

Report to the Council House-building Cabinet Committee



Report reference: CHB-008-2013/14
Date of meeting: 04 February 2014

**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Housing – Cllr David Stallan

Subject: Future use of garage sites unsuitable for redevelopment –
Council House-Building Programme

Responsible Officer: Paul Pledger, Asst. Director of Housing (Property)
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Democratic Services Officer: Jackie Leither (01992 564756)

Recommendations:

That the Cabinet Committee receives a report at a future meeting on the use of garage sites that are unsuitable for redevelopment.

Executive Summary:

The Council's Development Agent is required to undertake feasibility studies for each of the 65 garage sites included on a list of potential development garage sites approved by the Cabinet. The future use of any garage site considered either unsuitable, financially unviable or not receiving planning permission must to be considered and a Policy agreed. The Cabinet Committee is being consulted on the options that are to be considered and included in a more detailed report at a later date.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

Since the Cabinet have agreed to the redevelopment of 65 garage sites, this agreement is always subject to feasibility, financial viability and planning approval. Where sites are not developable, then their future use must be considered to maximise the Council's benefit of the Asset.

Other Options for Action:

1. This report is for discussion only at this stage.

Background

1. The Cabinet, at its meeting in July 2012, agreed to the redevelopment of 65 under-used garage and other sites for the construction of Council houses and flats, with a target of 20 homes per year for 6-years making 120 Council homes in total.
2. Each site is being assessed by the Council's Development Agent, East Thames, for its development potential, which includes a detailed feasibility study and financial viability assessment. Once considered by the Cabinet Committee, some sites will be progressed up to and including planning applications being submitted. However, some sites will not be developable for any number of reasons, including unsuitable access, insufficient land,

financially unviable, unforeseen underground services, legal issues or simply not being put forward by the Cabinet Committee planning permission or gaining planning approval. For these sites, it is necessary to develop a Policy on their future use, which may include:

- a. The sale of the sites to private developers for residential or commercial redevelopment;
 - b. Dividing the site up and offering the land to neighbouring properties for garden use;
 - c. Demolishing the garages and retaining the land for open, unallocated off-street parking, or other uses including grassed or landscaped amenity space; or
 - d. Retention of the garages and to continue to rent them where possible
3. It is proposed that a detailed report on this issue be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

Resource Implications:

None at this stage

Legal and Governance Implications:

Within its Terms of Reference, the House-Building Cabinet Committee is expected to consider the future use of each garage site, either for Council House-building or any other alternative use.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

The future use of under-utilised garage sites that do not have redevelopment potential, need to be considered so as to make the best possible use of the site and enhance the environment.

Consultation Undertaken:

None

Background Papers:

None

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

Each site will need to have a risk assessment carried out to ensure the future use is both safe and suitable in the short, medium and long-term. Site specific Risk Assessment has yet to be compiled.

Equality and Diversity:

Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications? No

Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? N/A

What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?

It should be noted that an Equality Impact Assessment has already been formulated for Housing Strategy and Development.

How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?

N/A