

The Cabinet

6th April, 2016 at 3.00 pm
at the Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

- Present:** Councillor Eling (Chair);
Councillors Crompton, Y Davies, Hackett, Khatun
and Moore.
- Apology:** Councillor L Horton.
- Observers:** Councillors Ahmed, P Hughes, S Jones, Sandars
and Underhill.

60/16

Councillor Cooper – Leader of the Council

Members stood in silent tribute to mark the passing of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Darren Cooper.

The Acting Leader of the Council, on behalf of members, paid tribute to the late Councillor Cooper who had represented the Soho and Victoria ward since 1991 and had been the Leader of the Council since 2009.

Members of the Cabinet and Scrutiny Chairs extended their condolences to Councillor Cooper's family.

Strategic Item

61/16

Changing the Housing Landscape in Sandwell Summary Programme for Council House New Build (Key Decision Ref. No. REI021)

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Investment sought approval to the Changing the Housing Landscape programme which aimed to deliver 636 new Council owned properties in Sandwell.

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The programme entailed:-

- building new homes or buying 'off plan' through a variety of funding sources;
- identifying existing Council owned sites and surplus to requirement premises suitable for conversion to residential use;
- exploring the viability and potential for building new homes through a partnership.

The Changing the Housing Landscape programme would focus upon the development of new approaches in providing older or vulnerable people with a choice of accommodation options which, alongside the right care and support, enabled them to stay in their own communities. Service users would also be directly supported in developing and maintaining independence to enable improved health and wellbeing.

The cross council transformation project team had developed a number of schemes that would provide both Council accommodation and projected savings to the Adult Social Care budget. These schemes would be subject to specific Cabinet reports in due course.

An equality impact assessment had been carried out for this proposal.

In recommending the proposals for approval, the Cabinet Member reiterated that despite the Government scrapping the Decent Homes Programme, the Council was continuing to invest in Council housing, including the recently refurbished high rise flats at The Crofts, Smethwick.

In response to a number of questions from the Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Board, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Investment confirmed that:-

- the sites indicated in the delivery plan were sites that were currently available and did not require remediation works. The Council was continuing to identify sites in other parts of the Borough including Bescot site in Friar Park, Wednesbury and Harvills Hawthorn, West Bromwich;

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- he shared concerns regarding the Government increasing the owner-occupation policy and in doing so, right to buy properties were reducing the Council's housing stock. In accordance with the Housing Act 1985, specialist accommodation for adult social care residents was exempt from right to buy and it was envisaged that most of the accommodation under this scheme would fall into this exemption. In relation to new build properties for general needs purposes, a cost floor provision would be operated to prevent any right to buy sales on new properties for the first ten years.

The Acting Leader of the Council also reiterated that whilst the Council supported young people getting onto the property ladder, concern was expressed that social rented housing accommodation was not being replaced despite a commitment being made by the Government. The recent 1% rent reduction to council tenants would result in a reduction of resources to the authority reducing the Council's ability to reinvest in future housing development.

Despite this, the Council was committed to providing decent quality council housing in Sandwell and to provide a mix of stock that was suitable for the needs of Sandwell tenants.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the programme for the provision of new Council house accommodation in the Borough, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved;
- (2) that the Director - Regeneration and Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Investment and the Director - Neighbourhoods, substitute alternative sites to achieve the required housing outcomes should the schemes set out in Appendix 1 prove not to be viable in terms of value for money;
- (3) that any other sites identified for new Council house accommodation, not included within the programme set out in Appendix 1 or identified under resolution (2) above, be subject to further reports to Cabinet for consideration.

62/16 **Exclusion of the Public**

Resolved that the public and press be excluded from the rest of the proceedings to avoid the possible disclosure of exempt information under Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Strategic Item

63/16 **Delivering New Homes – The Provision of new Council Housing Oxford Road, West Bromwich (Key Decision Ref. No. REI026)**

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Investment sought approval for the provision of new Council housing in Oxford Road, West Bromwich.

On 29th October 2014, the Cabinet approved options for developing additional council housing to fit the new housing landscape due to the continued demand for affordable rented properties.

Additionally, the Adult Social Care Strategic Transformation Framework – Accommodation and Support was approved by the Cabinet on 20th May 2015 (see Minute No. 93/15). One of the objectives within the Framework was to consider the use of Council owned land and property as part of the potential solution to the accommodation and support requirements for the future needs of vulnerable adults.

It was therefore proposed to develop 93 affordable rented homes on the site off Oxford Road to directly contribute to that aim. The proposed breakdown of accommodation was as follows:-

- 58 Flats
 - 24 - no. 2 bedroom 3 persons
 - 34 - no. 1 bedroom

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- 35 Bungalows
 - 27 no - 2 bedroom 3 person(s) bungalows
 - 4 no - 2 bedroom 4 person(s) bungalows
 - 4 no - 2 bedroom 3 person(s) wheelchair bungalows

The most cost effective and sustainable model for the site was to develop a community of mixed needs that took advantage of its proximity to Goldfield Court extra care scheme.

The Oxford Road site was in Council ownership and capable of redevelopment. The site was acquired by means of compulsory purchase as part of the Greets Green Partnerships housing strategy and had been fully remediated ready for development. The cross Council transformation team had been working on design proposals to meet the requirements of specific user groups ensuring that the design submitted for planning was fit for purpose and met objectives for the delivery of personal care, housing and wider support needs for adult social care users in the coming years.

A number of feasibility options had been undertaken to ascertain if the site was financially viable to develop as Council housing taking into account planning and Adults Services requirements.

The detailed development residential configuration had been decided and progressed to detailed design and had been considered for planning consent in March 2016. All units would be developed in accordance with current Building Regulations incorporating the levels of adaptations required by Adult Services.

The delivery of the scheme would be procured through the Homes and Communities Agency Development Partner Panel as the estimated development costs were above Official Journal European Union thresholds. Invitations for expression of interest were currently being prepared. Contractual arrangements would be completed by the end of September 2016 with completion of council units by April 2018.

Public consultation would be undertaken as part of the statutory planning process and a full appraisal had been undertaken by Strategic Finance with a number of risks identified and action points recommended to mitigate these risks.

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An equality impact assessment had been carried out for this proposal.

In relation to a number of questions raised by the Chair of the Housing Scrutiny Board and the Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board, the Cabinet Member confirmed that:-

- it was envisaged that the authority would save approximately £40,000-£80,000 per scheme and six months off the building process by not undertaking the Official Journal European Union (procurement) process;
- the Development Partner Panel was a procurement process to select a partner at which point the Council would enter into contractual arrangements. Mini completion would be a requirement at this stage for the Council to be transparent, including if the Council set up its own Partner Framework. Maintenance contracts would be agreed upon on a schedule of rates basis which were easy to compare and agree, however, the new build meant that the schemes were bespoke and comparison would therefore be more complex;
- a full planning submission for the site would be made week commencing 11th April and the plan would be available to view on the planning portal showing the current infrastructure layouts. In the current layout, there would be pedestrian links across the site to the Dartmouth Street tram station. It was envisaged that work would commence on site in September/October 2016 with the first properties being available to let from July 2017.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the Director -Regeneration and Economy, in consultation with Director – Neighbourhoods, develop approximately 1.90 hectares of land off Oxford Road, West Bromwich with council house properties, as shown on the plan at Appendix 2;

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- (2) that the Director – Governance, the Chief Finance Officer and the Director – Regeneration and Economy, in consultation with the Director – Neighbourhoods, prepare tendering documentation and, in accordance with the public procurement rules and the Council's Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules and the requirements of the Development Partner Panel framework, engage with contractor(s) to develop the proposed housing scheme;
- (3) that in connection with resolution (1) above, the Director – Governance enter into or execute under seal any documentation in relation to the award of the contract and/or development/partnership agreement, licence, undertaking, framework joining agreement and any other agreements with the procured contractor/s and with the Homes and Communities Agency, as may be deemed necessary, to facilitate development of the site with council houses and otherwise on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director - Regeneration and Economy;
- (4) that the Chief Finance Officer allocate a sum of money from the Housing Revenue Account capital investment programme to facilitate the development of land off Oxford Road, West Bromwich as set out in resolution (1) above;
- (5) that the Director – Regeneration and Economy take appropriate action to ensure the land referred to in resolution (1) above be appropriated from general fund slum clearance purposes to Housing Revenue Account housing purposes and that the accounts are adjusted accordingly;
- (6) that following practical completion of each property referred to in resolution (1) above, the Director – Neighbourhoods manage and let the premises in accordance with the Council's housing allocation policy;
- (7) that the following action points identified within the appraisal report be implemented to reduce any risk to the Council:

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- undertake further analysis of demand from adult social care users for different property types to ensure that the aims and objectives of the project can be met;
- review the Risk Register to include appropriate target dates for the mitigation of risks;
- document the proposed governance reporting structure to ensure that contract monitoring has appropriate means of reporting and rectifying any project risks/issues;
- determine how proposed outcomes will be measured and reported for both the construction programme and against Facing the Future programme savings.

(Meeting ended at 3.36 pm)

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Appendix 1 Summary programme for Council House New Build

Scheme Project Name	Number of units	Cabinet Approval	Planning Consent	Comments
Kent Close, West Bromwich	29	Approved	Full Consent	Council owned site. Scheme in progress completion due June 2016
Tibbington Terrace, Tipton	7	Approved	Full Consent	Council owned site Finalising development contracts initial site works already on site. Actual start on site June 2016
Atlas Metals, Smethwick	41	Approved	Full Consent	Council owned site Finalising development contracts initial site works already on site. Actual start on site March 2016
Gladstone Street, West Bromwich	5	Approved	Full Consent	Council owned site Start on site demolition April 2016. Build tenders currently being prepared for release.
Hilton Road, Tividale	10	Approved	Full Consent	Council owned site Delays to demolition due to ecology report and the existence of bats within the property. This could result in delays to autumn 2016 if bats proven to be there.
Monmouth Drive, Hateley Heath	6	Approved	Full Consent	Council owned site Start on site demolition April 2016. Build tenders currently being prepared for release.

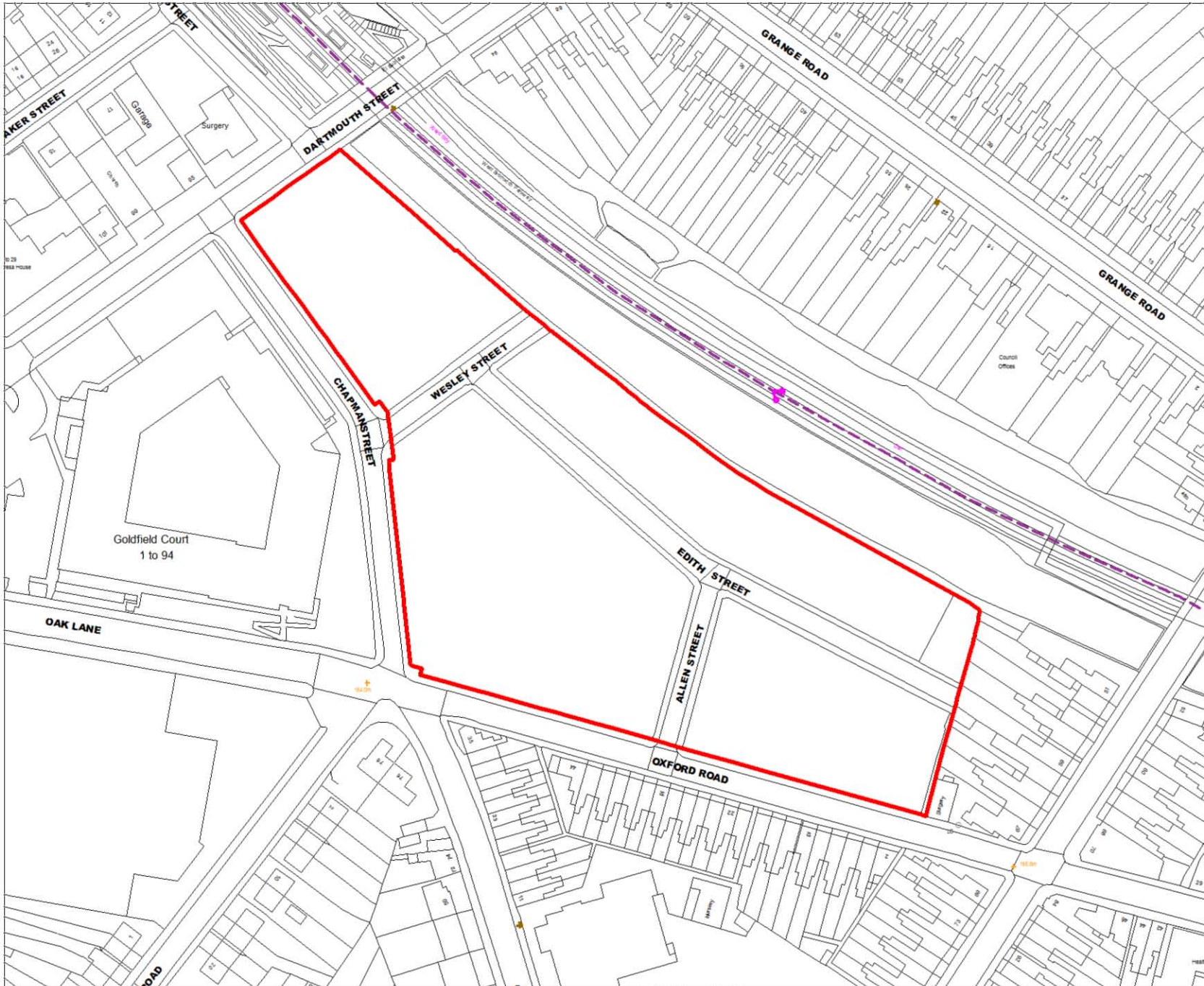
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Scheme Project Name	Number of units	Cabinet Approval	Planning Consent	Comments
Ladbury Road, Yew Tree	6	Approved	Full Consent	Council owned site Start on site demolition April 2016. Build tenders currently being prepared for release.
Oxford Road, West Bromwich	93	Cabinet 7 th April 2016	Submission March 2016	Council owned site
Shaftsbury House, West Bromwich	47	May 2016		Council owned site
Smethwick Council House (site to rear)	32	May/June 2016		Council owned site Demolition complete. Currently liaising with English Heritage regarding accepted redevelopment proposals. Information required prior to submission to Cabinet.
Nelson House,	6	June/July 2016		Council owned site Properties to be developed as part of the high rise block refurbishment
Carrisbrooke Close, Wednesbury	38	June 2016		Council owned site awaiting site investigation report.
Moor Lane, Rowley Regis	93	August 2016		Council owned site. Site investigation complete. Adults Services options review
Durham Estate, Hamstead	90.	August 2016		Council owned site. Site investigation complete. Adults Services options review

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Scheme Project Name	Number of units	Cabinet Approval	Planning Consent	Comments
Dudley Road, Rowley Regis	30	Forward Plan May 2016	Outline Consent	Private owned site purchase off plan. Under negotiation
Clifton Road, West Bromwich	14	Forward Plan May 2016	Outline Consent	Private owned site purchase off plan. Under negotiation
Simpson Street, Oldbury	11	Forward Plan May 2016	Outline Consent	Private owned site purchase off plan. Under negotiation
Whitehall Road, Tipton	22	Forward Plan May 2016	Outline Consent	Private owned site purchase off plan. Under negotiation
Eagle Close, Rowley Regis	44		Full Consent	Private owned site purchase off plan. Under negotiation
Sandfield House, Stone Cross	12	Approved		Conversion of a Council owned property.



Regeneration and Economy

Appendix 1

**Provision of
New Council Housing
Oxford Road
West Bromwich**

1.90 hectare
Approx.

NOT TO SCALE -
FOR IDENTIFICATION
ONLY



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