

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Housing Portfolio Holder

1 August 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 in principle that the site is offered for sale to the purchaser of the adjacent pub site at the price of £30,000 plus legal costs, for use as a parking and garden area to serve a new pub on the pub site, subject to planning permission and an uplift clause. Existing rights of way over the site to be retained. (Option One).

Reasons for Recommendations

3. The site is surplus to Council requirements.
4. There is local support for a new pub on the adjacent pub site and this would benefit from the use of the garage site as an ancillary parking and garden area.
5. There is local opposition to the use of the garage site for new housing.

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. On 20 March 2013 the Housing Portfolio Holder decided the following:

"To defer making a decision for six months to allow time for interested parties to put together a business case for the site and the former public house adjacent it to be redeveloped for use by the community of Bassingbourn. Tenancies of the garages on site would be ended within the next six months and, after that time, the Housing Portfolio Holder would decide whether to authorise a community use or exercise his power to sell following a reassessment of the land value."

11. The pub site has now been sold to a developer who proposes to redevelop the site as a new public house. A request has been received from the developer to purchase the garage site to use as a parking and garden area for the new pub, subject to planning permission. The developer has made the Council an offer of £30,000 for the garage site.
12. A valuation of the garage site had initially been requested from Pocock & Shaw, who assessed it at £40,000 if sold on the basis of its existing use. Pocock & Shaw were then asked to reassess the value of the site to serve as a parking and garden area for a new pub and their view is that acquisition of the land would not add any more to the value of the pub than the existing use figure and it would therefore be appropriate to offer the site for sale on this basis, provided that overage provision is included with the sale.

Considerations

13. 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.
14. The site itself, following demolition of the garage units, has the potential for the development of 2 - 4 small affordable dwellings but there is local opposition to such a proposal. The site's value if offered on the open market for housing development, would be approximately £100,000.
15. There is local support for a new pub and for the garage site to be part of this proposal so although the site would be sold at less than best consideration, it would be of benefit to the local community.
16. The developer has offered a figure for the site that is lower than the assessed value to allow for the expense of demolishing the garages and removing the asbestos. Based on quotations received for other garage demolitions and removal of asbestos, the cost of this work is estimated at £7,000 - £10,000.

Options

17. Option One – Offer the site for sale to the purchaser of the adjacent pub site at the price of £30,000 plus legal costs, for use as a parking and garden area to serve a new pub on the pub site, subject to planning permission and an uplift clause. Existing rights of way over the site to be retained.
18. Option Two – Place the site for sale on the open market at development value.
19. Option Three – Consider developing the site for new Council housing.

Implications

20. Financial	With Option One, the Council would benefit from some financial return Option Two would bring the maximum financial return to the Council With Option Three, the Council could benefit from additional social housing on the site
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's previous comment on this was:

"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."

He now supports the sale of the site to the purchaser of the pub site at £30,000, as long as it will be used only as a parking and amenity area to serve the proposed new pub.

22. Bassingbourn Parish Council's previous comments were that they hoped that The Pear Tree would remain as a public house and they would not support any application for change of use to residential.
23. Residents living adjacent the site at 2 Mill Lane, 23 and 25 The Fillance and 65 North End were previously 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 One.

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 to support the future use of the adjacent pub site as a new pub, subject to any planning permissions, should ensure that the site is used to benefit the local community.

Conclusions / Summary

26. The garage site is surplus to Council requirements. It has both its own development potential and the potential to serve as a parking and amenity area for a proposed new pub on the adjacent site, which has now been sold. With local opposition to new housing on the site and a preference for a newly opened pub, it is recommended to agree in principle to a sale of the site to the developer of the pub site, subject to planning permission being obtained.

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

None.

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