

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Housing Portfolio Holder 5th March 2009
AUTHOR/S: Corporate Manager – Affordable Homes / Housing Development
and Enabling Manger

ACCESS OVER LAND IN THE OWNERSHIP OF SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL AT ORCHARD CLOSE, COTTENHAM

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to seek the Housing Portfolio Holders consent to grant Hundred Houses a “right of access” over a strip of land that is currently in the ownership of South Cambridgeshire District Council. The access will facilitate a development on an exceptions site of 11 affordable homes for local people in Cottenham.
2. This is not a key decision because the value of the access strip does not exceed £120,000.

Background

3. This site is at the rear of houses in Orchard Close, Cottenham and can only be accessed through the car parking area and access strip currently in the ownership of South Cambridgeshire District Council.
4. The site was granted full planning permission for 11 affordable homes for people with a local connection to Cottenham in December 2008. A plan, highlighting the access strip is attached to this report.

Considerations

5. The site now has full planning permission, and Hundred Houses will shortly be making an application for grant funding to the Homes and Communities Agency through the Continous Market Engagement Process. This application will be supported by the Housing Strategy and Development Team.
6. The original proposal for the site was for a mix of shared ownership and rented units. However, current market conditions are making it almost impossible for applicants registered with Key Homes East (our HomeBuy Agent) to secure a mortgage. Therefore smaller scale development such as this, will only be successful in the current climate if we are able to offer it all as rented. Hundred Houses have confirmed that would be willing to provide all the units on a rented basis.
7. The Housing Portfolio Holder will be aware that our largest demand for social housing is for rented accommodation. It is prudent that we are able to fill properties with families in housing need, rather than let the homes sit empty, which is likely to be the case should shared ownership be insisted upon for this site.
8. This is an exceptions site, it will therefore be allocated to households with a local connection to Cottenham.

Options

9. The only option to allow this scheme for 11 affordable homes to proceed is for the Housing Portfolio Holder to grant access over land currently in the ownership of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Implications

10. Financial	The value of the access to the site is £44,000 as confirmed by our valuers Pocock and Shaw
Legal	None
Staffing	None
Risk Management	None
Equal Opportunities	None

Consultations

11. Consultations were not necessary for the purpose of this report

Effect on Corporate Objectives and Service Priorities

12.	Work in partnership to manage growth to benefit everyone in South Cambridgeshire now and in the future This project brings together the work of the District Council, Hundred Houses Housing Association, Cottenham Parish Council and the Homes and Communities Agency. This site will deliver 11 affordable homes
	Deliver high quality services that represent best value and are accessible to all our community Hundred Houses will be able to provide a good quality and local housing management service which benefits the local community in Cottenham
	Enhance quality of life and build a sustainable South Cambridgeshire where everyone is proud to live and work Good quality, sustainable and affordable housing will be developed on this site

Recommendations

13. The Housing Portfolio Holder is asked to recommend that Hundred Houses is granted rights of access over the access strip at Orchard Close, Cottenham at nil value.

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

Plan of Orchard Close, Cottenham

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