

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

Committee: Council Housebuilding Cabinet **Date:** Tuesday, 18 November 2014
Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, **Time:** 6.30 - 8.10 pm
High Street, Epping
Members Present: D Stallan (Chairman), G Waller, Ms H Kane and J Philip
Other Councillors: S Neville, C C Pond, D Wixley and K Angold-Stephens
Apologies: R Bassett, W Breare-Hall and Ms S Stavrou
Officers Present: P Pledger (Assistant Director (Housing Property)) and J Leither (Democratic Services Assistant)
Also in attendance: A Gatrell (East Thames Group), I Collins (Pellings LLP) and N Penfold (Pellings LLP)

22. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The Cabinet Committee noted that Councillor H Kane substituted for Councillor R Bassett and Councillor J Philip substituted for Councillor W Breare-Hall.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor C Pond declared a personal interest in agenda item 5, Feasibility Reports, by virtue of being a member of Loughton Town Council. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non pecuniary and would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the issue.

24. MINUTES

Resolved:

(1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2014 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

25. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Resolved:

(1) That the Terms of Reference as amended by a Leader Decision on the 21 October 2014 be noted.

26. FEASIBILITY REPORTS

The Assistant Director of Housing (Property) presented a report to the Cabinet Committee he advised that each of the 8 sites were presented as individual feasibility

studies, which identified the number of units and the mix that would be achievable for each site. At this stage, Members were asked to consider the merits of each site and agree which were to progress for inclusion in a future phase of the Council House-building Programme in line with the Policy on Prioritisation of Sites.

Ward Members agreed that the Pyrles Lane (Site A) would be a good site to progress as it was constantly used for fly tipping and it would smarten up the area. Councillor Pond suggested that the District Council may want to discuss with the Town Council the possibility of developing the adjacent allotment gardens for affordable housing as these were difficult to let as allotments.

Decision:

(1) That the Cabinet Committee considered a revised feasibility study and viability assessment for the site at Hornbeam House, Buckhurst Hill, which took into account the Cabinet Committees comments made at the meeting on 13 October 2014 for consideration to be included in a future phase of the Council House-building Programme:

(a) Hornbeam House, Buckhurst Hill – Garages 1-22

That the Cabinet Committee considered the revised layout of this site and agreed that this was a viable site to progress to a detailed planning stage.

(2) That the Cabinet Committee considered the viability of each of the 7 (seven) individual feasibility studies taken from the Cabinet approved list of Primary Sites, as listed below, for consideration for inclusion in a future phase of the Council House-building Programme:

(a) Chester Road, Debden - Garages 654-675

That the Cabinet Committee agreed this was a viable site to progress to a detailed planning stage.

(b) Etheridge Road, Debden - Garages 676-712

That the Cabinet Committee agreed this was a viable site to progress to a detailed planning stage.

(c) Langley Meadows Amenity Area, Loughton - Sites A & B

Site A - That the Cabinet Committee agreed this was a viable site to progress to a detailed planning stage.

Site B - That the Cabinet Committee agreed that this was not a viable site to progress to a detailed planning stage due to Thames Water sewer apparatus on the site and issues with the loss of parking in the area. It was therefore agreed that Site B would be used for open car parking spaces.

(d) Pyrles Lane, Loughton (Site A) - Garages 1-12

That the Cabinet Committee agreed this was a viable site to progress to a detailed planning stage.

(e) Pyrles Lane, Loughton (Site B) - Garages 82-109

That the Cabinet Committee agreed this was a viable site to progress to a detailed planning stage.

(f) Hillyfields, Loughton - Garages 13-24

That the Cabinet Committee agreed this was a viable site to progress to a detailed planning stage.

(g) Thatchers Close, Loughton

That the Cabinet Committee agreed this was a viable site to progress to a detailed planning stage.

Reasons for Decision:

At its meeting in August 2014, the Cabinet Committee asked that each of the sites on the Primary List of approved sites be progressed to feasibility stage to create a bank of sites for future phases of the House-building Programme. The 8 sites included in this report, made up of one site at Hornbeam House, Buckhurst Hill that is a revised design previously considered by the Cabinet Committee in October 2014 and the last 7 sites from the 22 sites that were completed in Loughton and Buckhurst Hill along with the Burton Road site back in November 2013, albeit not reported at that time. Each site is presented on its own merits at this stage. However, when all of the feasibility studies have been considered, the Cabinet Committee will then be asked to batch the sites in line with the Policy on Prioritisation of Sites.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

1. Not to progress with any of the schemes presented in this report.
2. To develop the sites with a different number of homes, or with an alternative mix of property types or parking allocation.

27. RISK REGISTER UPDATE

The Assistant Director of Housing (Property) presented a report to the Cabinet Committee. He advised that Pellings LLP, who were the Employers Agent appointed by the Council's Development Agent East Thames, produced and kept individual Risk Registers up to date for the House-building Programme.

Decision:

- (1) That the Programme-wide Risk Register for the Council House-building Programme be noted.

Reasons for Decision:

The Council's Housebuilding Programme was a major undertaking, involving significant amounts of money and risks, it is essential that the Officer Project Team and the Cabinet Committee record, monitor and mitigate those risks.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

(a) Not to have a Risk Register – but it would not be appropriate to contemplate such an option; and

(b) To request amendments to the format or content of the Programme-wide Risk Register.

28. PROGRESS REPORTS

The Assistant Director of Housing (Property) presented a report to the Cabinet Committee regarding progress reports on Marden Close and Faversham Hall Conversions and Phase 1 and 2 of the Council house-building programme.

The Assistant Director gave a progress report update on the sites below:

Marden Close and Faversham Hall Conversion

Work had commenced on the conversions on 15 September 2014 which would generate 12 self contained flats. This was expected to be completed by 18 September 2015.

Phase 1

To mark the commencement of the Council's House-building Programme a ground breaking ceremony at Harveyfields in Waltham Abbey took place on Friday 14 November 2014.

The sites at Harveyfields and Roundhills in Waltham Abbey would generate 23 new affordable homes and was expected to be completed by the 13 November 2015.

Phase 2

The site at Burton Road, Loughton had been agreed and detailed plans would be submitted in the new year. This site would generate 52 new affordable homes.

Councillor Kane highlighted the fact that the very first house building project for over 30 years would start in Waltham Abbey and she gave her thanks to the Council

The Chairman advised that he had attended the ground breaking ceremony to mark the first Council house-building development in the district for over 30 years and stated that this was a very proud moment.

Decision:

(1) That the current progress with regard to Marden Close and Faversham Hall, as well as Phases 1 and 2 of the Council house-building programme be noted;

(2) That the current budget position be noted, based on

- a. Marden Close & Faversham Hall tender sum already agreed by the Housing Portfolio Holder in the sum of £890,000 (Works and Fees) for 12 new self-contained flats;
- b. Phase 1 tender received and agreed earlier on the Agenda, taking account of the total scheme costs of around £3.47m (Works & fees) for 23 homes at Roundhills and Harveyfields, Waltham Abbey; and

- c. Phase 2 feasibility estimate of £8.9m (Works & fees) for 52 new homes at Burton Road, Loughton.

(3) That the Programme timetable at appendix 1 of the Agenda be noted.

Reasons for Decision:

It was a requirement that the Council Housebuilding Cabinet Committee received regular updates on progress and monitors expenditure against the House-building budget as delegated by the Cabinet.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

None as this report was for noting only.

29. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Cabinet Committee noted that there was no other urgent business for consideration.

30. MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman advised the Cabinet Committee that this would be the last meeting that Andy Gatrell from East Thames Group would be attending. He thanked him for all the work he had done on this project and wished him luck for the future in his career move.

31. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Cabinet Committee noted that there were no items of business on the agenda that necessitated the exclusion of the public and press from the meeting.

CHAIRMAN