



REPORT TO: Housing Portfolio Holder
LEAD OFFICER: Director of Housing

1 April 2014

Wilford Furlong/Brickhills, Willingham

Purpose

1. This report provides the Housing Portfolio Holder with recent information gathered about the estate and also seeks permission to undertake a series of further actions detailed in the recommendations at Paragraph 3.
2. This is not a key decision. The option to progress work on this estate was first published in the August 2013 Forward Plan. Further reports will be presented to the Portfolio Holder as the project progresses.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that the Housing Portfolio Holder approves the initial steps for the Wilford Furlong/Brickhills Project as follows:
 - a) To undertake a more in depth survey of residents about where they live and how they feel about their home and current surroundings.
 - b) Re-survey all our 82 tenanted homes for consistent SAP and EPC ratings and asset information Work with Saunders Boston Architects to plan Open Days / Planning for real days to explore options with residents
 - c) Approach the scheme as an infill regeneration and renewal scheme; giving better neighbourhoods to existing residents and added value of additional homes to let
 - d) Explore the option of an additional new build site in the locality

Reasons for Recommendations

4. The Council is proposing a significant regeneration scheme for this estate and it is important to begin that process by working closely with existing residents to understand what they want to achieve for their area and homes.

Background

5. Wilford Furlong and the Brickhills estate was built circa 1970 with some additional homes being provided in the area in the late 1980s.
6. The estate currently comprises 129 properties (plus 1 non-residential communal facility) which include a mixture of property types and sizes. 93 of these properties remain in the ownership of South Cambridgeshire District Council, 62 of which are sheltered bungalows.

Property Breakdown	Numbers	% Totals	% Of What
All properties (Wilford Furlong & Brickhills)	130		
Houses	65	50%	Res props
Bungalows	64	50%	Res props
Residential Properties Sub Total	129		
Non residential	1		
Total	130		
Houses			
Council owned (inc 3 leaseholders)	29	23%	Res Props
2 bedroom	28	22%	Res Props
3 bedroom	1	1%	Res Props
Sub Total	29		
Bungalows	64	50%	Res props
Sheltered (inc 9 leaseholders)	62	48%	Res props
1 bedroom	23	18%	Res Props
2 bedroom	39	30%	Res Props
Sub Total	62		
Non sheltered	2		
2 bedroom	2	1.5%	Res Props
Sub Total	2		
Total	64		
Total Number Of Council Owned On Site	93	72%	Res Props
Total Number Sold Under Right To Buy	36	28%	Res Props
Total Number Of Sheltered	64	50%	Res Props

7. On the overall scheme the cost of day to day repairs and planned/capital works can be summarised as follows

- (a) The estate is expensive in terms of spend per property, per annum on responsive repairs. The council stock average spend per property per year is £396.23 for 2004-2014; Wilford Furlong/Brickhills is currently £636.79.

The latest Housemark figures for comparison purposes (2011/12) of 54 stock owning local authorities gives a range of £309 p.a at best to £375 as mid-range to £453 as high cost pa in terms of responsive repairs cost per annum.

- (b) The estate is not expensive in terms of spend per property, per annum on capital works. The stock average is £2304.76. Wilford Furlong/Brickhills is currently £1744.81.
- (c) The estate is not expensive in terms of spend per property, per annum on void works. The stock average is £2148.13. Wilford Furlong/Brickhills is currently £1877.28

Considerations

8. South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) currently manage 72% of the estate and 50% of this is sheltered accommodation.
9. The sheltered accommodation has the benefit of a communal room, which is well used by residents, and is also used regularly by other agencies (Diabetes nurse and dementia support). The external use is not huge and could be improved upon. It is not designated as a community hub, but our sheltered services team consider it to be a useful facility for the local residents.
10. The sheltered residents and South Cambridgeshire District Council currently use the communal room for the following:
 - a laundry – well used
 - an office – that has been reconfigured as storage for an emergency evacuation station
 - a room kitted out as a hairdressers
11. An initial analysis of the site by architects Saunders Boston demonstrates that the site is inefficient in terms of layout, has a significant amount of unused hard and soft landscaping, and the estate would lend itself well to infill plot development giving us additional affordable homes in the locality with associated increase in rental revenue.
12. The properties are expensive to maintain in terms of response repairs therefore capital spend on improvements will reduce this burden in the long term.
13. The Strategic Team have met with our lead Design Team, Saunders Boston. The Design Team have undertaken a site visit and have agreed to assist in participating in the wider community consultation that the Council feel is necessary to understand how the current residents feel about their estate and the environment where they live.

Options

14. There are currently four main options which could be explored with residents before any further decisions are made about Wilford Furlong.

- a) **Infill development possibilities** – there is quite a lot of open space and underused garage forecourts which could accommodate some additional new homes for the Council.
 - b) **Reconfiguring hard & soft landscaping** – there is the opportunity to include some of the underused open space areas into existing residents gardens, and possibly incorporate off road parking in some areas of the estate. The open space currently provides for no equipped area of play, is this something that residents want?
 - c) **Property improvements** – The properties are expensive to maintain in terms of responsive repairs. Capital investment from the Housing revenue Account over an agreed period could reduce the burden on our day to day repairs budget
 - d) **Increasing energy efficiency across our stock** – the properties vary in terms of SAP ratings from 52 to 96. The SAP average in the area is 71 and is considered low against our overall existing stock which measures at 73.
15. Demolition and rebuild is a theoretical option. However, the Council only manage 72% of the estate, the remainder being in owner occupation or privately let. A high proportion of the Council managed homes are sheltered housing (50%), therefore complete demolition and rebuild would not:
- a) Be cost efficient – estimated cost of relocation and buying owned properties would be in the region of £6.5 to £7.5 million
 - b) Add any social value because if we were to pursue a demolition & rebuild option we would need to relocate a large number of settled elderly people who may be content in their homes – and that the upheaval would in all reasonable likelihood be detrimental to their well-being.

Implications

16. In the writing of this report, taking into account financial, legal, staffing, risk management, equality and diversity, climate change, community safety and any other key issues, the following implications have been considered: -

Financial

17. The survey costs can be met from within the existing tenant participation budget. Once the scale and extent of the project is known this will be the subject of a more detailed business plan. All costs will be met from within the HRA.

Legal

18. Legal advice will be sought as the project develops and in response to questions arising from the consultation.

Staffing

19. There are no extra staff requirements at this stage of the process. There is already a dedicated Tenancy Liaison Officer in post as well as the local Housing Officer and sheltered housing Estate Officer.

Risk Management

20. Current risks are minimal. The main risk is reputational damage if lots of preparation work is done but no work follows

Equality and Diversity

21. There are no significant implications at this stage. The consultation will take into account the views of all members of the local community and their particular needs.

Climate Change

22. There are no significant implications at this stage but the project has the potential to improve the environmental performance of the dwellings on the estate.

Consultation responses (including from the Youth Council)

23. This report is requesting approval to undertake detailed consultation.

Effect on Strategic Aims

Aim 4: ENGAGEMENT

24. Work with tenants, parish councils and community groups to sustain successful, vibrant villages

Aim 5: PARTNERSHIPS

25. Build new council homes to provide affordable accommodation to meet the needs of local communities

Background Papers

None

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