

**Agenda Item No:** 9.6 **Report No:** 121/15  
**Report Title:** Land for Development at Ringmer  
**Report To:** Cabinet **Date:** 24<sup>th</sup> September 2015  
**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Andy Smith  
**Ward(s) Affected:** Ouse Valley and Ringmer  
**Report By:** Alan Osborne, Director of Corporate Services  
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#### **Purpose of Report:**

To update Cabinet on a proposal to develop of a number of Council-owned sites to provide community benefit and regeneration in Ringmer and a financial return for the Council.

#### **Officers Recommendation(s):**

- 1 That the Director of Corporate Services and the Assistant Director of Corporate Services be authorised to negotiate a Development Agreement based on the draft Heads of Terms for the disposal of land for development for housing at Anchor Field in Ringmer.

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#### **Reasons for Recommendations**

- 2 To enable the Council to enter into a development agreement with a property developer which will enable it to achieve the following:
  - Make best use of assets to stimulate regeneration and realise community benefits, including the provision of affordable housing.
  - Dispose of the maintenance liability of under-performing assets.

## Information

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#### Anchor Field, Ringmer

- 3.1** In May 2012 Cabinet approved the Corporate Property Strategy which recommended that all previous LDC policy relating to property be superseded by the new Strategy.
- 3.2** The Council has been approached by a developer working in conjunction with Ringmer Football Club to relocate the club elsewhere within the village (potentially as a facility that will enable wider community use), and develop the existing football ground to deliver new housing within Ringmer.
- 3.3** The Council owns three parcels of land that border the football club and one area leased to the Club. Two of the sites have been discussed with the Council's strategic property partner and the early indication is that the sites could be removed from the package of assets available for redevelopment without impacting on the remaining sites or the project as a whole.
- 3.4** The proposal is to develop the existing football ground for a mixed residential scheme. Such a proposal is supported in principle, with 'saved' Policy RG1 from the Local Plan 2003 allocating the existing ground for a residential development provided a suitable replacement facility is identified and established.
- 3.5** In January 2015, Cabinet approved a recommendation to investigate the feasibility of entering into a partnership with Anchorfield Developments Ltd (ADL) to develop the site. The primary objectives of the partnership would be to:
  - (a)** carry out redevelopment
  - (b)** obtain satisfactory planning permission
  - (c)** site assembly
  - (d)** obtain vacant possession
  - (e)** acquire necessary rights
  - (f)** extinguish third party rights where necessary; and
  - (g)** overcome any other impediments blocking the potential for redevelopment.
- 3.6** By combining the land owned by Ringmer FC and the land owned by the Council, there is scope to deliver a wider and more attractive scheme.

The proposals incorporate landscaping, amenity space, and equipped play space. It will deliver a mix of housing types and tenures and will be sensitively designed so as to enhance the appearance of the site in the community.

- 3.7** Any proposal that is progressed as part of the proposed development agreement will need to have regard to the relevant development plan policies for the site and area in question.

Any proposals will also need to consider any existing uses on the sites in question and whether there is a need for these to be relocated, or re-provided elsewhere. This will be determined through the consideration of any planning application on the site (including pre-application engagement), which will be an entirely separate and independent process to the development agreement.

- 3.8** Heads of terms have been drafted settings out the terms of the commercial transaction agreed in principle between parties during initial negotiations. The Heads of Terms are attached as Appendix A. Heads of terms do not legally compel the parties to conclude the deal. However, they normally:

- (a)** provide written confirmation of the main terms agreed in principle;
- (b)** outline the timetable for progressing the project; and
- (c)** provide the basis for the parties to move to the drafting of the legally binding definitive agreements.

- 3.9** It is recommended that Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Corporate Services and the Assistant Director of Corporate Services to negotiate a Development Agreement with Anchorfield Developments Ltd based on the draft Heads of Terms appended to this report.

## **Financial Appraisal**

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- 4.1** Initial appraisals of the proposed scheme give a total land value of between £5 million and £8 million. The Council would receive a proportion of this value as a capital receipt net of professional fees and costs, as a percentage of the land included within the agreement. The Gross Development Value of the site is considerably higher and illustrative figures are provided at Appendix B.

## **Legal Implications**

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- 5.1** Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires that a local authority achieve best consideration for any freehold or disposal or a leasehold disposal in excess of seven years. The negotiations will have to take account of this statutory requirement

## **Risk Management Implications**

- 6** Risk management implications will be determined at the project implementation stage if the project proceeds.

## **Equality Screening**

- 7** A decision as to whether an Equality Impact Assessment is necessary will be made at the project implementation stage if the project proceeds.

## **Background Papers**

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## **Appendices - EXEMPT**

- 9** Appendix A (exempt): Heads of Terms  
Appendix B (exempt): Headline Valuation