

DECISION-MAKER: CABINET
SUBJECT: TOWNHILL PARK REGENERATION – SCHEME APPROVAL TO DEMOLISH PROPERTIES IN PHASE 1 AND OTHER MATTERS
DATE OF DECISION: 16 DECEMBER 2014
REPORT OF: CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING & SUSTAINABILITY

CONTACT DETAILS

AUTHOR: **Name:** Sue Jones **Tel:** 023 8083 3929
 E-mail: Sue.jones@southampton.gov.uk
Director **Name:** Stuart Love **Tel:** 023 8091 7713
 E-mail: Stuart.Love@southampton.gov.uk

STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

None

BRIEF SUMMARY

Southampton City Council has embarked on a major estate regeneration programme which plays an essential part in the wider commitment of delivering growth and tackling economic deprivation and social disadvantage on Southampton’s Council estates. Following the Council and Cabinet decisions of November 2012 and 2013, this paper seeks further approval to allow Townhill Park regeneration to continue to deliver.

Assembling the sites for phase one of the Townhill Park regeneration is already underway with residents being moved to alternative homes. The design work for all three phases of the regeneration is also underway to work towards achieving the comprehensive regeneration reflected in the Townhill Park Master Plan and to achieve the greatest economies of scale.

This report is to consider the report of the Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainability seeking approval to demolish properties in Phase 1, submit a planning application for the whole scheme, accept the offer of a grant on Affordable units in phase one from the Housing and Communities Agency and to receive feedback from consultation carried out with local residents in September 2014 about the regeneration plans.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- (i) To delegate authority to the Director, Place, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer to accept grant funding of £750,000 from the Affordable Housing Programme 2015 – 2018 from the Homes and Communities Agency to part fund phase one of the redevelopment of Townhill Park and enter into the affordable housing grant funding agreement as a member of the Wayfarer Consortium.
- (ii) To serve Final Demolition Notices on any secure tenants remaining in occupation of properties on the phase one redevelopment sites.
- (iii) To approve (once vacant possession and planning permission has been obtained) the demolition of the buildings and structures on the land hatched in black in Appendix 1.

- (iv) To authorise the Estate Regeneration Project Manager responsible for managing the Townhill Park Redevelopment project in consultation with the (Interim) Planning & Development Manager and the Highways Manager to make the necessary applications for highway/ footpath stopping up and/or diversion orders in respect of the Paulet Close / Meggeson Avenue footpath, the Roundhill Close / Townhill Way footpath and Roundhill Close and Townhill Way including footways, verges and carriageway within the site identified in the plan at Appendix 1.
- (v) To delegate authority to the Director, Place following consultation with the Head of Housing Services, Head of Development, Economy & Renewal and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Sustainability to submit a planning application for redevelopment of phases one, two and three of the Townhill Park regeneration.
- (vi) To authorise the Director, Place, following consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Chief Financial Officer, to take all lawful steps to effect the proposals in the report.

REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Estate Regeneration is a major programme of renewal which is part of a wider commitment by the Council to deliver sustained economic growth and tackle deprivation on Southampton's Council estates.
2. Redevelopment of Townhill Park will provide the opportunity to deliver improved modern local facilities to meet the needs of residents. It will also provide a mixed tenure environment and good quality accommodation, together with significant improvements in the public and private realm on site. This will promote a cohesive and sustainable community and provide a net gain of housing including affordable housing.
3. Selecting areas of the City such as Townhill Park which are the most deprived, but have the greatest potential for housing gain will also contribute to the city's priorities in terms of economic growth and the need for more homes in the city (the Core Strategy has a target to deliver over 16,000 new homes between 2010 and 2026 and the aim to deliver more affordable housing). Regeneration will provide the opportunity to tackle some of the socio economic challenges in the area.
4. Regeneration is supported by the community in Townhill Park. Consultation started in September 2011 together with further recent consultations held in September 2013 and September 2014. Future events will take place as proposals for the area develop. As the Townhill Park Master Plan proposals are implemented over a period of about ten years there will be many further opportunities for the community to engage with the proposals as they evolve and develop through the various stages of implementation.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

5. The option of not approving the financial contributions to meet the cost of delivering the regeneration framework has been rejected as it would not enable the regeneration of Townhill Park to proceed beyond Phase 1.
6. The option of doing nothing would not achieve the Council's objectives of creating successful communities on our estates.

7. There has been considerable community consultation with local tenants and residents at Townhill Park, which has raised community hopes and expectations.

DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)

Demolition Of Properties

8. The process of decanting residents at the phase one part of the Townhill Park redevelopment area site has been progressing since May 2013. Since the start of the decant the site has vacated quickly and as at the start of November 2014 the site is approximately 89% vacant. The rapid site decant has brought forward discussions on early demolition of the vacant blocks on the site that would more readily enable the redevelopment of the site and reduce the risk of vandalism and the ongoing costs to the Council of securing and maintaining the site, whilst it is hoped it would also maintain some amenity for the residents living closest to the site
9. The phase one land proposed to be demolished comprises of the following properties:
 - Plot 1
 - 34-64 Roundhill Close
 - 66-96 Roundhill Close
 - 98-118 Roundhill Close
 - Plot 2a
 - 2-60 Meggeson Avenue
 - 62-120 Meggeson Avenue
 - Plot 2b
 - 2-22 Paulet Close
 - 24-44 Paulet Close
 - 122-142 Meggeson Avenue
10. It is proposed that a two-phase demolition, of the superstructure only, is carried out at the phase one blocks at Townhill Park, starting with the vacant blocks at plot 1 and 2b, followed by plot 2a as in the table above.
11. The phasing of the proposed demolition reflects those properties which are currently vacant. As the remainder become vacant then demolition will follow. Negotiations are continuing with the remaining leaseholders in order to purchase the remaining properties which are not in Council ownership.
12. As regards the land assembly, Cabinet are asked to note the previous authority granted from Cabinet and Council in November 2012 and November 2013 allowing the Council to acquire interests in land it does not currently own and to serve the Initial Demolition Notices on secure tenants in the redevelopment area on the land hatched in black in Appendix 2.
13. In order to be able to commence demolition, and subsequent redevelopment, a number of highway rights that currently exist within the site will need to be extinguished. These include stopping up the publicly maintainable highways at Roundhill Close, Townhill Way, Meggeson Avenue and Paulet Close.
14. The Council has power to make applications either to the Magistrates' Court or to the Secretary of State for orders authorising the stopping-up or diversion of public highway/ footpaths and bridleways

15. Cabinet are requested to note that the demolition works will be procured in accordance with the Council's Contracts Procedure Rules.

Planning Application For All Three Phases Of The Regeneration

16. Cabinet are asked to note the previous consent given by both Cabinet and Council in November 2013 to approve commissioning of the design work on phases one, two and three of the Townhill Park regeneration in order to achieve planning consent, procurement and the contract supervision of the building phase.
17. Since the November 2013 Cabinet approval, design proposals, and associated reports and studies, have been worked up to enable a full planning application on the phase one land, and for outline planning consent at phase two and phase three land, a "hybrid" planning application. (Please see attached plan of the redevelopment sites at Appendix 2)
18. The public were consulted on the ideas generated from the current progress of the design work. As a result of the comments made during the consultation period, some revisions may be made to the current proposals and these will be made ahead of the submission of any planning application. It is also expected that a further pre-application public consultation will take place early in 2015. The planning application is expected to be submitted in April 2015.

Acceptance Of Grant From The Homes & Communities Agency (HCA)

19. Grant funding of £750,000 has been allocated to the Council from the Homes and Communities Agency at a rate of £15,000 per unit, for a total of 50 units comprising part of the affordable housing element of phase one Townhill Park regeneration. This grant funding is from the HCA's Affordable Housing Programme 2015 – 2018.
20. It is proposed that the Council enter into the affordable housing grant funding agreement as a member of the Wayfarer Consortium. The Council joined the Wayfarer consortium in 2013. Wayfarer is a local consortium of eight different registered housing providers and its purpose is to collaborate and co-operate in terms of bidding for HCA grant funding for proposed affordable schemes. Each member retains its individual identity and concentrates on its own area of expertise. By working in this arrangement the council is able to call on a greatly enhanced range of skills and resources in attracting funds. It also provides assistance with the time consuming and technical process of bidding for grants, and provides access to OJEU compliant procured frameworks. Wayfarer members own or manage more than 43,000 homes throughout the region. Since its formation the consortium has attracted funding for over 5,000 homes with grants in excess of £188 million.

Feedback From Public Consultations Undertaken In September 2014

21. Local residents were consulted on the progress of the design work in September 2014. There were two public exhibitions held at Cutbush Children's Centre in Townhill Park on 17th and 20th September 2014 and 173 people attended. The plans were also posted on the Council's website. The closing date for responses was 17th October 2014. The Consultation was undertaken in accordance with the Housing Act 1985 in relation to secure tenants. A summary of the report's conclusions are produced below with a copy of the full report in Appendix 3.

22. The consultation events were well attended and responses were generally favourable. The principle of regeneration and the design proposals were well received and the concept of a 'Village Green' as a new focal point continues to receive positive support.
23. Parking and traffic issues were the main concerns raised by residents. Traffic calming proposals were generally welcomed although there was concern about bus flows on Meggeson Avenue. Despite the maximum allowed parking allocations proposed for the new developments, residents are concerned that there will not be sufficient parking. Most residents welcomed the idea of increasing, where possible, the road access to existing residential properties to increase their ability to park by, or on their property. The intention of the design proposals is to provide at least as much parking, if not more, than is currently available to address these concerns.
24. Concerns continue around the vehicle congestion and parking around the schools, children's facilities and the community centre. This will be further investigated as the design proposals are developed in more detail to address these issues. Residents were also concerned about construction traffic and this will be looked at in more detail to see how disruption can be minimised.
25. The majority of the designs proposals have been favourably received. The main concerns were on certain individual development plots and these along with the Council's response are set out below. The layout plan identifying the plots is at the end of the consultation report at Appendix 3.
26. Site 1 - Not all residents in the terrace that overlooks Plot 1 supported the idea of a vehicle access off Meggeson Avenue which will access Plot 1 and a few residents were concerned at the height of the new block. The new access is required and is consistent with Highways policy. The upper level apartments will be set back from the terraces and will therefore be further from the terrace. All distances are to policy standards.
27. Site 3 - Development of the garage site at the top of Roundhill Close was not well received by residents of Roundhill Close nor residents in Middleton Close who park there. Objections were mainly on the grounds of increasing parking congestion. Therefore, this site has been withdrawn from the proposals and will not be considered for residential development.
28. Suggested link road between Roundhill Close and Middleton Close. The suggested link between Roundhill Close and Middleton Close received many objections from local residents of both Closes who do not want the two roads connected and this suggestion has been withdrawn.
29. Site 4
This site is being retained for new housing, but the design has been amended to avoid overlooking and the access modified to be from Middleton Close with no vehicle link to Roundhill Close. Although there is loss of open space, throughout the development there will not be an overall loss and more properties will have gardens or access to communal open spaces.
30. Site 7 - The concerns here are centred on the new apartment block and have been made by adjacent residents in Cornwall Road who are primarily concerned about height and overlooking. However, the new block, although higher than existing, is located further away from the boundary to minimise overlooking and conforms to planning policy requirements. The proposed roof garden can be oriented to look over the park and away from existing homes.

31. Site 13 - Objections to this site are linked to objections to Site 13a. Site 13 has always shown development for housing, however, the form of housing has changed. The current housing layout is considered to be appropriate for the topography, the relationship to Frog's Copse and the pedestrian routes around the site. Although there is loss of open space there is not a loss of open space overall in the development. Private gardens are provided to the houses and some open space is retained.
32. Site 13a - This suggestion was included in the September consultation as a new idea. Residents' objections have been noted and in addition, following a more detailed review of the emerging master planning and design considerations, the site will not be considered for new homes.
33. Site 14 - Concerns were expressed by the Townhill Park Residents' Association about loss of views for residents of Hillgrove Road. Development of this site would conform to planning policy but following the feedback, further design and layout revisions have taken place to refine and improve the proposals.
34. Cabinet are asked to note the report on the public consultations carried out in September 2014. Please see Appendix 3
35. **Further Consultations:**
As the design proposals continue to develop the Council will recognise residents' views and, where possible, will seek to take these into account. Following the Council's responses to the September 2014 consultations further changes have been made to the designs. There will be further opportunities for residents to view these changes and the most up to date proposals for comment in the new year, prior to submission of the planning application, and the Council will continue to consider residents views. The intention is to submit a planning application in the spring of 2015. As part of this process, residents will have a further opportunity to participate in the statutory consultation process associated with the Planning Authority.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Capital/Revenue

Capital – Grant Funding

36. Grant funding of £750,000 has been allocated to the Council from the Homes and Communities Agency for the affordable housing element of the scheme as part of the HCA's Affordable Housing Programme 2015 – 2018. Details of how this money is actually claimed will form part of the grant funding agreement with the Homes and Community Agency. Approval to spend this money would need to be sought as part of a future scheme approval report.

Capital – Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

37. Previously Council approved that the HRA Capital Programme would fund costs estimated at £11.8M for the site preparation costs of phase one of the regeneration of Townhill Park. Specific scheme approval to spend, in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules, was agreed for the site preparation costs of phase one, along with approval to progress design work and leasehold acquisitions on phases two and three.

38. Demolition works had been included in the original project budget estimates in November 2012. The updated feasibility cost estimates for demolition have been prepared by Capita (as at September / October 2014) based on carrying out two phases of demolition at the site. The estimated cost of demolition of the superstructure is £790,000.
39. Cabinet are asked to note the approved expenditure for site preparation, including demolition, works at the phase one land at Townhill Park, which was granted in November 2012. The estimated expenditure for the demolition work, at £790,000, are to be phased as £50,000 in 2014/2015 and £740,000 in 2015/2016, on the Townhill Park Redevelopment Programme provision for which already exists in the Townhill Park Redevelopment Programme.

Capital – Delivery Of Redevelopment

40. There is ongoing work to consider delivery models for the redevelopment work at Townhill Park. It is envisaged that the delivery model work will reach a conclusion early in the New Year.
41. In November 2012 Council noted that the HRA will be required to incur further capital expenditure to acquire the 450 units of social housing at an estimated cost of £47.7M, provision for which has been included in the 30 year HRA Business Plan projections for these proposals, but with the timing dependent on the final details of the development agreement and subject to future Cabinet/Council approvals. They further noted that the General Fund capital programme will be required to fund highways infrastructure, and open space improvements, at an estimated cost of £2.6M with the method of funding this being agreed once the use of the Community Infrastructure Levy and the value of the GF capital receipts are known. Full scheme approval including financial details will come to full Council in early 2015.
42. Further to this in November 2013 Cabinet noted that a budget of £3.9M had been approved for the purchase of leasehold properties in phases two and three.

Property/Other

43. Some of the phase one properties on site remain occupied. The current position on acquisition to date is set out earlier in the report, at paragraphs 9 and 12. Negotiations are continuing to purchase the remaining properties which are in Council ownership. Once vacant possession of all the properties has been obtained, demolition of the whole site can be achieved

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:

44. The Council has powers under the Housing Acts, Landlord and Tenant Acts and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to undertake the estate regeneration proposals. A power of general competence is also available under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, the exercise of which is subject to any pre or post-commencement prohibitions or restrictions that may exist.

45. In order to extinguish the Right To Buy completely, a Final Demolition Notice (FDN) has to be served on any remaining secure tenants within seven years of the service of the Initial Demolition Notice at which time the Council must have concrete arrangements in place to purchase property which is not in its ownership. The Cabinet and Council report of November 2012 authorised officers to serve an Initial Demolition Notice on the phase one properties which was implemented in 2013.
46. The Council also has powers under the Housing Acts 1985 and 1996, the Land Compensation Act 1973 (as amended) and the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, to agree and to undertake the decanting of Council tenants to progress the scheme.
47. The Council has the power to make an application to stop-up or divert public highway under section 116 of the Highways Act 1980, section 247 and section 257 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, to enable a development to proceed.

Other Legal Implications:

48. None

POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS

49. These proposals will help deliver the new homes including affordable homes required in both the Housing Strategy 2011-15 and as part of the Council's partnership with Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH). The regeneration of Southampton's Council estates will play an important part in delivering a number of corporate policy objectives for regeneration

KEY DECISION? Yes/~~No~~

WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED: Harefield ward, Bitterne Park ward

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices

1. Plan of Phase One Properties To Be Demolished
2. Plan Of The Townhill Park Regeneration Area
3. Report on September 2014 public consultation

Documents In Members' Rooms

1. None

Equality Impact Assessment

Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to be carried out. Yes/~~No~~

Other Background Documents ; Equality Impact Assessment and Other Background documents available for inspection at:

- | | |
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| Title of Background Paper(s) | Relevant Paragraph of the Access to Information Procedure Rules / Schedule 12A allowing document to be Exempt/Confidential (if applicable) |
| 1. None | |