

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Housing Portfolio Holder

20 March 2013

AUTHOR/S: Director of Housing

DISPOSAL OF GARAGE SITE OFF MILL LANE, BASSINGBOURN

Purpose

1. To seek agreement by the Housing Portfolio Holder for the disposal of the Council's garage site off Mill Lane, Bassingbourn as outlined red on plan.

Recommendations

2. That the Housing Portfolio Holder agrees that, depending on the outcome of any planning applications on the pub site, the site is offered for sale to a purchaser of the pub site at the price of £100,000 plus legal costs, for use as a parking and amenity area to serve either new housing or a new /reopened pub on the pub site. (Option Three).

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The site is surplus to Council requirements.
4. The Council should expect to receive the development value in any sale.
5. With local opposition to the development of new housing either on the garage site or on the adjacent pub site and a wish to see the pub reopened, it is suggested that a formal offer to sell the Council's site is not made until the outcome of any relevant planning applications submitted for the adjacent site is known.

Background

6. The site in question is one of two garage sites serving the Council's estate at The Fillance and Mill Lane, Bassingbourn.
7. The site consists of 10 units (nos 1-11), 5 of which are currently rented. The other site off The Fillance also has 10 units (nos 12-21), 4 of which are rented.
8. The forecourt of the site (1-11) is large and has been subject to anti-social behaviour by young people with cars and motor bikes.
9. 2 Mill Lane and 25 The Fillance both have a vehicular right of way over the site to access their own on-plot garages and there is a pedestrian access over the site for residents of The Fillance, via a path that enters one corner of the site.
10. Adjacent the garage site is a public house (The Pear Tree) which is closed and the site is currently for sale. Interest in purchasing the garage site has been received from a prospective purchaser of the pub site. His proposed redevelopment of the pub site (subject to planning permission) involves building eight new 3-bed terraced houses, four of which would be affordable. The original plan was to construct an underground parking area for these dwellings, the cost of which the developer has

estimated at £80 - £90K. He would prefer to use the adjacent garage site as a parking and amenity area for the new dwellings.

11. A valuation of the site was requested from Pocock & Shaw, who has assessed it at £40,000 if sold on the basis of its existing use. Since the site itself has potential for the development of housing, however, the Council should expect to receive the development value in any sale which is £100,000. The developer who expressed interest in the site has confirmed that he would be prepared to pay this price.

Considerations

12. The site is being considered for disposal as it is surplus to the Council's requirements and attracts anti-social behaviour. It is proposed that the 10 units on the other garage site off The Fillance will be rebuilt and will be sufficient to satisfy the local demand for garages to rent.
13. The site itself, following demolition of the garage units, has the potential for the development of 2 - 4 small affordable dwellings, with the existing rights of way over the site being retained.
14. The site also has the potential to serve as a parking and amenity area for a new development on the pub site, whether this is for new housing or for a new pub.
15. There is local opposition to the development of new housing on the pub site and garage site and a wish to see the pub reopened. The pub site is in private hands and the Council (as owner of the garage site) has no control over its sale nor its future use. Whether or not planning permission is granted for new housing on the pub site could have a bearing on the future use of the garage site.

Options

16. Option One – Retain site in SCDC ownership and consider its redevelopment for Council housing in the future.
17. Option Two – Place site on open market, starting at development value (£100,000) and accept highest bid, either for redevelopment of site for housing or to serve adjacent pub site either for housing or new pub.
18. Option Three – Depending on the outcome of any planning applications on the pub site, offer site for sale to a purchaser of the pub site at the price of £100,000 plus legal costs, for use as a parking and amenity area to serve either new housing or a new /reopened pub on the pub site.
19. Option Four – Only offer site for sale to a purchaser of the pub site if it is to be used as ancillary parking to serve new/reopened pub.

Implications

20.	Financial	With Option One, the Council could benefit from additional social housing on the site With Options Two to Four, the Council would be aiming to sell the site at market value
	Legal	Legal advice would be sought to carry out any sale.
	Staffing	None

Risk Management	No risks associated with sale.
Equality and Diversity	None
Equality Impact Assessment completed	No Not relevant
Climate Change	None

Consultations

21. Councillor Cathcart has registered his concern at the possible sale of the site to a developer and would prefer it to be used for parking to serve a new pub on the adjacent site. His reasons are as follows:
- i) "I am still hopeful that the pub could be opened again as a public house for the local community. In the past the pub has suffered from inadequate parking and the incorporation of part of the existing District Council car park into the environs of the Pear Tree would make it a more attractive and viable proposition for a future business. Although the Pub has been closed for over a year, there are plenty of examples of pubs being reopened again and there is widespread support in the local community for the pub to open again.
 - ii) For the entire car park to be sold to a developer would result in over development and would deprive the local council residents of much needed garage space and further encourage parking on the road which is already a problem."
22. Bassingbourn Parish Council are opposed to the sale of the site by the Council to a developer. They hope that The Pear Tree will remain as a public house and will not support any application for change of use to residential, should the pub site be sold.
23. Residents living adjacent the site at 2 Mill Lane, 23 and 25 The Fillance and 65 North End were consulted on the future of the garage site. The only response was from the owners of 65 North End, who strongly object to any new housing being built on the garage site due to concerns regarding overlooking. They would prefer the site to be used for parking either for the use of the local community or to serve a new development or new pub on the pub site (they would prefer a new pub).
24. The Housing Development and Enabling Manager supports Option Three.

Effect on Strategic Aims

25. **AIM: To make sure that South Cambridgeshire continues to offer outstanding and sustainable quality of life for our residents**
A sale of the site at market value to support the future use of the adjacent pub site, subject to any planning permissions, should ensure that the site is used to benefit the local community and that the Council receives best value for its asset.

Conclusions / Summary

26. The garage site is surplus to Council requirements. It has both its own development potential and the potential to support the future use of the adjacent (private) pub site which is currently for sale, as a parking and amenity area either for new housing or a new pub. With local opposition to new housing in that area and a preference for the

pub to be reopened, it is recommended that no formal sale offer on the garage site is made until any planning applications on the pub site have been determined.

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

None.

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