

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 12 April 2021

Portfolio:	Housing
Subject:	Property Name for the Fareham Housing development at Station Road, Portchester
Report of:	The Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Corporate Priorities:	Providing Housing Choices

Purpose:

For the Executive to confirm the intended building name for the development at Station Road, Portchester. To include providing the Executive with an understanding of the financial gift from The Randal Cremer Cottages Trust.

Executive summary:

The Randal Cremer Cottages Trust sought to provide a financial contribution toward an affordable housing project for older persons in the Borough. The scheme at Station Road in Portchester provided an ideal opportunity for the Council to potentially accept this gift.

In offering the gift to the Council, the Trust have not sought any financial return or share of rental receipts for their contribution, but conditions would apply that are intended to recognise the legacy of the charity forebearer; most notably the naming of the building as 'Sir Randal Cremer House'.

The report seeks confirmation from the Executive of their agreement to the name of the building as 'Sir Randal Cremer House' therefore enabling the Council to accept the significant financial contribution towards the cost of the development.

The report notes the objections of Portchester East Ward Councillors to the proposed name of the building.

Recommendation/Recommended Option:

It is recommended that the Executive confirm the name of the new sheltered housing building at Station Road as 'Sir Randal Cremer House', with officers to progress the relevant street name and numbering process accordingly. This building name is in acknowledgement of the financial contribution from The Randal Cremer Cottages Trust toward the project.

Reason:

To ensure the Executive confirm the intended building name in acknowledgement of the financial contribution from the Trust.

Cost of proposals:

None. Noting that cost/finance implications will arise should the recommendation not be agreed.

Appendices: **A:** Overview of Sir William Randal Cremer (as provided by the Trust)
 B: Confidential Appendix

Background papers: None

Reference papers: Executive Report – 07 October 2019 (including associated Confidential Appendix)

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	12 April 2021
Subject:	Property name for the Fareham Housing development at Station Road, Portchester
Briefing by:	The Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Portfolio:	Housing

INTRODUCTION

1. In April 2020 planning permission was granted for 16No. sheltered flats on the former Merjen Engineering site at Station Road in Portchester. Since then technical drawings have been produced and Ascia Construction Ltd have been appointed to undertake the building works.
2. Alongside the planning process and progressing the potential development at Station Road officers have been in discussion with The Randal Cremer Cottages Trust about a relatively unique opportunity; a financial contribution towards a new older person affordable housing project.
3. In October 2019 the Executive considered a report relating to the funding arrangements for Station Road. At that time information was provided in the accompanying Confidential Appendix to that report about the discussions that were underway with The Randal Cremer Cottages Trust about their potential contribution.
4. Officers consider it appropriate to utilise the contribution available. The Trust seek no financial return or share in rental receipts in exchange for their contribution. They would however require recognition of the charity forebearer through the name of the building and a plaque in a public part of the building.
5. New affordable housing remains difficult to fund and all areas of Council finance will be under further financial pressure following the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

THE TRUST

6. The Randal Cremer Cottages Trust is a legacy from Sir William Randal Cremer. Sir William Randal Cremer was born in Fareham Borough in 1828 and achieved much good throughout his life around workers rights and peaceful international arbitration; this is reflected in his knighthood and Nobel Peace prize award. Appendix A includes more detail about this historical figure, as provided by the Trust.
7. On Sir William Randal Cremer's death, he bequeathed money to provide some alms

houses in Fareham. This positive legacy remains today through the provision of the Cremer Cottages in Stubbington which provide affordable housing for older people. These are the homes currently owned and managed by The Randal Cremer Cottages Trust and, when vacant, the properties are normally nominated to from the Council's Housing Register.

8. Through careful management of their homes and finances the Trust have a financial contribution which they would like to bestow to a new affordable housing project for older persons. The development of sheltered housing at Station Road provides an ideal opportunity to utilise this generous contribution.

THE CONTRIBUTION

9. Full details of the contribution are available in confidential Appendix B to this report. The Trust have requested that details of the amount remain confidential. Officers in Housing and Finance consider it to be significant, particularly bearing in mind the current difficulties in funding new affordable housing delivery.
10. The Trust are not seeking any financial return or share of rental receipts in exchange for the contribution. Nor are they seeking to be consulted on specifically who is placed in the properties. There are however certain provisos principally focused around ensuring the legacy of the charity forebearer is recognised and that the properties are for older persons in need of affordable housing.
11. Not welcoming and accepting the use of this contribution will require the Council to borrow against the HRA to meet the full costs of the Station Road project. This would then include the addition of borrowing costs (i.e. interest payable) on top of the amount required.
12. Since the Executive considered the 2019 report on funding for the Station Road project further affordable housing projects have been progressing and been identified. This includes the redevelopment of Assheton Court.
13. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Development Fund is now largely exhausted and funding pressures are such that most newly identified Affordable Housing projects will be predominately reliant on borrowing against the HRA. Accepting the contribution would lessen this burden and the financial impact to the Council.
14. There are no other suitable sites (i.e. new older person affordable housing) that are expected to progress in the coming years, apart from the Assheton Court redevelopment.

THE CONDITIONS

15. The contribution from the Trust does come with several provisos. These have been detailed in a legal agreement which will allow the Council to access the contribution (assuming the provisos are met). The key conditions include: -
 - That the homes are affordable homes for older persons; and
 - That the homes be for persons on the Council's Housing Register (or eligible for inclusion on the Register); and
 - That a plaque be placed in a public part of the building (wording to be agreed in conjunction with the Trust) to acknowledge the contribution; and
 - That the building be named 'Sir Randal Cremer House'.

16. The latter is probably the most significant request but one that Officers believe to be reasonable bearing in mind the nature of the contribution involved.

THE BUILDING NAME

17. The Council will only be able to accept the financial gift should the building be called 'Sir Randal Cremer House'. If the building were called something different there would be no contribution from the Trust.
18. Officers responsible for the street name and numbering process have advised that a building name would not normally include any Ward Councillor involvement; Ward Councillors would only normally be consulted on new road names.
19. In normal circumstances officers would engage with the public, Ward Councillors and residents of Assheton Court to choose the name for the new building. The most recent example of this public engagement was the naming of the new Fareham Live venue. However, this approach wasn't deemed appropriate in these circumstances, given that naming was a condition of the financial gift from the Trust.
20. The residents at Assheton Court (who understandably have a particular interest in the Station Road development as it will be one of the potential decant options) were advised in a newsletter that the development 'is expected to be called Sir Randal Cremer House'. Ward Councillors are also aware of the proposed name and have been confidentially advised of the contribution sum involved.

WARD COUNCILLOR OBJECTION

21. The Portchester East Councillors have expressed their concern to the naming and do not accept the proposed name, stating the following reasons: -
- that the proposed name does not have a local Portchester connection; and
 - that local Councillors/residents were not consulted on the name; and
 - that they did not find out about the intended building name until after a relative of a resident of Assheton Court contacted them.

CONCLUSION

22. Naming the Station Road development 'Sir Randal Cremer House' will allow the Council to access the contribution kindly offered by The Randal Cremer Cottages Trust toward the project. This will recognise the legacy from a Fareham Borough born historical figure who achieved many positive things throughout their life.
23. The Executive are requested to confirm the intended approach for the name of the building and the acceptance of the financial contribution toward the scheme. Also noting the positive impact this will have to affordable home delivery by reducing the impact to the Council's HRA.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Robyn Lyons (Ext 4305)