

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 10 June 2013

Portfolio:	Health and Housing
Subject:	Development of land at Palmerston Avenue
Report of:	Director of Community
Strategy/Policy:	Housing Strategy
Corporate Objective:	A balanced housing market

Purpose:

To seek the Executive's approval to progress with a development proposal on land in the Council's ownership at Palmerston Avenue and to submit a bid to the Homes and Communities Agency for funding towards the capital cost of the scheme.

Executive summary:

This report sets out proposals to build 16 good quality one bedroom flats on land in the Council's ownership in Palmerston Avenue which is currently used for a car park. These flats will be particularly suited to existing Council or Housing Association tenants who are currently under occupying their properties and want to down size to smaller accommodation. It is proposed that a bid for funding be submitted to the Homes and Communities Agency for funding towards the cost of the development.

Recommendation:

That the Executive agrees to:-

- (a) Progress with the development proposals for 16 one bedroom flats on land in the Council's ownership at Palmerston Avenue including submitting a planning application
- (b) Submit a bid for funding to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) for grant towards the cost of the development
- (c) Approve a provisional budget of £1,600,000 to be funded from the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme.

Reason:

To build 16 one bedroom flats in the town centre to meet local housing needs.

Cost of proposals:

The estimated cost of the construction of the scheme is £1,600,000 which can be met from the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme.

Background papers: Palmerston Avenue Location Plan

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date: 10 June 2013

Subject: Development of land at Palmerston Avenue

Briefing by: Director of Community

Portfolio: Housing

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 number of 1 bedroom flats on the site, 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. There were some concerns about over looking from the site to the back gardens of 17 and 19 Palmerston Avenue, hence the plans have been revised to minimise this.

6. Officers have been in discussion with the Homes and Communities Agency about the possibility of bidding for grant funding towards this scheme from the Affordable Homes Programme. Early indications are that if the scheme can be progressed and completed before March 2015 then there may be some grant funding available towards the capital cost of the scheme.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7. Based on the current design an estimated construction budget has been set for the scheme which will require £1,600,000 to be met from the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme. There will be a loss of income from the car park which is around £10,000 per annum, however some of the exiting permit holders may purchase annual season tickets for use on the Council's other car parks.

NEXT STEPS

8. 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 - June 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

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

CONCLUSION

10. 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.

Enquiries:

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