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| <b>11 February 2020</b>  |                             | <b>ITEM: 7</b> |
| <b>Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>   |                             |                |
| <b>Housing Development Options List</b>  |                             |                |
| <b>Wards and communities affected:</b><br>All  | <b>Key Decision:</b><br>Key |                |
| <b>Report of:</b> Keith Andrews, Housing Development Manager                                   |                             |                |
| <b>Accountable Assistant Director:</b> David Moore, Interim Assistant Director, Place Delivery |                             |                |
| <b>Accountable Director:</b> Andy Millard, Director of Place                                   |                             |                |
| <b>This report is</b> Public   |                             |                |

## **Executive Summary**

On 29 October 2019, Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee were asked to comment on the proposed process and criteria by which Council owned sites are selected for redevelopment for residential purposes. Subsequently, Cabinet approved the approach set out on 15 January 2019. This report now follows the criteria established by Cabinet and sets out a list of site options that are recommended to be considered for residential development by the Council (through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)) or by the Council's wholly owned company, Thurrock Regeneration Limited (TRL).

The list of site options will enable the Council to have greater focus and work more efficiently towards delivering the housing development targets as time will be spent on sites that are agreed, rather than reacting and working on sites that may be abortive.

The report does not seek approval for individual housing development schemes, nor for housing development contracts to be tendered. Its purpose, in accordance with the procedure agreed by Cabinet in January, is to identify a list of potential housing development sites that have been assessed against the initial criteria agreed by Cabinet. The list of site options will then be explored further to establish their suitability for development, subject to the appropriate levels of engagement and consultation with stakeholders and communities.

### **1. Recommendation(s)**

- 1.1 Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to review and comment on the list of housing development option sites to be taken forward for further detailed work, involving engagement with**

## **stakeholders and communities.**

- 1.2 Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee are asked to note that their comments on this paper will be reported to Cabinet on 12 February 2020.**

## **2. Introduction and Background**

- 2.1 The emerging Local Plan refers to the need for up to 32,000 new homes in Thurrock during the next Local Plan period to 2038.
- 2.2 As a contribution to this target, the Council has agreed its own ambitious targets for house-building, both through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and through Thurrock Regeneration Limited (TRL). These targets are to build:
- up to 500 affordable HRA homes between 2019 to 2029
  - 1,000 homes for sale and rent by TRL by 2023
- 2.3 This follows the publication of the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (May 2017) which objectively assessed the need for housing in Thurrock between 2014 and 2037 as being between 1,074-1,381 new dwellings per annum, within which the affordable housing element is estimated at 472 dwellings per annum.
- 2.4 On 18 June 2019, the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorsed the delivery of a New Homes Delivery Programme through the HRA for the next 5 to 10 years and resolved to receive regular updates to assist in its successful delivery.
- 2.5 Further reports to Housing Overview and Scrutiny on 29 October 2019 and to Cabinet on 15 January 2020 established the process and criteria by which sites are to be identified as potential housing development site options.
- 2.6 The aim of the list of site options is to provide greater transparency on the sites being considered for potential housing development, and to address the Council's growth aspirations and Housing Development targets.
- 2.7 The list of development site options will also provide a focus for Housing Development activity in the Council and through TRL, leading to greater efficiencies and improved delivery.

## **3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

### **The Options List**

- 3.1 This report identifies twenty Council-owned site options that have been through the newly established process and criteria and have been identified

as potentially being suitable for residential development by the HRA or TRL. The list of sites is summarised in Appendix A, with more detailed site by site information contained in Appendix B.

- 3.2. In total, the site options on the list could deliver up to 926 new homes against the Council's and TRL's targets, although it should be emphasised that these figures are indicative. It is expected that there will be a mix of unit types, tenures and sizes that are appropriate for each site and which also meet (at a programme level) the Council's cross-tenure housing needs.
- 3.3 It should be noted that Committee's (and Cabinet's) views of the Housing Development Options List does not constitute any form of planning endorsement, nor does this report seek to create authority for schemes to proceed or construction contracts to be tendered. The site options on the list will be brought forward in the normal way, including consultation with stakeholders and communities. Regular progress and update reports will be brought to this Committee on the overall progress of the housing development programme, together with any additional schemes or amendments to the existing programme.
- 3.4 In addition, if sites are identified as being suitable for development by TRL, then further approvals will be needed from TRL's Board once the site has been deemed viable. The terms of any land transfer will require separate Cabinet approval.

### **Next Steps**

- 3.5 Following agreement of sites on the options list, they will be taken forward for further development work and detailed engagement with local communities, in a process that will be supported by the Council's internal Community Development and Equalities Team, with input from other agencies as required. This is to ensure that any new development meet the Council's standards and that stakeholders, Councillors and communities are fully engaged in the process.
- 3.6 Those sites considered suitable to progress to the development stage will then be subject to final approvals at Cabinet (tender approvals, award of contracts etc.) and Planning Committee as set out above.

### **Updates and Amendments**

- 3.7 The list of potential site options for development will from time to time require amendment and updating as new sites become available in line with the established criteria. The housing development programme will need to be dynamic and forward-moving and it is recommended that programme updates should be brought to this Committee on a regular basis to update Members on progress.

3.8 Any significant changes to the sites on the agreed list (such as changes to the “redline” boundary if neighbouring sites are identified that could sensibly be added to an agreed scheme) would be made in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and reported back regularly to this Committee.

#### **4. Reasons for Recommendation**

4.1 The recommendation is informed by the recently agreed Housing Delivery Process, which was put in place in order to ensure that the Council can achieve its Housing Delivery targets in an open and transparent manner and in close liaison with local communities and can then focus on the effective delivery of schemes.

#### **5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

5.1 This paper provides an opportunity for Members of this Committee to review the proposed sites and development programme, and Committee’s comments will be reported to Cabinet on 12 February 2020.

5.2 Housing Overview and Scrutiny committee has also previously considered the New Homes Delivery Programme on 18 June 2019 and the Housing Development Process on 29 October 2019.

#### **6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact**

6.1 The proposed list of housing development site options aligns closely with the Council’s Vision and Priorities adopted in 2018. In particular it resonates with the “Place” theme which focuses on houses, places and environments in which residents can take pride.

#### **7. Implications**

##### **7.1 Financial**

Implications verified by: **Jonathan Wilson**  
**Assistant Director, Finance**

Approval of the process will enable the Council and TRL to move forward with delivering a house programme which will contribute to the wider objectives of the Council and support the Council’s MTFS (where schemes are developed through TRL).

Costs associated with the initial feasibility assessment of schemes will need to be considered depending on the nature of the scheme and whether it is subsequently developed by the HRA or TRL.

The proposal is also likely to reduce the level of capital receipts available to the Council to fund other priorities.

## 7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Courage Emovon**  
**Acting Strategic Lead / Deputy Head of Legal Services**

This report sets out the list of potential site options for development on Council owned sites for residential development via the Housing Revenue Account or for development by Thurrock Regeneration Limited (a Council wholly owned company). Legal Services will provide all legal advice (if any) arising from this report, as and when required by the Council.

## 7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: **Becky Lee**  
**Team Manager – Community Development and Equalities**

The service has completed a Community Equality Impact Assessment (CEIA) in line with Equality Act 2010 requirements and to gather an understanding of the impact on protected groups through the implementation of the process set out in this report. The findings from the CEIA established that the implications for each protected group is currently considered neutral. Individual CEIAs will sit alongside development proposals with information gathered in consultation with communities determining potential impacts and mitigation where identified for individuals or groups with protected characteristics. This will ensure more detailed consideration of the impacts of particular developments than is possible within the scope of the overarching CEIA and process set out in this report.

## 7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

None

## 8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee report 18 June 2019 (New Council HRA Home Building Programme)

- Extraordinary Meeting, Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee report 29 October 2019 (Housing Development Process)

## **9. Appendices to the report**

- Appendix A – The list of proposed residential development sites
- Appendix B – Individual site infographics

### **Report Author:**

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Place