

Appendix A – Housing Development Process

(Approved at Cabinet 15th January 2020 – extract from Cabinet Paper)

- 3.1 The identification and filtering of potential development sites is a sensitive process that requires the careful consideration of a wide range of factors. By agreeing a range of criteria, this filtering process will be transparent and will also ensure that unsuitable sites, based on the agreed criteria, are not brought forward, thereby maximising the use of time and resource. Once the criteria and sites are agreed, then consideration can be focused on resident engagement regarding the sites, with an increased focus on pace and effectiveness of delivery supported by the views of the local community.
- 3.2 The following are proposed to be key criteria for sites deemed potentially suitable for development. Sites will often fall within more than one criterion. These criteria will be:
- Sites will have been initially identified as suitable for development through the corporate asset review, known as the 3R's (Retain, Release, Reuse)
 - Sites can also be identified as surplus to requirements by the Council's multi-disciplinary Property Board
 - If the site includes Open Space, it will only be brought forward for development if the open space is considered to be of poor quality and no longer required for that purpose (as defined in the 2016 Open Space Assessment or other similar reports)
 - Council owned car parks could also be brought forward if a Council review has concluded that the car park is no longer required for its original or other strategic car parking purpose
 - Sites that are HRA property can also be brought forward if the property is identified as being no longer required or fit for purpose – for example redundant garage sites identified through the HRA garage sites review - or where a more effective use of the asset has been identified and agreed
 - Sites can also be brought forward if there is clear evidence that their development will contribute to the wider regeneration of an area.
- 3.3 Subject to a site falling within one or more of these criteria, each site will then be subjected to a rigorous analysis of available background information about the sites, followed in due course by appropriate on-site assessments once the list of potential sites has been agreed. Examples of the analysis work undertaken would typically include:
- Land ownership and legal constraints reports
 - Flood and air quality assessments
 - Utilities (gas, water, electric, cable) surveys
 - Topographical and geotechnical studies to understand the layout and ground makeup
 - Ecological and arboricultural surveys.
- 3.4 Each site will then have an architecturally-led study to explore the type and quantity of housing that could be developed on the site, ensuring that the

study meet the Council's high quality standards for housing. Various options are then assessed, together with their respective cost plans. The expected costs and receipts are then put into a financial viability analysis model to inform decisions as to whether a site is suitable and financially viable to develop. The study is an exercise to determine how many houses could go onto a site and the study is not expected to be the final design that will be submitted for planning approval.

- 3.5 If the site appears suitable and financially viable to develop, then it will be included on the "Long List" of potential sites for development.
- 3.6 It is important to stress that the inclusion of a site on the "Long List" does not constitute any planning endorsement.
- 3.7 The "Long List" of potential sites for Development will have input from Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then go for approval to Cabinet, with appropriate amendments.
- 3.8 The sites will then go forward for detailed consultation 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 consultation processes meet the Council's standards and that Members and residents are fully engaged in the process. The views of the community and stakeholders will be reviewed to determine any amendments required and how the scheme should be taken forward.
- 3.9 Any significant changes to the sites on the agreed list (such as changes to the "redline" boundary if neighbouring sites are identified) would be made in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, with significant changes being reported back to Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 3.10 The process of identifying and agreeing the "Long List" of sites for development is intended to be an annual process, with a list of new sites being reviewed each year by Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee and approved by Cabinet. Local Ward Councillors will also be contacted about sites on the 'Long List' of identified site that are within their ward boundary. This annual review process should ensure that new sites are brought forward regularly, thereby sustaining an annual pipeline of new sites to ensure the Council's agreed Housing Delivery targets are achieved