

Report of the Cabinet Member for Next Generation Services

Cabinet – 18 February 2016

MORE HOMES: PILOT SCHEME PROGRESS

Purpose:	To provide an update on progress with the pilot schemes of new Council housing.
Policy Framework:	Local Housing Strategy.
Reason for Decision:	To progress the development of new Council Housing.
Consultation:	Legal, Finance & Access to Services.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) Progress with the pilot schemes is noted. 2) HRA land off Eppynt Road and Bettws Road in Penlan is identified as a reserve pilot location should any further constraints to development within desired timescales become evident on the existing sites. 3) That any decisions arising out of this report are delegated to the Cabinet Member for Next Generation Services and the Director of Place.
Report Author:	Martin Nicholls / David Evans
Finance Officer:	Jeff Dong
Legal Officer:	Sandie Richards
Access to Services Officer	Phil Couch

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Cabinet at its meeting on the 17th September 2015 decided (minute 72) that:

'Housing Revenue Account (HRA) owned land off Milford Way, Penderry and at Parc Y Helig, Llansamlet, are identified as preferred locations for pilot schemes of new Council housing subject to any unknown constraints to development.'

1.2 As set out in the Cabinet report at the time, the objectives of the pilot schemes is to test a number of issues which in turn will help inform the longer term strategy for providing additional Council housing. These include:

- Overall financial viability of directly developing new Council housing:

- The practical, organisational and capability issues that will need to be addressed as part of the ongoing More Homes programme:
- Specification options to balance the viability of the scheme with the affordability for the occupants and overall sustainability of the design.

2.0 Progress

- 2.1 Initially, the main consideration on the Parc Y Helig site was for a small scheme of HRA funded new build and a larger scheme in partnership with a developer preferred for Milford Way.
- 2.2 However, some of the potential site constraints at Parc Y Helig which were mentioned in the report to Cabinet in September 2015 have since become evident and whilst development is still possible, progress within the desired timescales may now be unlikely.
- 2.3 In terms of the Milford Way site, any potential constraints are unlikely to have the same impact on development as at Parc Y Helig. Therefore, a small development of directly funded housing at the Milford Way site is now being progressed alongside the Parc Y Helig scheme.

3.0 Indicative Timescales

- 3.1 Appendix 1 includes indicative timelines for both the Milford Way and Parc Y Helig sites for “traditional” and Passivhaus standard. The timelines are based on having an agreed project brief and any subsequent changes may have an adverse effect on the overall timeline.
- 3.2 In addition to these “two standards” referred to in 3.1 and Appendix 1, recent discussions have taken place regarding utilising an innovative design by a consortium of academics led by Swansea University for ‘energy positive’ homes probably at Milford Way. This design has been given the acronym SOLCER (Smart Operations for a Low Carbon Energy Region) and detailed discussions with the University are ongoing. However, given the learning process and more complex design of these innovative approaches, timelines are likely to be longer than a more traditional option.
- 3.3 As things currently stand, either option listed in Appendix A could deliver a phased completion of some units on the Milford Way site within desired timescales although no allowance for slippage, unforeseen ground conditions or adverse weather has been built into the indicative timeline.
- 3.4 The timeline also assumes that no further formal cabinet approvals are required for the schemes.
- 3.5 In considering the respective timelines, attention is drawn to the requirement to comply with contract procedure rules and EU procurement legislation which may have an impact on these indicative dates

4.0 Third Pilot Site

- 4.1 Until the required ground surveys and detailed discussions with all the relevant statutory bodies have been completed, there is a risk with any development that unforeseen constraints become evident which impact on desired timescales.
- 4.2 Whilst the risks of this at Milford Way are less than at the Parc Y Helig, constraints may still become evident as part of the development process and it would be useful at this stage to identify a third pilot site to be held in reserve.
- 4.3 A previous analysis of HRA owned sites showed that land off Eppynt Road and Bettws Road in Penlan offered the best opportunity for development within a relatively short timescale and the proposal is to work up a small scheme of new build Council housing at this site to be brought forward for development should unforeseen delays unduly impact on progress at the current sites.

5.0 Equality and Engagement Implications

- 5.1 An EIA screening was completed for the original site selection report which concluded that a full EIA report is not required at this time.

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 Provision has been made within the HRA Capital Programme for 2016/17 for 'More Homes'. Appropriate FPR7 reporting and approval shall be obtained by the More Homes Project team once the resultant scheme and budget is formalised

7.0 Legal Implications

- 7.1 At the appropriate stage, advice will be required as part of a more detailed assessment of practical issues regarding title which relate directly to the development of the sites for a pilot scheme, such as the right of light and air and drainage. Detailed advice will be also be required regarding the planning law implications of the scheme

Background Papers: None

Appendices: Indicative Timeline

More Homes – Pilot Programme: Indicative Project Timelines (summary)*

Key Activity	Milford Way, Penderry		Parc-y-Helig, Birchgrove		Eppynt/Bettws Rd Penlan
	Traditional	Passivhaus	Traditional	Passivhaus	
Ecological Survey	N/A - mitigation only	N/A - mitigation only	May 2016	May 2016	N/A mitigation only
Ground Investigation	Feb-April16 (topo. complete)	Feb-April16 (topo. complete)	June-Aug16 (inc. topo. knotweed & site clearance)	June-Aug16 (inc. topo., knotweed & site clearance)	June-Aug16 (inc. topo)
Design	Feb-June16	Feb-July16	Apr-Aug16	Apr-Sept16	<i>Timelines to be confirmed on confirmation of brief</i>
Planning	July-Sept16	Aug-Oct16	Sept-Nov16	Oct-Dec16	
Tender/Quotation	July-Sept16	Aug-Oct16	Sept-Nov16	Oct-Dec16	
Construction	Sept-June17	Oct-Aug17	Dec-Sept17	Jan17-Nov17	
Phased Handover	Mar 17-July 17	Apr 17-Sept17	June17-Oct17	Aug 17 – Jan18	

* *Timelines indicated above are subject to:*

- site surveys – specifically ground investigation to define ability to develop at reasonable cost
- reasonable infrastructure/substructure abnormalities
- detailed consultation with utility providers re. services infrastructure within and serving each site & any improvements required
- Parc Y Helig timeline relates to current site– works elements/timelines to be adjusted if alternative location on Parc Y Helig is pursued.
- assumed internal (CBPS) contractor delivery – if external, procurement timelines to be reviewed