

## **BRECKLAND COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE BOARD – 21 JANUARY 2008**

**CABINET – 12 FEBRUARY 2008**

### **REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR COMMERCIAL SERVICES**

**(Author: Zoe Footer, Land Management Officer, in conjunction with Ray Johnson, Assistant Director)**

#### **VACANT AND SURPLUS LAND – OPTIONS APPRAISAL**

This report asks for the release of £130,000.00 revenue funding and that power be given to the appropriate Director to offer a contract to a consultant(s) offering best value to submit planning applications on 11 Vacant and Surplus Council-owned sites and commence negotiations with developers and housing associations to achieve the maximum commercial return, once the Council's procurement process has been adhered to.

#### **1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Scrutiny Panel (Economic) considered the future use of 75 Vacant and Surplus Council-owned sites at their meetings held on 2 September 2004, 6 January 2005 and 7 April 2005. Members made 'in principle' recommendations which were subsequently endorsed by Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.
- 1.2 Following preliminary discussions with Allman Woodcock Ltd (Chartered Quantity Surveyors) in May 2007, a professional team was assembled involving David Futter Associates Ltd (Architects and Consulting Engineers) and Edwin Watson Partnership (Chartered Surveyor) to assess the development potential of the 75 sites.

#### **2. KEY DECISION**

- 2.1 This is not a key decision.

#### **3. COUNCIL PRIORITIES**

- 3.1 This matter raised in this report falls(s) within the following council priorities:
- A well planned place to live which encourages vibrant communities.

#### **4. MUD TO HOUSES**

- 4.1 The Council has received a preliminary report from this professional team which gives an initial overview of the plots of vacant and surplus land. Each site has been categorised for development potential. The categories are A, B, C or D, with A in the professional team's opinion, having the best chances of success.
- 4.2 On 18 September 2007 a meeting was held with this professional team whereby a definitive list of category A sites was established and agreed which includes the following:
1. Bintree – Cubbits Close;
  2. Caston – Coronation Terrace;
  3. Dereham – Boyd Avenue;
  4. Dereham – Girling Road;
  5. Dereham – Howlett Close;
  6. Dereham – Moorgate Road;
  7. Dereham – South Green Gardens;
  8. Gressenhall – Swan Drive;
  9. Mileham – Burghwood Drive;
  10. Swaffham – Sandringham Way; and

## 11. Whissonsett – Church Close.

- 4.3 These 11 sites potentially accommodate 40 units.
- 4.4 The next stage of this innovative scheme involves undertaking more detailed inspections of each site, including photographic records, liaising with Planning and Housing officers on the sites that have been prioritised and preparing sketch scheme layouts for potential development.
- 4.5 The professional team provided an indicative fee of £130,000.00 for this work. This equates to £3,000.00 per unit.

### **5. OPTIONS**

- 5.1 That funds of £130,000.00 be released and that power be given to the appropriate Director to offer a contract to a consultant(s) offering best value to submit planning applications on 11 Vacant and Surplus Council-owned sites and commence negotiations with developers and housing associations to achieve the maximum commercial return, once the Council's procurement process has been adhered to.
- 5.2 That an exception to standing order be applied in this case. That funds of £130,000.00 be released and that power be given to the appropriate Director to instruct Allman Woodcock Ltd, David Futter Associates Ltd and Edwin Watson Partnership to submit planning application on 11 Vacant and Surplus Council-owned sites (see 4.2 above) and commence negotiations with developers and housing associations to achieve the maximum commercial return.
- 5.3 That this innovative scheme not be progressed any further.

### **6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 To progress this innovative scheme.

### **7. RISK**

- 7.1 The Council will not maximise its return on the sites identified.

### **8. RECOMMENDATION**

- 8.1 I recommend that revenue funds of £130,000.00 be released and that power be given to the appropriate Director to offer a contract to a consultant(s) offering best value to submit planning applications on 11 Vacant and Surplus Council-owned sites and commence negotiations with developers and housing associations to achieve the maximum commercial return, once the Council's procurement process has been adhered to.

Appendix A – Pro Forma B

Appendix B - Site Plans of 11 Vacant and Surplus Council-owned sites (see 4.2 above)

Appendix C – Outline timetable

*This report has taken account of the need for compliance with the Council's Equal Opportunities Policy and the requirements of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998. This report raises no matters to which attention specifically needs to be drawn under the legislation.*