

East Thames Housing / Epping Forest District Council
Housing Delivery Programme

Feasibility Report (56 unit scheme)

Site: Site of garages, former depot, hardstanding and open grassed areas, Burton Road, Debden, Loughton IG10 3TA

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1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1. On 4th February this Committee approved report CHB-009-2013/14 recommending progress to detailed planning for the erection of a minimum of 31 affordable homes on the former Council depot, two garage sites and grassed area at Burton Road, Loughton and adjoining land to the south west.
- 1.2. The 'adjoining land to the south west' was previously the subject of discussions with the Special Advisor to the Archdeacon of Harlow regarding the possibility of the provision of a small Church with associated community facilities. This proposal has not as yet come forward and as this land is adjacent to the site owned by the Council, East Thames has been asked to consider a feasibility study to extend the development site to incorporate this additional piece of land.
- 1.3. In addition, the south west area of land also contains an area of land that is leased to Stobart Properties Limited and sub-let by them to Sainsbury's Properties Limited. This leasing arrangement is in the process of surrender and as such, similarly to item 1.2 above, this section of land has been incorporated into the feasibility study.
- 1.4. A potential layout for all the Council owned land and a summary financial appraisal for the erection of an option comprising 56 units is included within this report.

2.0 Introduction and Confirmation of Brief

- 2.1. Pellings LLP are appointed as part of East Thames Group Technical Team in respect of delivery of Development Agent services to Epping Forest District Council for a six year housing delivery programme.
- 2.2. Following initial appraisal by EFDC, 59 sites have been identified as having possible development potential, with a further number of sites in reserve.
- 2.3. Pellings LLP have been instructed to progress feasibility studies to all 59 sites and this will assist in establishing the extent and timing of the overall programme.
- 2.4. Our instructions are in accordance with our fee tender of 13 August 2012, against the previously prepared tender documentation, and email confirmation of 9 April 2013.
- 2.5. We have been provided with information from the Masterplanning report (Debden Town Centre and Broadway; Development Options – August 2008) of the surrounding area, and such information has informed our proposals.

3.0 Existing Site and Surroundings

- 3.1. The site is located within the town centre of Debden, Loughton, 100m north of the train station. It is situated between suburban housing with gardens to the south, and a town centre car park and three storey parade with commercial premises on the ground floor, and flats above, to the north.
- 3.2. The site essentially consists of a long strip of land and it is situated between residential flats to the rear and an access road (including bus waiting area and bus stop) directly in front. It comprises of an unused garage site (and former Council depot) on its eastern side, a path and grassed area with some small trees in the middle, a hard surfaced parking area and further garage site (partly used) on the western side. At its western and eastern ends the site adjoins the rear

gardens of neighbouring houses.

- 3.3. The site slopes down slightly from north to south, with the adjoining flats to the south in Torrington Drive being sited at a lower level than the town centre buildings. Neighbouring houses and flats are two storey terraced with front and rear gardens, and, within the town centre, within three storey parades.
- 3.4. There is a pedestrian Right of Way through the site, running North to South.
- 3.5. There are some trees on the site although it is felt that these are generally not of significant value.

4.0 **Proposals**

- 4.1. Read in conjunction with drawings 612.023/P2-25D attached at Appendix A.
- 4.2. The proposals are :

621.023.P2-25D – Erection of 2 x 2 bed houses, 16 x 3 bed houses, 14 x 1 bed flats, 20 x 2 bed flats, 4 x 2 bed flats (recessed 4 storey) with a total of 28 car parking spaces; the houses to have individual gardens and the flats to have communal amenity space.

- 4.3. Proposals maintain the Right of Way referenced above.

5.0 **Planning Issues and Risks**

Relevant Planning Policies/Considerations

- 5.1. The adopted Development Plan for Epping Forest District Council is the Combined Local Plan 1998 and Local Plan Alterations 2006.
- 5.2. The site is not located in a Conservation Area. It is located in the Debden Town Centre Boundary in the Epping Forest District Council Combined Local Plan 1998 and Local Plan Alterations 2006. The site does not lie in a Flood Zone on the Environment Agency Flood Map.
- 5.3. Policy TC3 of the Epping Forest District Council Combined Local Plan 1998 and Local Plan Alterations 2006 indicates that residential uses may be appropriate within smaller and district centres but the policy does suggest that residential uses should be avoided on the ground floor and that new development should not prejudice the vitality and viability of town centres. A Development Options Report for Debden Town Centre produced for the Council in August 2008 identifies 2 and 3 storey town houses with residential uses on all floors as being appropriate for the site.
- 5.4. Policy ST4 (Road Safety) states that planning permission will only be granted where there will be no adverse effects on the highway, traffic congestion or harm to the character or appearance of the area.
- 5.5. It will be necessary to undertake a Parking Survey and to prepare a Transport Statement to demonstrate that the loss of the garages/parking areas and proposed development would not cause any parking shortfalls or harm to highway conditions or the amenities of the area.
- 5.6. The site is located in the settlement of Debden and the proposal would be consistent with policy CP7 which encourages the efficient use of existing built-up areas by the 'recycling of vacant, derelict, degraded and under-used land to

accommodate the development' and the 're-use of urban sites, which are no longer appropriate to their existing or proposed use in the foreseeable future, for alternative land uses'.

- 5.7. The proposal would comply with policy H4A which states the need for a range of dwellings, including an appropriate proportion of smaller dwellings, to meet identified housing need on a site-by-site basis.
- 5.8. The development of family homes with rear gardens and one and two bedroom flats would be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area and may comply with Epping Forest's design policies and guidance.
- 5.9. It would be proposed to replace any trees requiring removal.
- 5.10. A Planning Officer has indicated that there may be potential overlooking but that this cannot be assessed fully until detailed drawings are received.

6.0 Impact/Implications of Statutory Services

- 6.1. We have undertaken statutory services enquiries to the following:
 - Southern Gas
 - Cable and Wireless
 - Virgin Media
 - Thames Water
 - BT
 - National Grid
 - Scottish and Southern Energy
 - Environment Agency
 - UK Power Networks
- 6.2. Responses received to date are from the Environment Agency, National Grid, UK Power Networks, Virgin Media and Thames Water.
- 6.3. The Environment Agency has not pointed out any watercourses which cross the site.
 - 6.3.1. National Grid: From drawn information given no apparatus appears to be located on the site, although there is a statement in text that there may be low pressure gas apparatus on the site. We would not envisage that this should affect proposals at this stage.
 - 6.3.2. UK Power Networks: There do not appear to be any installations on the site.
 - 6.3.3. Virgin Media: No apparatus appears to be located on the site.
- 6.4. Thames Water: No drains or sewers are located on any part of the site.
- 6.5. It should be noted there are a number of responses to enquiries that, at time of preparation of this report, have not yet been received.

7.0 Site Access and Buildability Issues

- 7.1. The site is accessed from existing site roads and there would not appear to be any particular difficulties for the normal level and size of construction traffic associated with a development of this nature.

- 7.2. Areas should be available for contractor's site set up and accommodation, although potentially restrictions on contractors access and operatives may be more onerous than for the outlying other 'garage' type sites and accordingly preliminary costs may be slightly higher.
- 7.3. The site is close to the Town Centre and has retail elements nearby and, accordingly, any appointed contractor should use all best endeavours to act in a considerate manner and within normal working hours.
- 7.4. The site has possible contamination sources from existing garages, and accordingly, suitable site investigation will need to be undertaken ahead of any proposals to take this site forward and specific recommendations made to deal with any contamination found, whether by capping or removal from site.

8.0 Neighbourly Matters and Party Walls

- 8.1. As above, the proposed development site is within a primarily residential area and the appointed contractor should act in a considerate manner. It is proposed that restrictions on working hours, noise levels, requirement for resident liaison and similar matters will be included within contract documentation.
- 8.2. From the proposals on Drawing 612.023/P2-25D, Party Wall matters will be relevant to development, particularly to No. 35 Burton Road.
- 8.3. Confirmation of ownership will be required in due course.
- 8.4. Such Party Wall matters may be undertaken ahead of the build contract by direct appointment by EFDC, or included as a requirement for the contractor to deal with within the build contract. This later approach, however, would carry increased risk to programme and cost.

9.0 Proposed Procurement Route

- 9.1. It is understood that development works will be procured by way of the East Thames Housing Group existing contractor framework arrangements.
- 9.2. It is proposed that works shall be procured on a Design and Build basis with the contractors taking forward RIBA Stage D planning consent drawings into detailed design and construction delivery on site.
- 9.3. Schemes shall be designed to a set of Employer's Requirements to be subsequently confirmed but which substantially shall be formed from existing East Thames Housing Group Design Standards and Employer's Requirement documentation.
- 9.4. It is proposed that all site preparation works will be included within individual contract packages including any required demolitions, adjustment of statutory services, highways works and boundary maintenance/reinstatement/provision.
- 9.5. On completion of the feasibility studies for the whole programme, further recommendations will be made in terms of how works are packaged to ensure size of work packages are optimised for ensuring maximum economies for East Thames Housing Group and EFDC.
- 9.6. It is considered, at this stage, that this may be by way of a mix of different sized contractors dependent upon the numbers and geographical location of individual works packages.

- 9.7. Works will be administered by Pellings LLP as Employer's Agent acting in accordance with East Thames Housing Group terms of appointment and the overarching requirements of the Development Agency agreement.
- 9.8. Due to the relative size of this scheme in relation to the remainder of the programme, letting of this project as an independent contract should be considered.

10.0 **Impact on Parking**

10.1. The Council's currently adopted parking standards are contained within Essex County Council's Parking Standards Design and Good Practice Guide – September 2009. These revised standards were adopted by the Council as statutory planning guidance in February 2012.

10.2. Flats and houses have the same parking standard as follows:

- 1 bedroom accommodation – 1 space per dwelling
- 2 bedroom accommodation and above – 2 spaces per dwelling
- Visitor parking – 0.25 spaces per dwelling (rounded up to the nearest whole number)

10.3. The proposals provide parking at less than the above standards but it is considered that given the town centre location and high level of public transport accessibility the proposed parking provision would meet the needs of future residents and not result in excessive overspill parking detrimental to the safety of surrounding highways or the amenities of neighbouring residents. A Planning Officer has commented that 'the level of parking provision proposed in the revised scheme is much more appropriate and I find it acceptable. I do not foresee any highway safety issues arising from the proposal.'

10.4. However, should the site move forward to planning application stages, it is recommended that a Transport Statement be undertaken, including parking surveys, to demonstrate that the loss of the garages will not give rise to any planning or highway problems.

10.5. Within both schemes new vehicular accesses are proposed to the site onto Burton Road. It may be necessary to agree the re-location of the existing bus stop/stands in front of the site. We would expect the cost of making good would be borne by the Epping Forest Housing Services while the cost of the new bus stop/stand would have to be negotiated with the County Council.

11.0 **Costs**

11.1. It is considered that a budget of £..... for 612.023/P2-25D should be allowed for this scheme, inclusive of contractor design fees, but exclusive of professional fees and VAT. Please refer to Appendix F.

12.0 **Recommendations and Conclusions**

12.1. Subject to an overall lifetime cost appraisal, we conclude that the site appears to have economic development opportunities and we recommend is considered for taking forward to planning application stage, with a view to incorporating into the overall programme.

Signed: **Date:**

Pellings LLP

Appendix A

Development Proposals

Drawing 612.023/P2-25D

Appendix B

Site Photographs

Appendix B - Site Photographs

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



Appendix C

Existing Site Plan

Appendix D

Statutory Services Information

Appendix E

Information on Possible Contamination

Information on possible contamination has been forwarded by Epping Forest District Council by way of email of 25nd May 2013, giving information on potential contamination across all the primary sites.

This clarifies possible ground contamination derived from asbestos, made ground, hydrocarbons, petroleum hydrocarbons and the like.

It is likely that any Planning Consent will carry a Condition that all contamination issues are to be remediated.

Accordingly, we recommend that initial site investigation is undertaken for all sites that move forward to Planning Applications.

Appendix F

Cost Build-up