

# FAREHAM

## BOROUGH COUNCIL

### **Report to Health and Housing Policy Development Review Panel**

**Date**                    **23 May 2013**

**Report of:**            **Director of Community**

**Subject:**                **DEVELOPMENT OF LAND AT PALMERSTON AVENUE**

#### **SUMMARY**

The report outlines the proposals for the Council to build 16 flats for affordable rent on land in its ownership at the bottom of Palmerston Avenue. This would include submitting a bid for funding to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) towards the cost of the scheme which is estimated will cost in the region of £1,525,000 to build.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Panel support the proposal to develop 16 one bedroom flats for affordable rent on land at Palmerston Avenue.

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Council owns a small parcel of land adjoining the shopping centre at the bottom of Palmerston Avenue which is currently used as a car park, mainly for people who work in the town centre. The Council currently receives an income of around £13,000 per annum from the car park.
2. When the Council acquired the land from the owners of the shopping centre it had the benefit of a detailed planning permission for 16 flats a mix of 1 and 2 bedroom flats. The planning consent has been implemented as the foundations for a cycle store had been completed.

## **CURRENT POSITION**

3. Architects have been appointed to review the scheme design with a brief to increase the amount of 1 bedroom flats on the site and to improve the size of the flats and to provide balconies to as many of the flats as possible. Two of the flats have been designed as fully accessible for households with a disability on the ground floor.
4. The site is very well located to the town centre and is close to the bus station and a short walk to the train station. As a result the scheme has been designed to be largely a car free scheme with only 2 disabled parking spaces. It is proposed that the scheme would be attractive to tenants who want to downsize and to live closer to the town centre.
5. The draft plans for the scheme were put out to public consultation on 18 April 2013 at Ferneham Hall and a total of 13 households attended. The proposals were generally supported and there were some concerns about overlooking from the site to the back gardens of 17 and 19 Palmerston Avenue.
6. Officers have been in discussion with the Homes and Communities Agency about the possibility of bidding for grant funding for this scheme from the Affordable Homes Programme and if the scheme can be progressed and completed before March 2015 then there might be some grant funding available towards the capital cost of the scheme.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Based on the current design an estimated budget has been set for the scheme which will require £1,525,000 to be met from the Housing Capital Programme.

## **NEXT STEPS**

7. In order to submit a bid to the HCA for grant funding and to meet the timetable for the scheme to be completed before March 2015 this would require that the following key milestones are met:-
  - (a) Submit Planning Application - May 2013
  - (b) Executive approval to progress the scheme - June 2013
  - (c) Submit bid to HCA - June 2013
  - (d) Invite Tenders - August/September 2013
  - (e) Executive approval to accept tender - November 2013

- (f) Start on Site - January 2014
- (g) Completion - January 2015

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8. There are no significant risk considerations in relation to this report

### **CONCLUSION**

- 9. The land in Palmerston Avenue would provide an opportunity to provide some good quality one bedroom flats in the town centre which would be particularly suitable to tenants who want to downsize.

### **Background Papers:**

### **Reference Papers:**

### **Enquiries:**

For further information on this report please contact Andrew Fiske. (Ext 4461)