

Report to Cabinet

15 March 2023

Subject:	The Future Use of Langley Swimming Centre
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Growth Councillor Peter Hughes
Director:	Director for Regeneration and Growth Tony McGovern
Key Decision:	Yes
Contact Officer:	Hayley Insley, Planning Regeneration Team Leader hayley_insley@sandwell.gov.uk Clinton Felicio, Senior Planner clinton_felicio@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That approval be given to allocate the site at Vicarage Road, Oldbury for the development of new affordable rent council housing, subject to planning permission being obtained.
- 1.2 That approval be given to allocate funding from the Council's Housing Revenue Account to demolish the existing buildings/structures at Vicarage Road, Oldbury as a pre-requisite for site investigation to facilitate compliance with the Homes England funding timescales.
- 1.3 That in connection with 1.1 above, the Director of Finance be authorised to allocate adequate resources from the Council's Housing Revenue Account, subject to being satisfied that the proposal provides value for money, to deliver the scheme and to utilise grant funding offered by Homes England, under any relevant Homes England Strategic Partnerships, to assist with the delivery of the project.
- 1.4 That subject to receiving the necessary Strategic Investment Unit appraisal approval mark of 65 or above, the Director of Regeneration



and Growth in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Director of Housing be authorised to prepare tendering documentation and subsequently procure, in accordance with any statutory regulations and the Council's Procurement and Financial Regulations a contractor/contractors to develop, on behalf of the Council, the proposed housing scheme; to enter into or execute under seal any financial agreement in relation to the Homes England grant on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Finance.

- 1.5 That subject to 1.3 and 1.4 above, the Director – Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to enter into or execute under seal any documentation in relation to award of the contract and/or development/partnership agreement, Homes England developer status, licence, undertaking, framework joining agreement, any consents or applications required for Planning or Highways appertaining to the delivery of the scheme and any other agreements with the procured contractor(s) and with the Homes England, as may be deemed necessary to facilitate development of the site with a housing scheme on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Regeneration and Growth.
- 1.6 That the Director of Regeneration and Growth in consultation with the Director of Finance and subject to confirmation of the funding rules applicable, to submit an application for funding to the WMCA and any other relevant funding sources and, in the event the funding bid is successful, the Director of Regeneration and Growth in consultation with the Director of Finance and the Director of Housing be authorised to accept the funding and execute under seal any financial agreement in relation to the WMCA and any other relevant funding sources grant on terms and conditions to be agreed by the Director of Finance.
- 1.7 That following practical completion of each property at the site of Vicarage Road, Oldbury, the Director of Housing be authorised to manage and let the properties built in accordance with the Council's housing allocation policy.
- 1.8 That the Director of Finance be authorised to make any necessary adjustment required to appropriate the site at Vicarage Road, Oldbury, for housing purposes.



2 Reasons for Recommendations





- 2.1 Following the Cabinet decision made on 31 January 2018 (minute 18/18 refers) Langley Swimming Centre is due to close in summer 2023 when the leisure provision will be located at the new Sandwell Aquatics Centre, Smethwick. Following the opening of the new Aquatics Centre the Council has the opportunity to develop the site at Vicarage Road, Oldbury with circa 27 homes (subject to planning consent), as part of the new strategic approach to provide more and better housing in the borough.

The development of this site with new homes will result in the following benefits for the Council:

- Increasing the numbers of authority owned stock which will ease pressure on our existing housing
- Replacing housing stock lost through Right to Buy
- Increasing income to the Housing Revenue Account
- Contributing positively to the financial position of the Council by generating New Homes Bonus and new Council Tax receipts
- Developing fit for purpose accommodation
- Increased good quality, energy efficient housing provision in the Borough
- Increasing the levels of new build Council housing stock within the Borough contributing to target forecasts
- Linking to the work of Think Local and Find-it-in-Sandwell approaches that will offer significant employment and training opportunities as well as additional community benefits to the local economy, including working with local supply chains and use of local labour
- Producing positive outputs for community safety through the redevelopment of a potential future vacant site.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>The Best Start in Life for Children and Young People</p> <p>These new build properties will provide accommodation which better meets the needs of young families allowing / enabling for a better home educational environment.</p>
	<p>People Live Well and Age Well</p> <p>The new properties will be built to the Building Regulations standard M4(2) "Accessible and Adaptable" which allows for easy adaptations of the properties and takes into consideration ease of access to the dwellings.</p>
	<p>Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods</p> <p>The redevelopment of this site with modern residential accommodation will improve the asset base of the borough by providing much needed affordable housing.</p> <p>The provision of this proposed scheme will provide Homes that meet people's needs. Sandwell's population is growing and people need quality housing that fits their individual requirements.</p> <p>The development of this site will be guided by the Local Planning Authority in accordance with approved planning and development guidance. This will seek to achieve a development of a quality that sets the highest architectural standards and which provides energy efficient buildings, in furtherance of the aims of the Environmental Policy for Sandwell.</p>
	<p>A Strong and Inclusive Economy</p> <p>The development of this scheme will support investing in businesses, people and jobs that will create wealth and tackle poverty. It will also actively promote Think Sandwell with the inclusion of apprenticeships and training opportunities within the contractual arrangements.</p>



4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 Once the building is closed it will become vacant on a site approximately 0.49 hectares. The site is located in Oldbury within half a mile of Rood End Local Centre and the surrounding area is predominantly residential in character.
- 4.2 The closing of Langley Swimming Centre provides the opportunity for the Council to re-develop the site with circa 27 homes (subject to planning consent) as part of the strategic approach to provide more high-quality housing in the borough.
- 4.3 The Council will put the site forward as part of the Brownfield Land Release Fund bid provided by the One Public Estate (OPE) partnership, which is a partnership between the Office of Government Property (OGP) in the Cabinet Office (CO), the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). This second round of funding will provide a capital grant to support the release of Council-owned brownfield land for housing and if the Council is successful, the funding will partly contribute to an estimated £924,500 for demolition of Langley Swimming Centre to prepare for re-development. The bid deadline is 31 March 2023 and the results are expected to be published in the summer. It is envisaged that pre-demolition works will proceed in Q4 2023.

5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 Option 1 – Disposal of the site on the open market

The Council can dispose of the site on the open market. This would result in the loss of a Council asset that can be used for the Council build programme and the Council will have minimal control over the future use of the building. This option increases the risk of ASB should the building become vacant.

- 5.2 Option 2 – Clear the site and disposal on the open market

Clearing the site and disposal of the site on the open market would reduce ASB issues but as identified in Option 1 would result in the loss of a Council asset that can be used for the Council build programme.



6 Implications

Resources:	Funding will be sought from the HRA account and Brownfield Land Release Fund 2 for demolition.
Legal and Governance:	<p>There are no specific immediate legal or statutory implications arising from the proposal outlined in this report.</p> <p>The Council's Sale of Land and Buildings Protocol requires the Corporate Landlord to be responsible for the management of land and premises required for operational purposes, which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the council's operational property portfolio is fit for purpose, sustainable and in good repair; • Identifying assets surplus to council requirements; • The formulation of business cases relating to the rationalisation and continued improvement of the council's operational property portfolio.
Risk:	Should the Council not be successful in the Brownfield Land Release Fund 2 bid funding will be required to demolish the building. This will also create a risk of the building on the site being vacant.
Equality:	A full equality impact assessment will be undertaken for the development of the new housing units to ensure compliance with the Equalities Act 2010 and the relevant Building Regulations.
Health and Wellbeing:	The demolition of Langley Swimming Centre and building of council houses will assist in improving the health and wellbeing of residents living within the new development, with good quality homes and access to open spaces.
Social Value:	The development of this scheme will support investing in businesses, people and jobs and apprenticeships particularly in construction, will be created through any residential provision. There will also be secondary spend within the local economy.
Climate Change:	Development of new high-quality build homes will comply with Building Regulations Part L ensuring the conservation of fuel and power and Part S to provide infrastructure for charging electric vehicles.



7. Appendices

- Site plan

