

REPORT TO CABINET

REPORT OF: Housing Services

REPORT NO. HSG165

DATE: 10th October 2005

TITLE:	Redevelopment of Bedsit Accommodation Croake Hill, Swinstead
FORWARD PLAN ITEM:	Not applicable
DATE WHEN FIRST APPEARED IN FORWARD PLAN:	Not applicable
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	Not applicable

COUNCIL AIMS/PORTFOLIO HOLDER NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Cllr. Peter Martin-Mayhew / Housing
CORPORATE PRIORITY:	Affordable Housing - B
CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS:	Minor
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT IMPLICATIONS:	This report is publicly available via the Local Democracy link on the Council's website www.southkesteven.gov.uk
BACKGROUND PAPERS:	Housing Strategy Community Strategy Report to Cabinet 16th December 2002

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update the Cabinet and to obtain approval to sell 2124m² of land (bedsit accommodation, garages, community room and rear washing line store area) at Croake Hill, Swinstead to Muir Group Housing Association ("The Association") shown edged with a broken line on the attached Plan A. The Housing Association propose redevelopment of the site with demolition of the existing bedsit accommodation and development of affordable housing, consisting six houses and two bungalows. It is proposed the site be sold to the Association at the District Valuer's fettered valuation taking into account nomination rights in favour of the Council.

To obtain approval to sell 978m² of amenity housing land (area edged with a broken line on the attached Plan B) to the Association as open land for the benefit of the residents of Croake Hill and maintained as open land for a period of 20 years.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that having considered other options available:

1. The land and buildings outlined by the broken line on Plan 'A' at Croake Hill, Swinstead be sold to the Association to develop six houses and two bungalows subject to a nomination rights in favour of the Council at District Valuers Valuation.
2. The open amenity land shown edged with a broken line on the attached Plan B be sold to the Association at District Valuers Valuation subject to the land being maintained by the Association as open land for the benefit of the residents of the Croake Hill development.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

On the 16th December 2002, Cabinet made the decision that:

1. The eight bedsit units, communal facilities and Warden's quarters at the Croake Hill, Swinstead sheltered scheme be demolished.
2. All equipment, furnishings, fittings, etc. be salvaged for use at other sheltered schemes.
3. Subject to the granting of planning permission, the site to be redeveloped to provide bungalows in partnership with one of the Council's preferred registered social landlord (RSL) partners.

The Association have been selected as one of the Council's preferred RSL partners.

Planning permission for the redevelopment of the site shown on Plan A attached was not granted until 17th May 2005. A report attached at Appendix A outlines the planning application history and the reasons for the change of units to six houses and two bungalows.

The Housing Association proposes to redevelop the site with eight affordable homes to meet local housing needs. Muir Group has secured funding for the redevelopment of the site from the Housing Corporation. In order to qualify for the grant, the transfer of the ownership of the site now needs to be completed.

On the 16th March 2005 Swinstead Residents Group applied to Lincolnshire County Council to register two pieces of land as 'Village Green' on our development site at Croake Hill. The two pieces of land are shown hatched on the attached Plan A. They are claiming that both pieces of land have become village green through 20 years of use.

This Council has opposed the application. The relevant committee of the County Council is due to consider the application on 17th October 2005.

A local neighbouring resident and the Swinstead Residents Group have approached the Council with offers to purchase an area of land shown hatched on Plan A - Area number 1.

The priority of the Council is to provide affordable housing. The most effective way for the Council to do this is to make land available to RSL's to provide such housing and secure nomination rights in favour of the Council. These offers to purchase have not been pursued.

4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND ASSESSED

Requests to purchase the two areas of land shown by a broken line on Plans A and B attached have been considered as genuine offers. It is recommended that these offers be rejected, as they do not accord with the Council's priorities. The requests also include a proposal for the two areas to be provided for the benefit of the community of Swinstead as village green or Swinstead. The Associations proposals for redevelopment of the site include the retention of the open space to the front of the development for the benefit of all the residents of Croake Hill. The Association's proposals could not proceed without the two areas of land referred to. The two areas of land have not been declared surplus to requirement by Housing Services.

5. COMMENTS OF CORPORATE MANAGER, DEMOCRATIC AND LEGAL SERVICES (MONITORING OFFICER)

The Council has the power to dispose of the freehold of the site to the Association at fettered valuation by virtue of s.25 of the Local Government Act 1988 in accordance with the General Housing Consent 2005.

The Council has opposed the application for registration as a village green. The land is housing land which has not been appropriated for any other use. Appropriate notices have been placed on the land to prevent any further use.

6. CONTACT OFFICER

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