

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Housing and Environmental Portfolio Holder 8th September 2008
AUTHOR/S: Corporate Manager – Affordable Homes / Housing Development and Enabling Manager

LAND AT OAKINGTON ROAD, COTTENHAM

Purpose

1. To reconsider a decision made by Cabinet on the 9th February 2006, to dispose of the land at Oakington Road, Cottenham for £100,000 to Nene Housing Society (now called Accent Nene)

Executive Summary

2. The site has planning permission for six affordable dwellings, which was obtained in March 2008, by Accent Nene. However, in April 2008, it was discovered that the site was contaminated and this has impacted upon scheme viability.
3. The original unit mix for the scheme was for 3 rented and 3 shared ownership. The added costs of contamination need to be reflected in the viability appraisal now and the Housing Development and Enabling Manager is advised that if the cost of the land is not removed the entire scheme would have to be shared ownership.

Background

4. The site is at the rear of existing houses located at the junction of Oakington Road and Rampton Road, Cottenham. The site now has full planning permission for six affordable units. The agreed mix is for 3 rented and 3 shared ownership.

Considerations

5. Members of the cabinet previously considered disposal of this site for the market value of £100,000 and agreed that it should be disposed at this price in order to facilitate new affordable housing to meet identified local needs.
6. Full planning permission was obtained for this site in March 2008.
7. The Housing Development and Enabling Manager has recently been advised that this site is contaminated with Fluoride, to which Accent Nene had no prior knowledge of. This has added an extra cost to the affordable housing development, which now affects the viability of the originally proposed tenure mix.

Options

8. The only viable option to ensure that the Council do not fail to deliver on the original scheme mix is for the Council to agree to offer this land to Accent Nene at nil consideration.

Implications

9. The requirement to pay the sum of £100,000 to South Cambridgeshire District Council and the costs associated with the removal of the contamination will affect the tenure mix, and we would end up with no rented units on the site.

10.

Financial	If the Council were to remove the requirement from Accent Nene to pay SCDC for the land the Council would not have
Legal	None
Staffing	None
Risk Management	None
Equal Opportunities	None

Consultations

11. No consultation has been required for the purposes of drafting this report.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

12.

Affordable Homes	SCDC owned land will be developed to provide 6 new affordable homes
Customer Service	Providing more affordable local homes
Northstowe and other growth areas	N/A
Quality, Accessible Services	Providing local homes for families in Housing Need who wish to move into or remain the village
Village Life	Allowing families to move to more appropriate accommodation the village to better suit their needs
Sustainability	N/A
Partnership	Continued partnership with working with Accent Nene and the Parish Council

Conclusions/Summary

13. The site at Oakington Road has been found to be contaminated with Flouride, remediation therefore needs to undertaken to ensure that residential development can be built upon it. Members previously agreed for the site to be disposed of at £100,000, with the added remediation costs the original mix will not be achievable if the Council does not reconsider its original decision.

Recommendations

14. It is recommended that Accent Nene are offered the site a nil value which will ensure the agreed tenure mix of 3 rented and 3 shared ownership units are not put at risk.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Report to Housing Portfolio Holder dated 20th January 2006 and report to the Leader and Cabinet dated 9th February 2006

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