

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Housing Portfolio Holder

23 January 2013

AUTHOR/S: Director of Housing

TRANSFER AND SALE OF LAND OFF HADDOWS CLOSE, LONGSTANTON

Purpose

1. To seek the approval of the Housing Portfolio Holder for the transfer and sale of land off Haddows Close, Longstanton, as indicated on the plan (Appendix A).

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Portfolio Holder agrees to Option One:
Transfer the freehold of the area hatched blue on the plan to Longstanton Parish Council at nil cost for allotment use and offer the area hatched red for sale to 21 Haddows Close at the price of £4,000 for garden use.

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The land is surplus to Council requirements as it has no potential for development.
4. By transferring some of the land to the Parish Council and selling the remainder, the Council will receive a financial return for the land as well as allowing some for community use.

Background

5. The land was once a Council garage site and was omitted from the transfer of adjacent land to BPHA for redevelopment in December 2011.
6. BPHA have removed the garage units and the concrete surface from the site at their expense.
7. Vehicular access to the land has been retained by the Council via the new BPHA development.
8. Interest in acquiring the land has been received from Longstanton Parish Council who wish to use it for allotments and from the owner of 21 Haddows Close who wishes to extend her rear garden. The Parish Council would be happy to accept transfer of the blue-hatched area only as long as it is at nil cost.

Considerations

9. The land is at risk of flooding from the stream that runs alongside the western boundary and so cannot be developed for housing.
10. It is in the interests of the Council to dispose of the land as the cost of ongoing maintenance will be substantial.

11. A letter has been received from a local resident expressing her wish for an allotment, should any of the land be transferred to the Parish Council for this use. This indicates that a demand exists for allotments in this area.
12. It is estimated that three small allotment plots could be created on the area hatched blue on the plan. The whole area would offer about five small plots.
13. The land has been valued by Pocock & Shaw as follows:
 - i) £8,000 for the whole area as garden land to 21 Haddows Close or £4,000 for the red hatched area
 - ii) £9,500 for the whole area to the Parish Council for allotments or £3,700 for the blue hatched area
14. The Parish Council have made it clear that they have no funding to pay for the land.

Options

15. Option One – Transfer the freehold of the area hatched blue on the plan to Longstanton Parish Council at nil cost for allotment use and offer the area hatched red for sale to 21 Haddows Close at the price of £4,000 for garden use.
16. Option Two – Transfer the freehold of the whole area of surplus land to Longstanton Parish Council at nil cost for allotment use.
17. Option Three – Offer the whole area of surplus land for sale to 21 Haddows Close, at the price of £8,000 for garden use.

Implications

18. Financial	Option One would bring a return of £4,000 for the Council in addition to offering some land for community use. Option Two would bring nil return for the Council but would offer land for community use. Option Three would bring a return of £8,000 to the Council but no land would be offered for community use.
Legal	Legal advice will be sought to carry out any sale or transfer
Staffing	None
Risk Management	No risks associated with sale.
Equality and Diversity	None
Equality Impact Assessment completed	No Not relevant
Climate Change	None

Consultations

19. Councillor Riley has no objection to the transfer of land to the Parish Council for allotment use at nil cost.

20. Longstanton Parish Council would like to acquire the land for allotment use but if the Council is offering it at market value, this would prohibit them from purchasing. They would accept an offer of all or part of the land at nil cost, with each party paying their own legal costs.

Consultation with young people

21. None

Effect on Strategic Aims

22. AIM: To make sure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer outstanding and sustainable quality of life for our residents
Transferring some or all of the land to the Parish Council would ensure that there is a benefit to the local community

Conclusions / Summary

23. The land off Haddows Close, Longstanton is surplus to Council requirements and cannot be developed. Longstanton Parish Council have expressed interest in acquiring it for allotment use and interest in purchasing the land for garden use has been received from 21 Haddows Close. Some of the market value of the land would be realised by selling part of it to the private owner, whilst enabling the local community to benefit by transferring the remainder to the Parish Council at nil cost.

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

None.

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