

EARNING INCOME FROM COUNCIL OWNED ASSETS

Finance & Investment Advisory Committee - 8 July 2020

Report of Chief Officer - Finance and Trading

Status For Decision

Also considered by Cabinet - 9 July 2020

Key Decision Yes

This report supports the Key Aim of Effective Management of Council Resources

Portfolio Holder Cllr. Matthew Dickins

Contact Officer Richard King Ext. 7099

Recommendation to Finance & Investment Advisory Committee:

- a) The Committee consider the options for the disposal of Land to the Rear of Sealcroft Cottages as set out in paragraphs 3 & 4 and recommend the preferred option to Cabinet;
- b) The Committee consider the options for disposal of land adjacent to 9 Pound Lane, Sevenoaks as set out in paragraphs 5 & 6 of the report and recommend the preferred option to Cabinet.

Recommendation to Cabinet: That, subject to any comments from the Finance & Investment Advisory Committee,

- a) delegated authority be granted to the Portfolio Holder for Finance & Investment in consultation with the Chief Officer Finance & Trading, to approve the terms of the disposal of Land to the Rear of Sealcroft Cottages, subject to site investigation and planning; and
- b) disposal by way of Auction, of the Land Adjacent 9 Pound Lane, Sevenoaks, be approved; with delegated authority granted to the Chief Officer Finance & Trading to set a minimum reserve.

Reason for recommendation:

- a) The land to the rear of Seal Croft Cottages was identified as surplus to requirements but is located in the Green Belt. However, the site can be developed by English Rural Housing Association as a Rural Exception Site and so can provide a solution to a rural housing needs requirement
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- b) The land adjacent 9 Pound Lane has no benefit to the Council. It is considered that Planning for development would be difficult. However, an overage clause should be written into the contract for any future consents. The site will generate a capital receipt for the Council.
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Introduction and Background

Sealcroft Cottages, Seal

- 1 The land, shown on the attached plan outlined in red (Appendix A) has been identified as surplus to requirements as part of the small sites programme. The site is located within the Green Belt, so the opportunities for Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) to develop the land itself are limited.
- 2 Housing Policy and Economic Development & Property have recognised that the best way to unlock the site's potential is as a Rural Exception Site (Core Strategy Policy SP4). Seal Parish Council has a housing needs requirement following a needs survey.
- 3 Opportunities have been considered in conjunction with Housing Policy. Following some Pre-application enquiries, there is the opportunity for development on the site for 2 or 3 x 1 Bedroom Bungalows. (Appendix B & C). The schemes have been drafted by English Rural Housing Association (ERHA) who are SDC's preferred Housing Association (HA) provider for rural locations and they are Seal Parish Council's selected partner.
- 4 There is the possibility of a larger site being considered as the ownership of the land to the north of the site outlined, and to the rear of No. 6 is currently being used without SDC's consent, and is subject to SDC recovering possession. This additional area would provide for a total of 4 Bungalows (Appendix D) to be developed on the site. The disposal to ERHA cannot be considered until all Boundary issues have been settled, however until such time as an in principle decision is made, ERHA are reluctant to incur further costs by commissioning additional feasibility expenditure.

Land Adjacent to 9 Pound Lane

- 5 This site, located on the attached plan Appendix E, has been identified as being surplus to requirements. The site is of no benefit to the Council. It is considered that Planning for development would be difficult. However, an overage clause should be written into the contract for any future consents. The site will generate a capital receipt for the Council.
- 6 It is proposed that Cabinet approval be sought to dispose of the site by way of auction.

Other Options Considered and/or Rejected

Sealcroft Cottages, Seal:

- 7 Because of the site's location within the Green Belt and its development under SP4, this site is not considered suitable for development by Quercus Housing. This is due to the complex nominations arrangements applying to rural exceptions housing which Quercus Housing are unable to provide and also, as they are not a Registered Provider, Quercus Housing are unable to access Homes England grant funding. Grant funding is needed to deliver appropriately designed and genuinely affordable homes on developments such as these.
- 8 Retaining the site in SDC's ownership will risk further encroachments and will be an additional and ongoing maintenance liability which will incur unbudgeted expenditure and considerable officer time in responding to any such encroachments.

Key Implications

Financial

There are no financial implications for the sale of this site outside those already highlighted within the report.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement.

Resources from the Council's legal team are and will continue to be needed to deal with any claim for adverse possession and to complete the disposal process.

Equality Assessment

The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

Conclusions

Members of the Finance and Investment Advisory Committee are asked to consider the progress being made in disposing of surplus or underperforming assets and support the recommendations for further action as outlined above.

Appendices

Appendix A - Land to rear of Seal Croft Cottages -
Plan of the site Outlined in Red

Appendix B - Land to rear of Seal Croft Cottages - Site
development Plan for 2 Bungalows

Appendix C - Land to rear of Seal Croft Cottages- Site
development plan for 3 Bungalows

Appendix D - Land to rear of Seal Croft Cottages -
Site development plan for 4 Bungalows

Appendix E - Land adjacent to 9 Pound Lane,
Sevenoaks - Plan of the site Outlined in Red

Appendix F - Exempt Information

Background Papers

None

Adrian Rowbotham

Chief Officer - Finance & Trading