May 2013. In

particular he highlighted concerns raised with him by local ward councillors in relation to the proposed new council house building on the Newbury Avenue site in Acomb. Therefore, in order to allay their concerns, Executive requested a re-examination of the proposals for the site and further consultation.

## **Consultation**

6. Following Executives request further consultation was carried out. Local residents and Ward Members were invited to a consultation event held at York & District Indoor Bowls Club, 206 invitations were sent to residents living in the vicinity of the site. Ward member (Cllr Waller) and the housing portfolio holder (Cllr Carr) attended. Drawings of the site layout and property types were available to view.
7. Seventeen people attended the event and eight left feedback on the night with three more submitting feedback by post. A petition with 24 signatures was submitted, eight signatories were from people who also submitted comments sheets. The petition was signed as being from residents who believe 'the proposed development is too large and all the extra traffic will seriously affect parking in the area, and our right to light will also be affected'.
8. A number of residents felt the area is over developed already particularly with the recent addition of the housing development on Our Lady's site. Other concerns raised include:
  - Loss of view over Hob Moor
  - Concerns about contamination
  - Loss of light
  - An out of date geotechnical survey
9. A number of people acknowledged there was a need for additional affordable housing but thought an alternative location should be found. Two respondents suggested building bungalows on the site
10. Following the public consultation a meeting was arranged to feedback to Cllr Carr (Executive Member – Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods) and Cllr Waller (Ward Councillor). Key concerns from the consultation were the level of traffic, parking and the height of the development given that it was 2.5 storeys high. It was resolved at the meeting that the site was appropriate for development, but alternative schemes should be drawn up limiting the height of any development to a maximum of 2 storeys.

## Alternative Options

11. Given that expenditure had been incurred on the original design, officers met with the architect to agree the scope of any revised sketch schemes that would consider:
  - a. How much of the detailed design could be re-used;
  - b. Whether it would be possible to reduce the height of the building but utilise the loft space for a third storey;
  - c. Whether a reduction in units from 9 to 6 would make the cost per unit still viable and value for money;
  - d. What impact there would be on the construction period and, if this period was not much reduced, then to factor that into the decision making.
12. Taking account of the above, the architects were asked to bring forward alternative proposals with a maximum height of 2 storeys. Four proposals were presented.
  - 12 x 1 bed apartments (2 person)
  - 12 x 1 bed apartments (1 person)
  - 8 x 1 bed apartments (2 person)
  - 8 x 1 bed bungalows (2 person)
13. **Alternative Scheme (1) - 12 x 1 bed (2 person) apartments** - This scheme has an arrangement of 6 x 1 bed apartments on each of two floors. A hallway divides the apartments on each floor to give access to 3 apartments on each side. The apartments are all 52sqm and intended for 2 persons. (See Annex 1 for draft site layout)
14. There are 12 car parking spaces for residents, together with 3 visitor bays onto Newbury Avenue. The layout gives a slightly larger floor plate than the approved scheme, but is no nearer to the existing 3 storey apartment adjacent to the north-east. At 8m (ridge height) the building is 1.3m lower in height than the approved development (9.3m to dormer roof).
15. The apartment block aligns with the boundary to Hob Moor, with rear elevations facing south-east. Initial feedback from Development Management Officers is that the layout is less interesting than the approved scheme.
16. There may be opportunity for the 6 ground floor apartments to be prioritised for downsizing for older persons but, with no lift, the first floor would have to be let to a wider age group.

17. **Alternative Scheme (2) - 12 x 1 bed (1 person) apartments** – The scheme is very similar to Option 1 above, differing only in apartment size (40sqm instead of 52sqm) and therefore a slightly smaller footprint. The stair cores and circulation are the same. The flats are intended for 1 person. The building height and massing is the same as for Option 1. (See Annex 2 for draft site layout)
18. As with Option 1 there are 12 resident car parking spaces together with 3 visitor parking bays.
19. There could be prioritisation for older persons' accommodation as part of the Council's downsizing programme but, with this option being smaller in size than Options 1, or the approved scheme, interest may not be high.
20. **Alternative Scheme (3) - 8 x 1 bed (2 person) apartments** – The floor plate for this scheme is smaller than options 1 and 2 above, being just 4 apartments on each floor, each with their own private access. The building height is the same as options 1 and 2, and 1.3m lower than the approved scheme. (See Annex 3 for draft site layout)
21. There are 8 resident car parking spaces and 2 visitor parking bays. The layout is linear, with the rear elevations facing south-east towards Hob Moor.
22. The apartments are all 52sqm in size (for 2 people) and, as such, could be prioritised for downsizing.
23. **Alternative Scheme (4) - 8 x 1 bed (2 person) bungalows** – The floor plate is wider, in order to incorporate all 8 bungalows, however the building is 5.5m to ridge height, and so significantly lower than Options 1, 2 and 3 and the approved 2.5 storey scheme. (See Annex 4 for draft site layout)
24. All the bungalows are 52sqm and could be prioritised for the Council's downsizing scheme. There are 8 resident car parking spaces to the rear of the bungalows, and 2 visitor parking bays.

### **The Original Scheme**

25. The original Scheme was for 9 Apartments, 8 x 2 bed & 1 x 1 bed. The properties were designed to be built over 2.5 storeys with a ridge height of 9.3m (dormer). (See Annex 5 for approved site layout)
26. The 2 bed apartments were 64sqm and the 1 bed was 57sqm. The proposal included a lift which was linked to the intention that the development would be prioritised for downsizing. There are 7 resident

parking spaces and 8 additional parking bays created for use by the wider community.

## **Summary of Build Options**

27. When comparing the schemes it has to be acknowledged that you are not comparing like for like, the number and size of the units is different. The original scheme also included a lift, wider communal landscaping and a parking scheme which provided 8 parking spaces for existing residents.
28. It also needs to be recognised that the original scheme is a fully tendered scheme and therefore there is more certainty around the cost of this scheme (notwithstanding that this needs to be adjusted for inflationary changes over the last 18 months) and the costs set out for the alternative proposals are based on Quantity Surveyor estimates. The following table therefore sets out the summary of the schemes details and cost, including adjustments for inflation.

**Table 1 – Summary of Options**

Scheme	No. of units	No. of Beds	Type of units	Size of Unit	Estimated Costs Per Unit		Unrecoverable costs associated with original scheme	Communal Landscaping / Parking	Total Estimated scheme costs
					Construction Costs	Fees / site costs @19%			
Alternative 1	12	1	Apt	52 sqm	£ 127,591	£ 24,242	£ 120,000	£ 220,000	£ 2,162,002
Alternative 2	12	1	Apt	40 sqm	£ 108,259	£ 20,569	£ 120,000	£ 220,000	£ 1,885,941
Alternative 3	8	1	Apt	52 sqm	£ 140,157	£ 26,630	£ 120,000	£ 220,000	£ 1,674,295
Alternative 4	8	1	Bung	52 sqm	£ 121,792	£ 23,140	£ 120,000	£ 220,000	£ 1,499,456
Original *	9	2	Apt	64 sqm	£ 152,072	£ 28,894		Included in construction cost	£ 1,628,686
		1	Apt	57 sqm					

\*Original tender price adjusted for inflation

## Options

29. **Option one** – To approve ‘Alternative Scheme 4’ to build 8 new (2 person) bungalows.
30. **Option two** – To instruct officers to bring forward a different alternative scheme or continue with the previously approved development scheme.

## Analysis

31. **Option one** –When considering the alternative scheme proposals, two of the four options presented would result in a total scheme cost in excess of the approved capital spend, however they deliver three more units than the original scheme. When considering the cost per unit it is difficult to have clear comparisons as the nature and size of the units are different and therefore you are not considering like for like.
32. Discussions with the Executive Member for Housing and the Ward Councillors, with whom residents raised concerns about the original scheme, has indicated that it is felt that a scheme of bungalows is the most desirable.
33. Approving this option would result in delays in bringing development forward on this site, linked to detailed design and planning approval for any new scheme when compared to the original scheme which has full planning approval and is ready to go. It should also be noted that the money spent to date on the original scheme will be unrecoverable.
34. The construction period for the alternative schemes or the original schemes would be very similar and therefore the impact of construction traffic between the alternative schemes and the original scheme is negligible.
35. The reality of significant increased residential traffic post development is that the differences in size of proposed development is unlikely to have a significant impact one way or another. The critical issue for future traffic impact is the nature of the units and the future residents. Given the proposed development of bungalows it is anticipated that whilst there will be some increase in car ownership and therefore residential traffic, it is likely to be minimal.
36. **Option Two** – The original scheme has undergone public consultation at both pre planning and planning stages and has been approved. However, whilst it has planning approval, there are clearly concerns that some residents have that led to the council re-examining the proposal and carrying out additional consultation.

37. Moving forward with the original scheme would bring development forward on this site quicker (it has full planning permission). However it would not take account of the additional concerns that a small number of residents have.

## **Council Plan**

38. The proposals link and support the priorities within the council plan.

## **Implications**

39. The implications arising from this report are:

- **Financial** – The cost of delivering the proposed scheme is less than the original approved scheme.

As part of the development of the HRA Business Plan, post self financing, the authority created a New Build Investment Fund of £20m. To date £14.7m has been spent / allocated leaving a balance of £5.3m.

The approved budget for phase one of new council house building is £10.2m, reported through capital monitoring in February 2015 (Capital Strategy report). The council's cost consultants have also advised that due to recent significant increases in build costs of up to 10% per annum there may be further increases in the tender returns for the 4 sites yet to be awarded a contract (Newbury Ave is one of the 4 sites). Once the tender returns have been received additional approval will be sought for any consequent increase in the budget. Any increase will be funded from the net balance on the HRA New Build Investment Fund.

- **Human Resources (HR)** – None
- **Equalities** – None
- **Legal** – None
- **Crime and Disorder** – None
- **Information Technology (IT)** – None
- **Property** – None



## Risk Management

40. The decision to re-examine the proposals was taken in light of a number of residents concerns over the original development. The outcome of the consultation was not conclusive in that some residents thought development of some nature was appropriate where others felt that the site should not be developed. Clearly in cases like this some residents may feel that their views have not been taken into account. However, overall the risks associated with this report are deemed to be low.

## Contact Details

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Director of Communities & Neighbourhoods

**Report  
Approved**



**Date** 26<sup>th</sup> August 2016

**All**

**Wards Affected:** Westfield

**For further information please contact the author of the report**

## Annexes

Annex 1 – Alternative scheme 1 – Draft site layout  
Annex 2 – Alternative scheme 2 – Draft site layout  
Annex 3 – Alternative scheme 3 – Draft site layout  
Annex 4 – Alternative scheme 4 – Draft site layout  
Annex 5 – Original scheme – Approved site layout

## Background Papers

Original Planning Application / report  
25<sup>th</sup> June 2015 Executive Report  
Cabinet Report – May 2013