



**Policy, Finance and
Development
Committee**

**Tuesday 22nd July
2014**

**Matter for
Information and
Decision**

Title: Progress with Development Opportunities in the Borough

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides a further update to a report of the same title that was considered at the last meeting of this committee, in terms of the involvement and progress of the Council in relation to a number of different development opportunities in the Borough, including in relation to the Council's own assets, the provision of market and affordable housing and the provision of land for burials and cremations.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Members:

i) note the position with regard to the potential development opportunities in the Borough; and

ii) agree to give officers delegated authority to explore the possibility of purchasing a suitable property for a family with young children with disabilities to add to the Council's housing stock. The cost of purchase to be contained within the current market values of £189,000 up to £200,000

3. Information

Potential Development Opportunities

- 3.1 Officers are currently investigating a number of different options whereby the Council can play a role in enabling development in the Borough, especially with a view to delivering a range of housing opportunities, and particularly where this will result in an increase in the amount of affordable housing provision.

Strategic Review of Council's Asset Register

- 3.2 A strategic review of the Council's Asset Register is currently taking place and is making good progress. This review is looking to identify and map all of the Council's land and building assets and to consider the current use and potential options for the future use of the land and buildings if there is an opportunity, and it is appropriate, to deviate from the current use. The outcomes of this review will be reported to Place Shaping Working Group and Policy, Finance and Development Committee in October. It is intended that in the longer term an action plan will arise out of this work.

Opportunities to bring forward land to develop affordable housing

- 3.3 The strategic review of the Council's Asset Register will have specific regard to the provision of affordable housing, and will identify any potential opportunities to make use of Council owned land to deliver affordable housing.

- 3.4 The Council continues to investigate opportunities to deliver new affordable housing on a small plot of land in Council ownership at **Bennett Way**, South Wigston in conjunction with any development that may come forward on the vacant 'Shoefayre' site at Kirkdale Road, South Wigston.
- 3.5 The developer in partnership with a Registered Provider (RP) on this development has made a formal grant bid to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to deliver affordable homes. As a Local Authority the Council has supported the bid as it meets with the Council's planning policy objectives for South Wigston in relation to delivering affordable homes. Once the outcome of the bid is known the Council will work with the developer to consider the best options for the area.
- 3.6 The Council has received correspondence from the developer with an appraisal of how our land can be best put to use for the overall betterment of the current site. The options and details will need expert advice before entering in to any discussions.
- 3.7 This committee agreed a grant to a Registered Provider to supply 12 rented units at Canal Street, South Wigston, consisting of much needed one and two bedroom accommodation. Planning permission was granted on 23 January 2014 and work commenced on site in February 2014. Section 106 agreements are being finalised and the handover is anticipated in April 2015. The Council will receive 100% nomination rights for all first lettings. The Council is negotiating 60% nomination rights for subsequent lettings.
- 3.8 The current Affordable Housing Strategy is under review and needs to capture the new opportunities available to the Council under the new finance regime and give the Council the flexibility to consider wider options following recent Government announcements on increasing the provision of affordable housing.
- 3.9 Through the Council's work with Disability Facility Grants, an application has been received to provide an extension for a family with two severely disabled children who currently reside in rented accommodation owned by a local Registered Provider (Housing Association). This provider has no other suitable stock in the Borough, which is where the family wish to continue to live due to their much needed support networks.
- 3.10 The current home is physically not suitable for an extension and all possibilities have been explored with both the provider and social services to seek suitable accommodation for the whole of the family within the Borough.
- 3.11 The Regulatory Reform Order 2002 has given the Council powers to acquire properties for a specific identified need within the Borough. In addition, the Council has signed up to the Government scheme of using recycled Capital Receipts (obtained through Right to Buy sales). The Housing Revenue Self-Financing regime allows this Council to purchase properties on the open market using such receipts. The Council can consider such options to add to the provision of affordable council housing. Given that such a property would be adapted, it would be exempt from a Right to Buy application and it will provide a useful addition to Council stock, by way of accommodation that can be utilised by large families.

Oadby and Wigston Town Centres Area Action Plan

- 3.12 A planning application has been approved for 26 apartments at the former factory site on Paddock Street, Wigston. This forms part of the land allocated for residential development in the Town Centres Area Action Plan.

Other development opportunities

- 3.13 The Council is currently investigating opportunities for the improvement of **Horsewell Lane Park** including the potential renewal of the pavilion and young peoples' club buildings and improvements to the existing sports and play facilities. A Playing Pitch Strategy is nearing completion and options for this site will be considered with key stakeholders who uses the facilities at Horsewell Lane Park during the summer and early autumn.
- 3.14 The Council is continuing to investigate opportunities to bring the vacant factory building at **41 Canal Street, South Wigston** back into use and a separate report on this forms part of the Agenda for this committee.

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Implications	
Legal (KG)	No specific implications as this is an overview report, however, there will be implications relating to each of the opportunities/matters referred to in this report.
Financial (PL)	No specific implications as this is an overview report, however, there will be implications associated with the value or purchase of land and the provision of affordable housing. Any purchase of property to add to Council housing stock would be funded from both Capital Receipts and use of Housing Revenue Account.
Equalities (KG)	An Equalities Impact Assessment is required.
Risk (AT)	A risk assessment will be undertaken where necessary in relation to the opportunities/matters referred to in this report