

Central Bedfordshire Council

EXECUTIVE

5 December 2017

Land at Saxon Drive and Sorrel Way, Biggleswade

Report of Cllr Steven Dixon, Executive Member for Education and Skills
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Advising Officer: Marcel Coiffait, Director of Community Services
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This report relates to a Key Decision

Purpose of this report

1. To give approval to the Director of Community Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Education and Skills to dispose of 10.19 hectares (ha) of CBC-owned land at Saxon Drive and 1.48 ha of CBC-owned land at Sorrel Way, both in Biggleswade (both shown edged yellow on plan at Appendix 1).
2. The sites received outline planning consents on 13th September 2017 at the Development Management Committee for the construction of a 93-unit extra care scheme for older people on Sorrel Way (delivering on the Council's commitment to the provision of affordable extra care housing for older people in Ivel Valley) and up to 200 residential units on Saxon Drive.
3. This report addresses matters in connection with the disposal of land at Saxon Drive and Sorrel Way, Biggleswade.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is asked to:

1. **authorise the Director of Community Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Education and Skills to dispose of 11.67 ha of land at Saxon Drive and Sorrel Way, Biggleswade on the best available terms.**

Overview and Scrutiny Comments/Recommendations

4. None

History and other considerations

5. CBC own the freehold of two sites, at Saxon Drive (10.19 ha) and Sorrel Way (1.48 ha). The sites are show edged yellow on the plan in Appendix 1.
6. The planning permission for the land at Sorrel Way is for an up to 93-unit extra care scheme, which will be fully affordable housing tenure, with a mix of shared ownership and affordable rental. Officers from the Resources and Social Care Health and Housing Directorates (the Assets and MANOP Teams) have worked in close cooperation to devise the joint approach to the two sites and bring them to this stage.
7. The planning permission for the land at Saxon Drive is for up to 200 residential units. The outline planning permission is subject to s.106 contributions.

The current proposal

8. The land is currently being marketed as a single offer to the open market with the Council's appointed marketing agents, Strutt and Parker. Specific briefing information has been prepared for prospective purchasers in regard the requirements for the extra care scheme.
9. The current bidding deadline for offers on the land is 15th December. Following the selection of a preferred bidder, detailed and best available terms will need to be negotiated with the prospective purchaser, which will then be reported Director of Community Services to approve, in consultation with the Executive Member for Education and Skills.
10. CBC's advisor Strutt and Parker will provide a report to ensure that best value is achieved (complying with the Council's duty under s.123 of the Local Government Act 1972).

Corporate Implications

Reason/s for decision

11. CBC will receive a capital receipt in accordance with the Medium Term Financial Plan.
12. The extra care scheme will help achieve the Council's priorities in respect of protecting the vulnerable and improving wellbeing.

Legal Implications

13. The council has a duty to obtain best value. LGSS Law were instructed to prepare a report on title as part of the initial due diligence work on the land. LGSS Law were subsequently instructed to provide legal support during preparation of and during the marketing campaign, and then deal with the legal documentation relating to the disposal, providing advice throughout, including during negotiations with a prospective purchaser.

Council Priorities

14. The proposed action supports the following Council priorities:
 - Enhancing Central Bedfordshire
 - Protecting the vulnerable and improving wellbeing
 - Creating stronger communities
 - A more efficient and responsive council

Financial and Risk Implications

15. Capital receipts will be generated from the disposal. This will help facilitate a number of the council's priorities and go towards achieving the council's MTFP.

Equalities Implications

16. Central Bedfordshire Council has a statutory duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and foster good relations in respect of nine protected characteristics; age disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.
17. Facilitating the timely development of the extra care scheme will ensure that the demand for the care and support services for older people which this scheme can provide are met. The residential development will provide additional housing.

Public Health

18. None.

Community Safety

19. Any issues in relation to the Extra Care scheme or residential development will be dealt with via the planning process (the sites will require a detailed planning consent which will be obtained by the purchaser following disposal by the Council).

Conclusion and next steps

20. Executive authorise the Director of Community Services in consultation with the Executive Member for Education and Skills to dispose of the land on best available terms.

Appendices

The following Appendix is attached:

Appendix 1: Plan EM2119 Development Sites: Sorrel Way and Saxon Drive, Biggleswade

Appendix 2: Exempt Information

Background Papers

None