

# Taunton Deane Borough Council

**Executive – 11 November 2009**

## **Proposed Redevelopment of Parmin Close, Taunton to provide 'Extra Care' Affordable Housing in Perpetuity for the Elderly and those in need of Extra Care Housing In Taunton Deane**

### **Report of the Housing Enabling Manager**

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Hazel Prior-Sankey)

The purpose of this report is to bring to the attention of the Executive the opportunity of redeveloping a land hungry council owned site which currently has 24 x 1 bed flats, 6 x 1 bed bungalows which are all Sheltered Housing and 1 x 3 bed house. Taking into account the decline in need for Sheltered Housing this site could provide a **State of the Art 'Extra Care'** complex of 70 x 1 and 2 bed homes for the residents of Taunton Deane who are in need of independent supported living rather than living in an institutional type environment.

I seek your support to progress these proposals through the recognised process to enable the delivery of a Flagship Scheme for Extra Care in Taunton.

This site is owned by Taunton Deane and is situated within a large Council owned social housing estate. Detailed below are my proposals for the proposed redevelopment and I would urge you to carefully consider these proposals, to recognise the potential and to support the progression of this scheme. This, in turn, will support the Council's agreed priority for providing Affordable Housing.

I believe these proposals reflect the Core Council's Review, the Council's commitment to provide Affordable Housing, compliment Project Taunton and are part of the first steps in providing better housing for the residents of Taunton Deane.

### **Background**

Parmin Close is a sheltered housing scheme built in 1971, of traditional brick construction consisting of 30 elderly persons homes owned and managed by Taunton Deane Borough Council.

The present complex comprises of:-

- 1 x 3 bed house
- 12 x 1 bed mini flats

- 12 x 1 bed maxi flats
- 6 x 1 bed bungalows
- 1 x meeting room.

The properties have Electric Economy 7 heating – providing poor heat in the evenings. One tenant has chosen to install gas into her bungalow the remaining properties have no gas. All have double glazing.

Flats 4a – 14b are small mini flats with only a shower, and there is a well used meeting hall.

**This proposal is not new.** Approximately five years ago there was a proposal to demolish the twelve mini flats on the east side of Parmin Close and to construct a new three storey block of Extra Care flats on this and adjoining land owned by the Council. The demolished properties would be replaced with 12 x two bed homes and 12 x one bed homes. It was proposed to gradually upgrade the remaining flats and bungalows to Extra Care standard as and when they became vacant. The new facility was intended to house older people as part of an Extra Care Sheltered Housing Scheme.

Taunton Deane made two bids to the Department of Health unsuccessfully. The main reason for the lack of success was because the Council was not partnering with a Registered Social Landlord.

### **Comment from the Supported Housing Manager**

“Whilst Taunton Deane has 27 Sheltered Housing Schemes across the Borough only two are Extra Care Housing Schemes. The fundamental difference between Sheltered and Extra Care is the partnership working provided in the past between the Council, Adult Social Care and the Care provider to ensure a continued 24/7 service, including sleep-in staff.

With the anticipated number of older people increasing over the forthcoming years it is anticipated that the demand for such accommodation will increase and present a real alternative to going into residential care or a nursing home”.

### **An overview of Extra Care living**

“Most older people want services that allow them to retain control over their daily lives with support delivered as and when they need it. What they don’t want are rigid traditional models that take for granted an inevitable and progressive path from living independently to being cared for” *(Dr Stephen Ladyman MP in 2003)*. **There is no evidence that this has changed.**

Extra Care and The Concept. It provides Housing with integrated care and support, specialist housing for frail and older persons, an alternative to residential care with independent living, own front door, and a choice of flexible person centred services.

It provides a community HUB, for the health and wellbeing for the wider older community, drop in services with an outreach for care and support. It offers leisure and social activities, informal day care and mostly a meeting place for our local elderly residents.

### **Current situation**

The Housing Enabling Manager and The Supported Housing Manager met with Mark Newstead, Head of Development (Care) with Sanctuary Housing Association on several occasions. Sanctuary is renowned for its experience and expertise in providing Extra Care across the country. An Architect was instructed to carry out a feasibility study and to provide indicative drawings for an innovative scheme for this proposed scheme. The design and facilities of this scheme will ensure this development will become a 'Flag Ship' in Extra Care for Taunton Deane for our local people.

Funding will come from several sources –

- The Homes and Communities Agency
- Sanctuary Housing Association (either reserves or market borrowing)
- Department of Health (Bid money)
- Supporting People.

The standard of bids to the Department of Health is extremely high. To achieve this, the following issues will need to be addressed to ensure success:-

- Innovative design;
- Innovative service delivery;
- Community use of the building;
- Hairdressing, Restaurant/Café/Tea shop, Internet café;
- Local partnership agreement;
- Funding arrangements;
- Value for money; and
- Deliverability within agreed timescales.

The new complex will be constructed to a very high standard. It will achieve, at least, Code for Sustainable Homes level 4. This in turn will provide very comfortable living for the tenants and low energy costs.

To achieve this we need to work in partnership with Sanctuary Housing Association.

Due to this Council's lack of financial resources we will be required to dispose of the land to Sanctuary for a nominal amount. The land disposal will represent this Council's contribution towards the scheme. The Council may also be required to contribute towards the Statutory Home Loss payment and any displacement compensation. In return, these Extra Care properties will

be let through the Choice Based Lettings system ring fenced for residents in Taunton Deane in perpetuity.

To achieve success with a scheme like this, most **careful consultation** with the existing tenants should be carried out. The decanting of elderly people is a very sensitive issue and much thought must go into this. The writer of this report is working closely with the Supported Housing Manager and her team to ensure this happens.

The tenants will be entitled to the Statutory Home Loss payment, which is currently £4,700. They will also be entitled to compensation for displacement issues such as removals, curtains, carpets and reconnection fees.

On the 15 September 2009 two consultations were held. One in the afternoon especially for the 30 tenants who were invited to bring a relative, and the second in the evening for residents living nearby.

The afternoon consultation was attended by 24 tenants, officers from Taunton Council, representatives from Sanctuary and their Architects. Unfortunately the afternoon was disrupted by several tenants who prevented other tenants from listening to the presentation or asking their own questions. These questions were able to be addressed during the tea break.

Attached to this report (Appendix 1) is a list of comments from the tenants of Parmin Close and residents from Parmin Way. You will see from the comments sheets that most of the comments are from residents living nearby in Parmin Way.

As a result of initial discussions Sanctuary has agreed that all existing tenants of Parmin Close, whether they fit the Extra Care criteria or not, will be offered a tenancy of one of the new properties. They would also be allowed to take their pets with them, although Sanctuary has a no pet policy.

Although this proposed development has attracted publicity in the local papers it is fully understood that most of the current tenants do not want to move. Some have indicated that they would like to take the opportunity to move nearer family and friends. Some would like to move out of the area. Those tenants who wish to move elsewhere will be given priority with a direct match through the Choice Based Lettings system to any vacant properties that become available in their area of choice.

The author of this report has attended the Sheltered Housing Forum to provide an update on the proposals. After the 11 November 2009 all tenants in Parmin Close will be advised of the Executive's decision and if appropriate a second Consultation will be arranged before Christmas.

## **In Conclusion**

In Taunton Deane there is a need for all forms of Affordable Housing. Over recent years we have fallen behind in our delivery by a least 3,000 affordable

homes. Just by acknowledging this demand and supporting this scheme it will go some way towards addressing the need for our elderly residents.

Working with Housing Associations to redevelop land hungry sites is a way of increasing the supply. This scheme will enhance our Extra Care provision considerably, as well as providing our present and future elderly residents with a good standard of independent living. This scheme will be built to at least Code 4 and as a result it will reduce energy bills and provide a better environment.

## **Recommendations**

Members of the Executive are asked to consider the recommendations and approve:-

1. The principle of progressing the Redevelopment and Regeneration of an Extra Care complex in Parmin Close, Taunton which will replace the current sheltered housing units.
2. To dispose of the land to the Registered Social Landlord for a nominal amount as this Council's contribution towards the scheme.
3. On disposal of the land it should be legally agreed that the land can never be used for anything other than for the provision of Affordable Housing.
4. The disposal of the land, must in return, give letting priority to Taunton Deane residents through the Homefinder Somerset scheme.
5. Meet the tenants' aspirations, where possible for relocation including
  - Present tenants to be offered a property in the new complex whether they currently meet the Extra Care criteria or not.
  - Present tenants to be given the opportunity to take their pets to the new complex.
6. The Council will work closely with all the tenants of Parmin Close and keep them informed.

By agreeing to these recommendations your support will enable the progression of this scheme through the recognized process.

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# Appendix 1

## Comments returned for Parmin Close Redevelopment

(15 October 2009)

### Comments from Residents of Parmin Close

1. Taunton Deane always said they were a caring Council. If that is the case why do they want to move all us old people out of their homes here at Parmin Close, most of us are in our 70's and 80's one tenant nearly 90, who have lived here for years to go somewhere else so the close can be redeveloped for the sake of about another 30 flats.
2. A lot of us spent a lot of money getting our home as we wanted it and at our age don't want to start again.
3. Most of us here have health problems and we just don't want the hassle and stress a move is going to cause us. Do the Council want to hear of some residents going down with strokes and heart attacks or even worse dieing and it could happen, I have 5 health problems, one being high blood pressure, which medication is not bringing down.
4. It is understood that you can return to the new complex, but I don't think many people will want to. It seems there will be lifts to all floors, a lot of people don't like lifts, myself included.
5. I know there will be help to move and only go where w want to but none of us want to go anywhere, we are like one big family here and we look out for each other. We don't want to go to live near people we don't know, which would be for at least a year and possibly more.
6. Sanctuary have a no pets policy and didn't seem over keen for us to bring the pets we have at present. A pet is the only thing some people have to talk to and greet them when they come home. To take that away from them would be cruel, I know from when I lost my husband what a comfort my cats were to me. They give you a purpose to get up in the mornings and keep going. TDBC never objected to pets, so why is Sanctuary when its supposed to be a partnership between the two.
7. Please TDBC find other sites to redevelop and leave the tenants of Parmin Close to end their days in the home they know which was the whole idea of moving here.
8. More than one tenant has quoted "if they make me move it will kill me".
9. Losing sleep as they are worried about leaving their home.

10. One 80 year old living on his own said he would be very pleased to move into the kind of facility outlined at the consultation.
11. You did explain that the factory site was designated for employment. I do not know how likely it is that a tenant will be found for the factory. But it is not a very suitable location for a factory. Could not an application be made for change of use? The economics surely cannot be much worse than writing off 32 well-maintained dwellings and a community hall and the new facility would provide some employment.
12. I would also assume that the factory site would have the advantage of better vehicular access. Vehicular access via Parmin Way and parking facilities were the most obvious weaknesses of the consultation.
13. Using the factory site, Parmin Close tenants would not have to be disturbed until the new facility was ready and then only those tenants who wanted to move would have to move.

### **Comments from Neighbouring Residents of Parmin Way**

1. The proposed building is to be four storeys high which would dominate the skyline over the whole area. The maximum height for the surrounding buildings are one and two storeys.
2. The proposed car parking should be within the curtilage of the site.
3. The residential estate road, ie., Parmin Way is not suitable to support the large number of vehicles that would be required to service the building during its construction and subsequent operation.
4. The existing pedestrian access to Ruskin Close would cause considerable disruption to the proposed project and should be closed as it will serve no useful purpose once the building is completed. However, the proposed re-siting of the footpath through Parmin Way will cause considerable inconvenience to the existing residents. This issue has already been discussed with the Sanctuary representative who is in total agreement.
5. Is Moorhaven a consideration in this proposal?
6. If the new building has '24 hour door entry system for added security' - how does that make it easily accessible? The current hall is not only used by elderly but younger residents use it regular for children's parties so are they now being excluded?
7. 'As many mature trees kept as possible to screen neighbours and factory' - To obscure what is proposed the trees would need to be very mature to hide a 4 storey building!

8. Very annoyed that did not receive a letter concerning the development in Parmin Close. Were told would not be affected but of course will be and it will have a detrimental affect on the value of our property.
9. Parmin Way is the only entrance into Parmin Close so the extra traffic, including cars, coaches ambulances etc., and work vehicles during construction is of serious concern. Parmin Way is a very narrow road and we have seen many near misses from our kitchen window. There are also many children and animals on the road. Therefore, we feel any extra vehicles is going to be dangerous.
10. Told at the meeting that this is a development for elderly people only. We would need this to be guaranteed. We are suspicious as to why there will be 2 bedroomed flats (there are none there now), a bistro, gym etc. Surely if it is the accommodation that is in short supply the above would be a waste of space and finances. Are the intentions not as we have been informed?
11. Traffic - too noisy/I work night shift when will I sleep. Roads not wide enough.
12. Parking - where will all visitors to new residents park?
13. Access Road not wide enough for through traffic.
14. Children playing in a very dangerous situation.
15. Better access must be a priority.
16. It is of concern that only one road entrance to this proposed development is from Parmin Way, as this area is already at times congested it would not be appropriate for at first the heavy construction lorries etc., to access and after, all the resident traffic, plus visitors plus all catering vehicles the area would continually be busy. Also it would not be a very safe area for mobility of wheelchair travel.
17. Another point with there being more accommodation, it is likely to need more emergency vehicles.
18. It does not state how many apartments there would be. The height of the four storey building would also, I'm sure, be detrimental to some residents.
19. It is also felt that having a bigger development would decrease the value of our property so to enlarge this complex we feel would not be appropriate.
20. Would we be compensated for all this disruption to our, at present, relatively quiet neighbourhood.
21. It concerns me that there is still only going to be one entrance from Parmin Way into Parmin Close. There is already congestion for residents of Parmin Way and as there will be a considerable amount of heavy lorries and other equipment when the demolition and rebuild commence, it will be horrendous.



Also will the road stand up to the extra weight that these vehicles will do. Another problem is will there be sufficient access for any of the emergency vehicles to get through?

22. Are the residents of Parmin Way going to be compensated in any way for the inconvenience, noise and heavy vehicles going to and fro when the demolition and rebuild commence?
23. Parking - there is little parking offered to the existing residents as it is. Many in Parmin Way have already HAD to put a driveway on the front of their property to accommodate their vehicles. The proposed allocated parking spaces for the 70 units (only being 20 spaces) will not be sufficient, to accommodate staffing, residents and visitors. When these people realise that there is no parking around, they will try to park in the surrounding areas.
24. Building Access - There is due to be only one access route to the new complex. This will increase the traffic significantly in what is a lovely, peaceful and quiet area. The lorries bringing in all supplies, will create extra noise, mess on the roads and damage to the vehicles, when they flick rubble, mud and stones up from the tyres or what drops off the top. How on earth they are expected to get around Parmin Way, with the corners and the existing traffic is unknown and don't forget it is against the law for an LGV to mount the pavement at anytime.
25. Height of flats - looking out of our property at the moment, we can see the Quantock Hills, and you actually feel that you are in the countryside. If the complex incorporates 4 storey flats this will affect our outlook immensely. Why can a 4 storey building be put up when we as long term residents are unable to have a two storey extension to our property even when we are not overlooked in anyway. This is hypocritical and very unfair. The look of the complex is not wonderful and I question why it has to be enclosed with a garden in the middle. This does not make it inviting for all to use the extra facilities, it makes it feel like their space and our space.
26. The existing Residents - on conversing with some of the residents, they don't want to move out or have this disruption placed upon them. Many of these people are elderly and frail. They have lived there for many years and have put their sole into the properties.
27. The re-directing of the pathway - Why is it that the residents in Wordsworth Drive have not been informed of the changes in the pathway, when it directly affects them, as it will make their gardens more accessible to potential thieves. This is a fairly low crime area and we don't need 'people' being offered things on a plate.
28. The Plans/Display - It doesn't look very good when The Sanctuary Group, supposedly after doing plans and research are unable to actually spell the names of an adjoining road correctly and we are suppose to trust what they are proposing.

29. The insensitivity of moving elderly residents many of whom are in ill health from their recently refurbished sheltered accommodation and dispersing them to various areas of the town. As they are a community who know and help each other this will isolate them and make them vulnerable. At the moment they live in a quiet area with all the amenities within easy distance. These people will not have the energy to move back into the new complex and many will sadly not be around to do so.
30. The complex proposed with 3 and 4 storey buildings is far too large for the area and will completely dominate the houses and bungalows that immediately back on to this site as well as the surrounding properties. It will also reduce the value of properties in the immediate vicinity.
31. Residents immediately on the site and adjacent to it will be subject to dust, mud and noise generated from the demolition and building process for a year or more.
32. There will be extra traffic imposed from large building equipment and lorries removing the debris and bringing in building supplies. After the project is built there will be continuous extra traffic from staff, visitors and large delivery vehicles. Access to Parmin Close is not easy for large vehicles as cars/vans are parked on the road, quite often on both sides.
33. It will greatly add to the existing parking problems. Adequate parking will be needed for cars owned by residents of the flats, staff and visitors. At the meeting it was mentioned that staff for the new complex would be sourced locally and therefore would not need cars. In reality not all staff will be local and those who are will use cars on night shift or in bad weather. Inadequate parking on site will lead to these people using valuable parking spaces in Parmin Way (many of the houses here are terraced and residents therefore can only park their cars on the road).
34. Workmen on the site during demolition and building will park their vehicles in Parmin Way thus adding to the parking problems.
35. The total waste of tax payers' money by demolishing recently refurbished properties and compensating residents by several thousand pounds to move out. Where is this money coming from and if the Council has this amount to spare should it not be spending it on repairing existing council properties?

### **Further Questions and Comments**

- Why knock down buildings that are home to elderly residents?
- Why knock down buildings that were only built in the 70's and which are perfectly serviceable?
- Why propose to put this on a site which is totally unsuitable? - it cannot be serviced only at the inconvenience of local residents so a quiet no through road will become a noisy service road!

- Has any consideration gone into parking - residential parking? Visitors parking? Service yard? Parmin Way's parking areas are already oversubscribed with some residents already feeling the need to forfeit their front gardens for off road parking. Cars park on both sides of road so difficult to drive through already without more vehicles.
- Will there be a guarantee that it is purely accommodation for the elderly? What if Sanctuary Care sell it on?
- Why restrict those you contacted that live on Parmin Way - was it to reduce amount of objections?
- Why Parmin Close when there are plenty of other areas which are more accessible and in need of redevelopment?