

APPENDIX F

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 5 JANUARY 2010

Title:

FUTURE USE OF HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT PROPERTY IN FARNHAM

[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Richard Gates]

[Wards Affected: Farnham, Wrecclesham and Rowledge]

Note pursuant to Section 100B (5) of the Local Government Act 1972

Exempt Annexe 2 to this report contains exempt information by virtue of which the public is likely to be excluded during the item to which the report relates, as specified in Paragraph 3 of the revised Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, namely:-

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Summary and purpose:

The Council owns a property in Farnham that previously has been used as temporary accommodation for homeless households (a location plan is attached as Annexe 1). This report, which was considered by the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 12 January 2009, proposes that the Council disposes of the property to a Registered Social Landlord approved by the Council in order to provide a mix of general needs affordable subsidised housing and flexible use affordable subsidised housing. This will help the Council prevent homelessness, work towards the Council's corporate priority of providing subsidised affordable housing and generate a capital sum for the Housing Revenue Account. This report sets out the result of negotiations on the capital sum to be received by Waverley.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

This report relates to the corporate priorities of Subsidised Affordable Housing, Value for Money, Improving Peoples lives and Environment. There is a considerable need for affordable housing in Waverley and despite the Council's good work to reduce numbers in temporary accommodation there is also the need to have flexible accommodation options to help address the potential growth in homelessness resulting from the credit crunch. In addition, the Council as a landlord faces considerable challenges in bringing its stock up to meet the Decent Homes Standard. The capital receipt arising from the proposed sale will be available to invest in the homes of other tenants. It is well documented that decent homes promote health, educational attainment, community safety and social well-being. Refurbishing the existing Marshalls building is a more sustainable option than to demolish and rebuild, upgrades a building which is currently standing empty and provides an opportunity to make the building more energy efficient.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

The Council is required to let social housing in accordance with Equal Opportunities legislation. Those seeking accommodation assistance can be a wide range of people but they particularly include some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged in the community

Resource/Value for Money implications:

By disposing of this property (which in its current form is not ideally suited either as homelessness accommodation or as general needs accommodation) the Council will avoid the need for significant capital investment in this one property. This is at a time when HRA capital resources are under increasing pressure; and the Council will receive a capital receipt, which if used for the Decent Homes programme works can be utilised at 100%. An indicative valuation is detailed in [Exempt] Annexe 2.

Legal Implications:

The legal implications relate to the disposal of a dwelling at Marshalls, Weydon Lane Farnham, to a Registered Social landlord and the related planning implications.

Introduction

1. Marshalls is a purpose-built hostel for the homeless, constructed in the mid 1980's. The ambience is very much that of a student hall of residence, with long corridors of painted brick. The building backs onto the railway on a narrow and shallow site.
2. Proposals for the refurbishment of the property into between 14 and 15 units of mixed tenure affordable housing were agreed by the Executive on 3 February 2009 (See [Exempt] Annexe 3). The proposed capital Waverley would receive from Mount Green Housing Association was £650,000.
3. Subsequently during pre-app discussions, the proposed refurbishment met significant opposition from planning officers. The current building itself is not attractive and the alterations proposed to create self-contained units were an awkward fit resulting in compromised elevational treatments. It is also situated opposite a locally listed building.
4. As a result of the discussions the housing association has been persuaded to consider demolition and redevelopment of the site that will both provide for 15 well-designed mixed tenure units and also sit comfortably within the street scene.
5. While the recommendations within the original report appear sufficiently wide to permit the authorisation of this new proposal, it was considered that the scheme was sufficiently different to require guidance from the Executive.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive:

1. approve the disposal of Marshall's Weydon Lane, Farnham, to Mount Green Housing Association on the revised terms from the original agreement in January 2009 negotiated by the Council's Estates and Valuation Manager, which include that the building is to be used as a mixed scheme of affordable housing to which the Council will receive nomination rights and as set out in the Exempt Annex; and
2. agree that the capital receipt from the sale of this property be applied to contribute toward achieving the Decent Homes Standard in the remaining Council housing stock.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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