# Taunton Deane Borough Council

## **Tenant Services Management Board- 15th July 2013**

# HALCON NORTH REGENERATION- CREECHBARROW ROAD PROJECT

#### **Report of the Health and Housing Manager**

(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Adkins)

#### 1. Executive Summary

Following approval of the Creechbarrow Road redevelopment scheme in principle in February 2013, this report outlines detailed proposals primarily in relation to the TDBC portion of the site. The report considers the design and financial aspects of the scheme along with how the new homes will be let in future in order to maximise the community benefit of the project.

#### 2. Background

On the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2013 the Council considered a report in relation to a proposed redevelopment scheme of Creechbarrow Road. The project was created following the Council not progressing with earlier plans for a much larger scale regeneration scheme in the Halcon North area. The revised project seeks to maximise the opportunities afforded by Homes and Communities Agency funding allocated to Knightstone Housing Association (KHA) and changes to housing finance resulting in more resources available for the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to invest in new affordable housing, along with land available in the development site. The aims of the project are to assist in tackling the high levels of deprivation in the Halcon Ward and to provide more affordable housing.

At this time the Council approved the following recommendations:-

#### In relation to the proposed Knightstone Housing Association portion of the site:

- 1. The transfer the Southern part of the Creechbarrow Road site (incorporating new house numbers 1-30 on the sketch plan) to Knightstone Housing Association for £1, in order to enable the development of 30 new affordable homes.
- 2. To decant the tenants currently occupying the Southern end of the site (current property numbers 2-20) and transfer these properties with vacant possession to KHA.
- 3. To accept to underwrite 50% of KHA "at risk costs" approximately £32K, to be funded by existing HRA revenue resources if required.

#### *In relation to the proposed TDBC portion of the site:*

- 4. Subject to satisfactory detailed scheme appraisal, to approve the redevelopment of the TDBC portion of the site broadly in accordance with the sketch plan provided, and for that purpose to:
  - Progression of actions necessary to achieve vacant possession of the current properties including decanting, buy back of former right to buy properties or agreement of exchange of alternate property, decommission properties and secure site.
  - Progress detailed design and site evaluation
  - Preparation of planning application
- 5. To approve in principle borrowing of £7.7 million to fund the scheme within the Housing Revenue Account and identify any additional funding for the community hub and play aspects of the development.
- 6. To agree to commit TDBC to "at risk" costs of approximately £120k, to be funded by HRA revenue resources.
- 7. To waive Contract Procedure Rules and:-
  - Appoint Knightstone Housing Association as Development Agents to act on behalf of the Council in relation to this project.
  - Appoint Boon Brown Architects to continue to act on the Council's behalf in relation to this scheme.
  - Undertake a joint mini competition amongst the 5 Employers Agents firms on the KHA framework and appoint as appropriate one to act on the Council's behalf in relation to this scheme.

Since this time much work has been undertaken to progress the scheme, to the point where final approval for the TDBC element is now requested in this report.

### 3 Creechbarrow Road Site.

The site in question forms a long strip alongside the left of Creechbarrow Road heading in a Southerly direction. It currently comprises 42 one and two bedroom flats. Of these, 37 are Council tenants, with the remainder being leaseholders, these properties having been sold under the right to buy scheme. The site also includes 4 semi detached houses at the end of Moorland Road of which 1 is owned by the General Fund and is also currently vacant, and an old HRA owned play area.

The flats were constructed in 1975/6. Whilst they vary in current condition and some are "well worn", there are no significant issues of disrepair. Overall, the flats on the site occupy a relatively small area of the site as a whole, with much of the site being grass. There are also 31 garages on the site.

#### 4. Scheme Overview

The site is currently being assembled by decanting the current tenants and buy back of the leasehold properties along with giving notice to quit on the garages.

All the current flats/houses would be demolished. One end of the site would be transferred to KHA and they will construct 32 affordable rented houses on this area. The remainder of this site would remain in TDBC ownership, on which we would build 60 new homes for Social rent. In addition the scheme would see the creation of a central green/play area and community hub building in the TDBC portion of the site.

Whilst the project is housing driven, it is also designed to help tackle the deprivation in the area. In total, the proposal is for 92 new homes on the site, a significant increase over the number of properties currently on the site, this represents a significant increase in better quality affordable homes that are cheaper to run and potential investment of over £12 million in this area. The play/green area would provide a new central focus and help integration of the new and the existing properties and provide a quality open space

Appendix section 1 contains an overview plan of the proposed scheme.

The Community Hub building will potentially provide a valuable facility for the provision of services to the Halcon Ward.

Whilst the increase in homes is significant, the potential increase in bed numbers is huge.

	Bedrooms	Bed Spaces		
Existing Creechbarrow				
Road-	68	104		
TDBC Portion				
Creechbarrow Road –				
Proposed TDBC	120	211		
Development				
Existing Creechbarrow				
Road –	14	24		
KHA Portion				
Creechbarrow Road –				
Proposed KHA	65	114		
Development				
Proposed TDBC	52 Additional	107 Additional Bed Spaces		
Development	Bedrooms			
Proposed KHA	51 Additional	90 Additional Bed Spaces		
Development	Bedrooms			
Total of Whole	185	325		
Development				
Total Additional	103	197		

#### 5. Detailed Proposal - KHA

The KHA outline development is comprised of 32 dwellings in total, consisting of the following.

- 1 x 1 bed two-person Flat Over Garage (FOG)
- 3 x 2 bed four-person FOGs
- 9 x 1 bed two-person elderly persons flats (including 3 wheelchair compliant)
- 6 x 2 bed three-person elderly persons flats (including 2 wheelchair compliant)

- 3 x 2 bed four-person houses
- 9 x 3 bed five-person houses
- 1 x 4 bed seven-person house

15 of the flats (9 x 1 bed & 6 x 2 bed) will form a 3 storey block for active, elderly persons, with 5 flats on the ground floor suitable for disabled persons. The block of flats will contain a lift and a mobility scooter store on the ground floor.

KHA funding is supported by Homes and Community Agency (HCA) grant for 30 of the 32 new dwellings. The grant conditions require completion of these properties by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015. This is a very tight timescale for the project, but equally it has created a significant pace and momentum for the project so far. KHA properties will all be let at Affordable Rent level (80% of market rent).

Further to the previous Council resolution, Heads of Terms for the disposal of the KHA portion of the site are being prepared. Previously the Council commissioned Savills to undertake an assessment of the residual value of the KHA portion of the site for affordable housing. This confirmed a negative residual value, and consequently the site will be disposed of for £1. The Council are operating in an "open book" fashion with KHA and the total scheme cost for the KHA part is currently £3,972M and shows a substantial loss.

However, if during contractor procurement the KHA scheme reveals a changed position to generating a surplus, we have negotiated an overage agreement where KHA and TDBC will benefit equally in any surpluses derived. In addition we will include a buy back for £1 clause in the draft Heads of Terms so the Council will be able to re purchase the site if it wishes if the scheme falters for any reason post completion.

#### 6. Detailed Proposal- TDBC

The design brief aims to create an inclusive and diverse community through careful consideration of property types and their relative location. The family houses ranging from 2 bed three person to 6 bed nine person are located closest to the green public open space and children's play area.

The outline of TDBC development is comprised of 60 new properties in accordance with the mix below.:-

- 9 x 1 bed two-person elderly persons flats (including 3 wheelchair compliant)
- 6 x 2 bed three-person elderly persons flats (including 2 wheelchair compliant)
- 1 x 1 bed two-person FOG
- 3 x 2 bed three-person FOGs
- 6 x 1 bed two-person wheelchair compliant flats
- 8 x 1 bed two-person flats
- 6 x 2 bed three-person flats
- 4 x 2 bed four-person houses
- 13 x 3 bed five-person houses
- 2 x 4 bed seven-person houses
- 1 x 5 bed eight-person house
- 1 x 6 bed nine-person house

#### **Elderly Persons Court**

Designed in collaboration with the Council's retained Occupational Therapist and inhouse Supported Housing Team, the Elderly Person's Court comprises self-contained flats within a single three-storey building providing 6 two-bed and 9 one-bed properties all designed to cater for non close-care elderly persons, with the inclusion of wheelchair transfer areas and level access showers in all flats with the option of reverting to baths should they be required. All of the flats have been designed with Lifetime Homes and Secured by Design principles and criteria in mind.

The ground floor flats are designed to be wheelchair compliant in accordance with the Habinteg housing wheelchair design guide, with the exception of the covered access requirement. The building has a secure lobbied entrance and internal mobility scooter store with charging points. There is also a communal lift and ambulant disabled compliant stair serving both upper floors and an external terrace on the first floor.

The Elderly Persons Court has designated car parking and a small common room area has been provided. The block has been specifically located close to a public bus stop, supermarket and proposed community hub building.

#### **General Needs Wheelchair Compliant Ground Floor Flats**

Resulting from community engagement with the TDBC Tenant's Forum and Tenant Services Management Board, and designed in collaboration with the Council's retained Occupational Therapist, six ground floor wheelchair compliant ground floor flats have been included in the scheme proposal.

The ground floor flats are designed to be wheelchair compliant (WCC) in accordance with Lifetime Homes and the comprehensive Habinteg housing wheelchair design guide, with the exception of the covered access requirement. However, the allocated car parking is adjacent to the flat entrance doors. Enclosed bin storage is accessed directly from the curtiledge of the plot, with individual secure mobility scooter store with charging points where possible, otherwise shared with the first floor flat. Each cluster of two ground-floor wheelchair compliant and two first floor (maisonette) two-bed general needs flats have a secure amenity space to the rear, with the WCC flats provided with direct access from the living-room to a patio.

The flats are designed as independent maisonettes with no internal communal spaces and the appearance of semi-detached properties; the combination of WCC and ablebodied flats is designed to foster an interdependent community aspect. The flats have wheelchair transfer areas and level access showers; with the option of reverting to baths should they be required. The kitchens are designed to accommodate differing height requirements for the key kitchen facilities.

The approach to providing an inclusive community has been extended to the remodelling of the site to improve highways, footpath and building / garden approach gradients.

#### 7. Design standards:-

#### Code for Sustainable Development – Level 4.

The new homes will be much cheaper to run for the occupants in that they are 25% more energy efficient than current building regulations. The Code for Sustainable Homes (CfSH) sets standards over and above the existing Building Regulations, through mandatory and tradable credits assessed pre and post construction, which includes as a key aspect the reduction in CO2 emissions as well as improving the fabric of the building.

In addition, it aims to:

- reduce potable water consumption per person
- encourage good waste management and recycling, both during construction and the occupation of the building
- · encourage the use of sustainable and/or recycled building materials
- encourage the use of low or zero carbon technologies
- increase the health and wellbeing of the occupants
- protect and enhance the ecology

The strategy for achieving Code Level 4 at Creechbarrow Road is being developed with the aim delivering the most efficient and cost effective solution. The strategy will continue to evolve in conjunction with the Development Partners, associated consultants and in negotiations with the Design Build Contactor. The scheme's architect and code assessor will progress the chosen approach of 'fabric first', where good construction and air tightness play an important part, the employer's requirements will set targets for an acceptable standard of work.

The proposals are following a traditional build construction, with a high efficiency gas boiler heating system with heat recovery; positive input ventilation will create better air tightness, a healthier living environment and is cost-neutral. At this stage, renewable energy solutions are not required to meet the design parameter of code level 4 compliance. The inclusion of renewable energy options for example Solar PV, will remain under consideration and may be added dependent on the construction contract tender sum.

Due to the constraints of the site in terms of topography, soil composition and the existing ecology, certain approaches (code credits) such as soakaways and significant ecological measures are not possible or practicable on the site. Whilst no credits have been assumed for the responsible sourcing of building elements or finishing elements (based on a proven difficulty in the past to satisfy this credit), the employer's requirements will identify responsible sourcing as a key requirement.

#### **Lifetime Homes**

Extract from Lifetime Homes website:

Lifetime Homes are ordinary homes designed to incorporate <u>16 Design Criteria</u> that can be universally applied to new homes at minimal cost. Each design feature adds to the comfort and convenience of the home and supports the changing needs of individuals and families at different stages of life. Lifetime Homes are all about flexibility and adaptability; they are not 'special', but are thoughtfully designed to create and encourage better living environments for everyone. From raising small children to coping with illness or dealing with reduced mobility in later life, Lifetime Homes make the ups and downs of daily living easier to manage.

The Creechbarrow Road scheme layout and house layouts fully conform to the latest Lifetime Homes design criteria, which ensures that a home built to the standards will be adaptable to allow future changes in occupant's circumstances to be accommodated through pre-planned alterations rather than requiring them to move house.

The 16 Lifetime Homes criteria cover the following aspects; accreditation can only be met by conforming to all the criteria:

Criterion 1: Parking (width or widening capability)

- Criterion 2: Approach to dwelling from parking (distance, gradients and widths)
- Criterion 3: Approach to all entrances
- **Criterion 4: Entrances**
- Criterion 5: Communal stairs and lifts
- Criterion 6: Internal doorways and hallways
- Criterion 7: Circulation space
- Criterion 8: Entrance level living space
- Criterion 9: Potential for entrance level bed-space
- Criterion 10: Entrance level WC and shower drainage
- Criterion 11: WC and bathroom walls
- Criterion 12: Stairs and potential through-floor lift in dwellings
- Criterion 13: Potential for fitting of hoists and bedroom / bathroom relationship
- Criterion 14: Bathrooms
- Criterion 15: Glazing and window handle heights
- Criterion 16: Location of service controls

#### Secured by Design

An integral part of the overall sustainable development strategy is to adopt the Secured by Design (SbD) police initiative providing guidance and encouragement to those engaged within the specification, design and build of new homes to adopt crime prevention measures in new development. Compliance with the guidance has been proven to reduce the opportunity for crime and the fear of crime, creating safer, more secure and sustainable environments.

Throughout the design development of the Creechbarrow Road scheme there has been close consultation with the Area Police Architectural Liaison Officer and Local Beat Sergeant, who have fully endorsed the agreed amendments to the scheme design. The SbD measures adopted by the scheme aim to address community safety and security requirements as well as individual building needs. By following the SbD principles there are proven environmental, health and well-being benefits as well as significant crime reduction. Design development included adopting a cul-de-sac highways strategy, increasing natural surveillance by re-orientating buildings and designing out communal areas to flats wherever possible.

It is intended that the Secured by Design principles are an integral part of the process and that the design will meet the SbD criteria for the Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4, which will be subsequently be entered for a SbD award.

### **Taunton Protocol**

The Taunton Protocol adopted by the Council in November 2011 sets out the Council's aspirations for development in the fields of carbon reduction, building design and valuation, producing significant reductions of Co2 to help meet the Government's challenging targets for reducing the impact of climate change. The committee report acknowledged that scheme viability and therefore delivery would influence whether the standards would be applied either comprehensively or in part.

The elements and standards contained within the Protocol cover:

- 1. Low Environmental Impact Building Design
- 2. Climate Change Adaptation
- 3. Sustainable Lifestyles & Community Involvement
- 4. Materials
- 5. Construction Site Management
- 6. Biodiversity & Ecology

The Creechbarrow Road development planning submission will include a review of the Taunton Protocol checklist identifying the areas of compliance and those where strict adherence has not been either practical or financially viable. By adopting a Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4 minimum threshold, the scheme will deliver a significantly more sustainable development than the majority of comparable speculative developments. The employer's requirements will emphasise the role of local apprenticeships and employment as well as locally sourced materials.

#### 8. Play Area/Open Space

The scheme will remove a current HRA owned play area at the northern end of the site. This area is of poor quality. In its place a new, more central play area/open space will be provided in the scheme.

Additional new dwellings potentially generate increased demand for children's play and in line with Local Plan Policy C4 an area of 20sqm per each additional family size 2 bed + dwelling should be provided. Viridor Green is within the national guideline of 400 metres or a 5 minute walk from the development however it is an area of open space specifically designated, and equipped for use by older children and teenagers. An equipped area for younger children known as a Local Equipped Area for Play (LEAP) will be provided within the development, closer to their homes and without the necessity of crossing Creechbarrow Road. The cost of the LEAP will be met entirely from the Section 106 contributions for children's play which will be generated by the additional family sized dwellings.

#### 9. Community Hub

A three storey building is proposed at the end of Moorland Road. This will provide dwellings (8 x 1 bed, 2 person flats) on the first and second floors and a community facility on the ground floor.

It has been decided that a separate planning application will be submitted for this aspect of the scheme because this aspect of the development requires further discussion of planning matters, so this approach will avoid this aspect holding up planning processes for the rest of the site. In addition more time is required to determine the design and ultimate use of this facility.

More consultation is underway with the community, stakeholders and partner agencies to attempt to create something that is of sustainable value to the community. Current thinking includes the following features:

- Walk in community facilities such as youth meeting place, internet provision, community café etc.
- Access to advice and services via volunteers and agencies.
- Meeting/activity rooms
- Smaller interview rooms.
- Landing pad workstations (hot desks) for partner agencies working in the area
- Accommodation above the hub may be more "managed" and could be targeted at persons who may, for example, be seeking skills development and employment via some of the services provided by the hub on the ground floor. Equally tenancy could be conditional on a level of volunteering in the hub or the community.

A more detailed report on this facility will follow in due course. For the time being the capital costs of constructing the basic shell of this facility are included in the scheme costs. If, ultimately, the hub does not come to fruition or is not viable, the building has been designed in such a way as the space can be readily returned to four additional flats.

#### **10.** Community Development – Construction.

It is the intention through the construction phase to maximise opportunities for local community involvement and benefit. Below are some examples of the sorts of activity that may be pursued through the life of the build:-

- Requiring contractor(s) to provide training/apprenticeship opportunities that may lead to longer term employment. Such opportunities will initially be ring-fenced to persons within the ward.
- Involving local persons in site security contract.
- Construction site awareness (safety) and general exposure to a large construction project as a learning experience for local and feeder schools and other community groups.
- Involvement of local and feeder schools in design and public art (planning requirement) throughout site.
- Possible managed street art wall on site hoarding.

#### 11. Community Development – Lettings.

In order to maximise the benefits of the scheme, not only to the new occupants but also to the wider community, it is important to let the new properties in a way that will facilitate and enable the greatest positive impact. Consequently a draft Local Lettings Plan has been created in consultation with partners and KHA. This will be a joint lettings plan between TDBC and KHA so will apply to the whole development area. There are three principle aims of this plan:-

- 1. To ensure the development benefits the wider Halcon Ward by making provision for families displaced from Creechbarrow Road to return, and for families overcrowded or with a need to downsize in the Ward to move to more suitable accommodation in the scheme.
- 2. To ensure new homes designed for specific purposes/needs are utilised as such. So that new homes for disabled, active elderly and families are used accordingly.
- 3. To provide a new balanced and sustainable community that will have a positive impact on the ward. This is done by excluding persons with a known criminal history, limiting the proportion of new households with tenancy support needs and promoting a balance of new tenants from Gold, Silver and Bronze (CBL) banding, including references to training and employment.

Members are asked to comment on the draft plan and confirm their support for the principles contained therein.

### 12. Right to Buy.

The new Council properties will be subject to Right to Buy (RtB), therefore if they are let to a tenant with existing, or, in time, earned RtB eligibility (Council or HA tenant for 5 years), they could make an application to RtB the property. However, the Council is afforded some protection by the "Cost floor" provision. This means that for new build property for a period of 15 years, the RtB discounts will be limited to ensure that the purchase price of the property does not fall below what has been spent on building, buying, repairing or maintaining it over a certain period of time, up to the market value of the property. Therefore, in order to RtB a property, applicants will be required to pay the full build costs of the property (up to the market value of the property).

Despite the Cost Floor provision, for the new larger properties there would still be a differential between build costs and future market value, potentially making some of the larger properties attractive as a medium term investment. We are able to exclude some properties from RtB risk (see below), but must accept there is a small, but inherent, RtB risk arising from this scheme, that is beyond the Council's control. Ultimately, if a small number of properties are purchased via RtB then perhaps the Council can still be content that it has provided/enabled more affordable housing in the wider sense, even though a few units may be lost to the HRA.

The Council is only able to protect certain properties from RtB, in this case the exclusions that will apply are if the dwelling is:-

- In a group of dwellings, and
- particularly suitable for occupation by an elderly person (i.e. close to shop, bus stop, ease of access via lift, and
- which it is the practice to let to persons aged 60 or over or persons with physical disability, and
- there is a non resident warden (supported housing) with a call system and a common room.

This exemption is addressed in Local Lettings Plan described above and will relate to 15 TDBC flats in the scheme.

Lastly, for new build property, the Council may apply to DCLG for an exemption from pooling of receipts (returning a proportion of capital receipts to Government). It is our intention to apply for this exemption if any properties are purchased via RtB, then we can keep 100% of these receipts locally.

#### 13. **Pre-planning Consultation**

Extensive public and stakeholder consultation / engagement has been undertaken by means of displays, meetings, workshops and design reviews with the following:

Asda General Manager **Compass Disability Group** Taunton and District Civic Society Open public meeting in Halcon Police Architectural Liaison Officer and Beat Sergeant SCC Highways pre-application TDBC Affordable Housing Open Day **TDBC Councillor Session TDBC** Footways pre-application TDBC Housing Department design review workshop **TDBC Occupational Therapist TDBC Officer Session TDBC Planning pre-application TDBC** Tenant's Forum TDBC Tenant's and Leaseholder's Open Day and AGM **Tenant Services Management Board** 

The consultation process through meaningful public and stakeholder engagement was used to inform the design development of both the scheme site layout and house type plans and elevations. Three alternative site layout and four house type / building elevational treatments ranging from contemporary to traditional form and aesthetics were presented for consideration. Significant positive criticism provided guidance on a number of aspects including the following key areas:

Preference for

- Two distinct cul-de-sacs entered from the existing access at the north and south of the site.
- A footpath / cycleway link through the site as a diversion of the existing public footpath with a link between the cul-de-sacs
- A range of property types to create a full range of inclusive community with strong support for the wheelchair compliant non age-related flats and a distinct elderly person's complex.
- LEAP play area, associated green space to be accessible to the whole of Halcon, and surrounded by the family housing.
- A traditional form and elevational treatment throughout the scheme, with low maintenance requirements.
- Car parking and private amenity space to be incorporated within the curtiledge of the plot.
- Strong support for the Community Hub.
- Reinforcing the landscape along Creechbarrow Road and within the proposed estate.
- Fabric first approach to providing energy efficient properties

Concern at

- The height, scale, massing, form as well as elevational treatment of the Elderly persons complex.
- Village square casual parking.
- Tandem parking
- The inclusion of timber or other cladding associated with the contemporary elevational treatments.
- Noise problems associated with the ASDA deliveries in the early hours.

All of the above points have been assimilated into a composite design development process, which has informed the planning submission.

#### 14. Appointments / Schedule of Consultants (TDBC)

Acoustic Consultant:	From: Acoustic Consultants Limited / Atkins Limited/
Asbestos Surveyor:	Hydrock Limited
Arboriculturalist:	TDBC Housing Property Services
Archaeologist:	Hellis Tree Consultants
Architect:	Context One Archaeological Limited
Building Control:	Boon Brown Partnership
Code for Sustainable	TDBC Building Control Services
Homes Assessor:	Boon Brown Partnership
Construction CDM-C:	Tuffin Ferraby Taylor
Development Agent:	Knightstone Housing Association
Ecologist:	Encompass Ecology Limited
Employer's Agent:	Tremain Powell Partnership
Geo-technical:	Hydrock Consultants Limited
Highways:	Hydrock Highways and Byways
Infrastructure:	Hydrock Consultants Limited
Landscape Architect:	Swan Paul Partnership
Legal:	TDBC Legal Team
Occupational Therapist:	SCC
Town Planning Consultant:	Boon Brown Partnership

#### 15. Current Position – Site Assessment and Investigation

Hydrock Consultants Limited a specialist geo-technical consultancy and sub-contractor have completed a detailed desktop study and intrusive trial-pit investigation as part of the overall site investigation as part of the outline contamination remediation strategy required of all proposed developments. The research undertaken in consultation with the Council's Scientific and H&S Officer's has identified the potential for ground gas migration from nearby former landfill and sewerage treatment sites, the monitoring for ground gas is an ongoing process. In general, the findings are consistent with the redevelopment of a brown-field site.

Other reports, either in progress or already completed include:

-Acoustic survey to take place in early July.

-Arboricultural Survey identifying the quality of the existing trees, the approach to retention and removal / replacement has been agreed with there Council's Landscape Officer.

-Archaeological desktop study that identifies the site as of low archaeological potential.

-Ecological survey has not identified any areas for concern.

-Geo-technical has not identified any areas for concern.

-Transport Statement and Travel Plan have been produced in consultation with SCC Highways.

-Infrastructure strategy has been designed following desktop studies through the public utilities including capacity checks, followed up by CCTV investigation and mapping and dye-based intrusive surveys of existing foul and surface sewers.

-Landscape and Public Art strategy is being produced following a landscape and area appraisal in consultation with the Council's Leisure and Landscape Officers.

#### 16. Current Position – Site Assembly

-Notice to quit has been issued to all tenants of garages, many are now vacant with keys returned.

-15 properties have been decanted to alternate accommodation.

-15 accepted offers on alternate property and are somewhere down the path of moving home

-Negotiations continuing with leaseholders for buy back of properties.

The area of the scheme includes four properties at the end of Moorland Road. Of these, one (number 1) is owned by the General Fund (GF) as it was "bought back " by Housing Enabling during the course of the original larger project. The remaining three properties are owned by the HRA. It is proposed that the property is transferred to the HRA from the GF at a price agreed following formal valuation.

#### 17. Financial Appraisal and Business Case

Previously Savills Consultancy were engaged to undertake an initial development appraisal of the outline proposals. Some of the key conclusions from this work are as follows:-

- 1. The current flats and houses in this scheme in Creechbarrow Road are predicted to make a modest surplus over the next 30 years, broadly comparable to the valuation attributable to them under HRA self-financing.
- 2. There is a net loss of income if these units are removed, however due to the small scale of the scheme, the impact on the overall HRA cash flow of removing these properties is marginal.
- 3. The estimated total cost of developing the new homes is too large to be met from available revenue in one year and so will need to be accommodated within the Council's capital/borrowing limits.
- 4. We consider that it is reasonable to conclude that the benefits of having more homes, including large family houses and the Community Hub, available in place of the 42 smaller flats and 4 houses currently provided justifies the slight additional net costs and the loss of net income from existing units.

Following the updates to the proposals, a detailed financial appraisal of the current proposed scheme has been undertaken and provides the following conclusions, however it should be noted that the construction work has not yet been subject to tendering and it is likely that reductions in the projected costs can be achieved through a competitive tendering process:-

#### The Total Scheme Costs (TSC) for the project is £8.143M

# Based on income from rents over a 30 year period the scheme can afford to repay £5.764m over 30 years.

#### Therefore the scheme requires subsidy of £2.379m

Payback period (the time at which the full cost – including the £2.379m above - is paid back): 46 years

#### 18. Finance Summary and Comment

The current 2013/14 Capital Programme includes an approved budget for the scheme totalling  $\pounds$ 7,667,000. In addition, there was an approved budget allocation of  $\pounds$ 200,000 included in the 2012/13 Capital Programme for this scheme, giving approval for Total Capital Expenditure of  $\pounds$ 7,867,000.

The updated estimate of Total Scheme Costs exceeds the current approval, therefore it is necessary to request a budget increase of £276,000 in order to proceed to tender, as shown in the following table:

	£
Current Capital Expenditure Budget for the scheme:	
2012/13 Capital Programme	200,000
2013/14 Capital Programme	7,667,000
Current Budget	7,867,000
Updated estimate of Total Scheme Costs	8,143,000
Additional Budget Approval Required	276,000

In terms of funding arrangements for the scheme, when the initial proposals were approved £200k was allocated from HRA Reserves and Members agreed in principle to approve funding for the balance via borrowing. As Members will be aware from the 2012/13 Financial Outturn Report, the Council has experienced significant growth in Right to Buy sales – and therefore capital receipts – in the last year (this trend has continued in the first quarter of the current year). It is therefore proposed to use RtB capital receipts to fund 10% of the scheme, taking into account the requirement to meet the conditions of the One for One Replacement Agreement with the Government. The following table summarises the proposed funding at this stage.

	£
Estimated Total Funding Required	8,143,000
Proposed Funding:	
HRA Reserves	200,000
RtB Capital Receipts	814,000

Social Housing Development Fund (indicative only)	1,686,000
Borrowing (indicative only)	5,443,000
Total Funding	8,143,000

Giving approval to support expenditure through borrowing will enable the scheme to proceed. The Finance service will liaise with the Council's treasury advisor – Arlingclose – to help determine the most advantageous method of borrowing. This could be executed through "internal borrowing" – which is essentially using available HRA and/or General Fund cash balances – or through "external borrowing" such as taking out a loan from Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) or another financial institution. The eventual financing arrangements will be handled through the Council's treasury operations, in line with the Treasury Management Strategy and Policies. The financial appraisal and business case has assumed a borrowing rate of 3.6% for financial modelling purposes. The HRA borrowing position including the sum above will remain comfortably within the HRA capital debt cap imposed by Government.

The proposals include the transfer of 1 Moorland Road from the General Fund to the HRA, which will need to be accounted for as an "appropriation" at open market value. It is currently held with the General Fund with a book value of £130k, however Property Services should be instructed to determine its current market value to be used for the transfer. This will give rise to an increase in the HRA Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) (i.e. be accounted for in the HRA as funded through borrowing and therefore use up some of the debt cap), with a similar reduction in the General Fund CFR. The transfer will be treated as a "reclassification" of the asset on the Council's Balance Sheet.

Although the Business Case indicates that the HRA will effectively provide a subsidy for the scheme within the current 30-year plan, the investment in the increased housing that the scheme provides does pay back over 46 years. It is reasonable to conclude that the investment is affordable over the long term and that the properties <u>should</u> have a useful life of at least 46 years if properly maintained as planned.

### 19. Legal Comments

All relevant provisions in existing tenancy and leaseholder agreements will be given due consideration if the project progresses.

#### 20. Links to Corporate Aims

Along with supporting the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan objectives, the proposals support the key Council priorities of Affordable Housing and Regeneration.

#### 21. Environmental Implications

All new homes on both parts of the site would be built to at least Code for Sustainable Development - Level 4, addressed in the main body of report.

#### 22. Community Safety Implications

Consideration will be given to local authority responsibilities in relation to crime and disorder, in particular the application of relevant design standards for new developments. The properties will be designed and built to Secure by Design standards

i.e. the Police have commented on the design to ensure safety and the specifications for the properties will include security features. In the new development as with all our existing estates Housing Management will take a proactive and robust approach to dealing with ASB.

#### 23. Equalities Impact -

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken in relation to the scheme and this included consultation with the Tenants Forum and Compass Disability.(See Appendix 3). The key findings are that the scheme has the potential for positive impact on many groups of people not just those with protected characteristics, with no adverse impacts identified.

The draft Local Lettings Plan, which is made under the Homefinder Somerset Common Lettings Policy, has the potential for positive impact on all groups of people not just those with protected characteristics. As a full equalities impact assessment has been previously completed on the Homefinder Somerset Common Allocations Policy, a full equality impact assessment is not required at this stage.

#### 24. Risk Management

A full Risk Register has been undertaken for the project.

Key risks associated with the proposals contained in this report are:-

- TDBC failure to obtain vacant possession of site leading to delayed hand over and potential loss of HCA funding.
- Significant unforeseen local opposition to the proposals creating operational difficulties.
- Sites not receiving Planning consent leading to wasted expenditure of at risk costs.

#### 25. Recommendation

Subject to prior approval by the Executive, the following recommendations will be made to full Council:-

- 1. Approve progression of the redevelopment scheme as outlined.
- 2. Subject to valuation approve transfer of 1 Moorland Road from the General fund to the Housing Revenue Account.
- 3. Approval of a Supplementary Estimate of £276,000 thus increasing the total Capital Expenditure Budget for the scheme to £8,143,000, and to note the proposed funding plan for the scheme, including borrowing
- 4. Comment on the proposed joint TDBC and KHA Local Lettings Plan for the development and confirm support for principles contained therein.

#### The Tenant Services Management Board is requested to comment on the report.

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Appendix 1:Scheme overview planAppendix 2:Proposed Local Lettings PlanAppendix 3:Equalities Impact Assessment

# Appendix 2

# LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN -DRAFT

### **CREECHBARROW ROAD, TAUNTON**

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH KNIGHTSTONE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

This is a joint Taunton Deane Borough Council (TDBC) and Knightstone Housing Association (KHA) local lettings plan for the Creechbarrow Road scheme.

Creechbarrow Road is a purpose built scheme which contains 92 social housing properties of which 60 will be owned by TDBC and 32 by KHA comprising 34 houses, 58 flats a community hub and a multi activity play area.

#### Background

Creechbarrow Road is within Halcon which is ranked as one of the top 5% most deprived communities in the country (Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2010). Although, much good work has been done over many years by a range of agencies, the deprivation indices showed no sign of improvement. Contributing towards tackling this has been a key driver for the Creechbarrow Road scheme. The scheme links in to many other new and innovative projects that are being delivered within Halcon.

The broad aim of the scheme is that TDBC will construct and retain ownership of new homes for social rent in addition to the creation of a central green/play area and community hub building. KHA will construct affordable rent properties on land transferred to their ownership with the addition of Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) funding.

#### **Objectives of this Lettings Plan**

The objectives of this lettings plan are:

- TDBC and KHA will work in partnership to achieve the greatest choice and flexibility in meeting the needs of housing applicants; and
- To create a safe and secure environment in which tenants can live peacefully and in harmony with their neighbours and families can grow.

#### The Area – Creechbarrow Road, Taunton

The Creechbarrow Road scheme will be built on the site of previous local authority housing adjacent to Creechbarrow Road in the East of Taunton. The site is on a larger mixed tenure estate which is made up of largely TDBC owned housing stock. There is a school within close proximity in the Halcon area, there are also a number of small local shops, a medium sized supermarket and a much larger supermarket close by. There are some recreational facilities notably at Viridor Green and Hamilton Gault Park which are both only a short walk away. There are good transport links into Taunton Town centre and the area is served by a regular bus route.

#### The Scheme

Creechbarrow Road is a scheme of 92 TDBC and KHA properties.

Property Type	KHA Affordable weekly rent	TDBC social weekly rent		
1 Bed flat	£82.85	£74.15		
1 Bed flat over	£87.45	£75.32		
garage (FOG)				
2 Bed flat	£101.26	£83.68		
2 Bed (FOG)	£105.86	£84.85		
2 bed house	£110.47	£90.66		
3 bed house	£119.67	£101.35		
4 bed house	£138.08	£116.70		
5 bed house	N/A	£123.90		
6 bed house	N/A	£132.27		

The stock break-down is as follows:

There will be two blocks of flats on the scheme comprising 30 (15 TDBC & 15 KHA) properties which will be particularly suitable for occupation by elderly persons and the disabled. They will have lifts and a mobility scooter store, are near to bus stops and close to shops and will be let to people who are over 60 years or those with a physical disability, there will also be a non resident warden service (supported housing) with a call system and a common room. Ten (5 TDBC and 5 KHA) of these properties are wheelchair compliant and will be let to persons who have a recognised need for this type of accommodation.

There will be an additional 6 wheelchair compliant flats on the remainder of the scheme owned and managed by TDBC, these will be let to people who have a recognised need for this type of accommodation.

### **Tenancy Type**

All of the applicants accepted into the scheme will be granted either a social rented tenancy by TDBC, or an affordable rent tenancy by KHA.

#### Lettings

TDBC and KHA are committed to advertising as many of the vacant properties as possible, on this scheme, through the Choice Based Lettings system. Adverts on vacant properties will give information on who will be eligible to apply for the properties.

#### Exclusions

The standard exclusions under section 3.7.1 of the Homefinder Somserset Common Allocations Policy will apply. For households that have a history of a persistent tenancy breach for anti-social behaviour or other types of tenancy breach for example:

 A known history/convictions of/for drug or alcohol abuse or drug dealing in the last 2 years; and • An outstanding debt to TDBC or one of the other Homefinder Somerset Partner Landlords or private landlords. This includes present rent, former tenancy rent arrears, court costs, housing related debt or re-charges. However, consideration may be given to those who can demonstrate that they have adhered to a regular repayment plan for a consecutive 6 months.

Furthermore in these such cases we will assess applications using criteria such as:

- That the household will be safe and secure;
- That the household's quality of life will not be adversely Affected;
- The quality of life for people already living in the area won't be adversely affected; and
- Where appropriate, you continue to positively engage with support agencies.

If it is assessed that a household do not meet these criteria, they will not be allocated a property on the scheme for the period of the local lettings plan.

For existing Registered Provider or council tenants, their present accommodation must be in good decorative order.

For all applicants a landlords reference will be required.

#### Allocations

Priority will be given to existing tenants wanting to return where their property is subject to demolition as part of this scheme. In an effort to achieve the greatest choice and flexibility in meeting applicants needs the following target allocations will be applied:

25% of the properties will be let to existing TDBC and KHA tenant transfers from the Halcon area who are overcrowded or are underoccupying their current accommodation. Priority will also be given to other TDBC and KHA tenants from the Halcon area who express a wish to transfer onto this scheme and TDBC and KHA tenants who properties are to be demolished as part of other development schemes. It is likely that many of these households will be in the gold band.

The remaining 75% of properties will be let to Homefinder applicants as follows:

Approx 15% gold band applicants (including applicants with a high medical priority).

Approx 50% to silver band applicants (including applicants who need to move nearer their place of work within the Homefinder Somerset area).

Approx 35% to bronze band applicants (including applicants who live in social housing, are owner occupiers or are tenants of private landlords).

#### Note:

• Maximum of 10% overall households with **tenancy support needs**, for example those households that need additional support and advice to manage their tenancies;

- Approx 60% of households to be working, in education or training and or engaging in community voluntary work; and
- Property adverts will give information on who will be eligible to apply for a property. For example, if the property is labelled for older people the advert will state that only applicants above a certain age will be eligible. An adapted property suitable for someone in a wheelchair will be labelled to say that applicants must require such a property.

#### Underletting of general needs properties:

It is our intention to only underlet properties when we are unable to let them to households that can make full use of the available bed space

1B/2P – let only to couples or single households.
2B/3P – let to childless couples or single adult with one child.
2B/4P – let only to couples with child/ren or single adult with children.
3B/5P – let only to couples or single adult with children.
4B/7P – let only to couples or single adult with children.
5B/8P – let only to couples or single adult with children.

6B/9P – let only to couples or single adult with children.

#### Note:

• Due to Welfare Reform Legislation applicants who are underlet properties will have to demonstrate that they can afford to pay their full rent.

We will review the impact of these lettings annually; the review will be conducted jointly between TDBC and KHA.

#### **Monitoring and Review**

Careful monitoring of allocations and the management of the scheme will routinely take place as part of an ongoing process. A number of areas will be monitored to ensure that this lettings plan is operating in the most effective way. Areas to be monitored may include:-

- A new tenancy visit will be conducted within 4-6 weeks of tenancy start date to capture feedback from new tenants.
- Number of expressions of interest for each property.
- Profile of those expressing an interest (e.g. transfers, disabled, BME, older people).
- Number of offers accepted first time.
- Number of properties re-advertised due to difficulty in letting.
- Average void rate.
- Number of nuisance and ASB complaints.
- Rent arrears.

#### Equality Impact Assessment

Responsible person	James Barrah	Job Title: Health and Ho	ousing Theme Manager
Why are you completing the Equality		e/plan/project	$\checkmark$
Impact Assessment? (Please mark	Change to Policy/service	Change to Policy/service	
as appropriate)	Budget/Financial decision –	Budget/Financial decision – MTFP	
	Part of timetable		
What are you completing the Equal (which, service, MTFP proposal)	ty Impact Assessment on	•	uncil (TDBC) Housing Services – Creechbarrow Road Project 2013
Section One – Scope of the assess	nent		
What are the main purposes/aims of the policy/decision/service/plan/project?	<ul> <li>To enable the development Knightstone Housing Assoc</li> <li>To contribute towards tackli</li> <li>To enhance the quality of h</li> <li>Produce housing that is of t</li> <li>To develop a community hu</li> </ul>	of 60 new social rented homes, of of 32 new affordable homes that ciation (KHA); ing the deprivation indices in the l ousing in the area; the highest, practicable, energy ef ub building that will provide a valu s/people in the Halcon area; and	will be owned and managed by Halcon area;

Which protected groups are targeted by the policy/decision/service/plan/project?	TDBC housing service has ambitions to explore new build development where this would meet an identified local need. As such Halcon North Regeneration - Creechbarrow Road Project 2013 may affect all the protected groups including: Age; Disability; Gender Reassignment; Pregnancy and Maternity; Race; Religion or belief; Sex; and Sexual Orientation; Marriage and civil partnerships.
What evidence has been used in the assessment - data, engagement undertaken – please list each source that has been used The information can be found on	<ul> <li>Data: <ul> <li>Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2010;</li> <li>The Priority Areas Strategy survey results - 2011;</li> <li>Priority Areas Strategy benchmarking report - 2011; and</li> <li>Homefinder Somerset Housing Register – 2012/13</li> </ul> </li> <li>Engagement: <ul> <li>Tenant and resident feedback about the development scheme has been received regularly – 2012/2013;</li> <li>Specific consultation has been conducted with external and internal stakeholders – 2012/13;</li> <li>Taunton Deane Tenants' Forum – 2012/13;</li> <li>Tenant Services Management Board – 2012/13; and</li> <li>Compass Disabilities – 2013.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Section two – Conclusion drawn about the impact of service/policy/function/plan/project/change on different groups highlighting negative impact, unequal outcomes or missed opportunities for promoting equality

Officers from TDBC housing services opinion of the Halcon North Regeneration – Creechbarrow Road Project 2013 concludes that they do not believe any further significant equalities impacts will arise.

The impacts on protected groups to positively advance equality from this project are detailed as follows:

- All of the flats on the scheme have been designed with Lifetime Homes and Secured by Design principles and criteria in mind. There are 16 ground floor flats that are designed to be wheelchair compliant in accordance with the Habinteg housing wheelchair design guide;
- The new housing will be let at social or affordable rent and will be affordable to families of different sizes, older people and disabled people;
- The quality of the new housing being provided will help create and encourage better living environments for everyone. As a consequence it is expected the health outcomes for the Halcon area will be improved as well as opportunities for reaching better educational outcomes for households;
- Tenants and residents will feel safe in the public realm and feelings of safety and security in the home will improve for all due to the adoption of crime prevention measures in the new development. Compliance with such crime prevention measures have been proven to reduce the opportunity for crime and fear of crime; and

The hub building will be accessible for all	groups in th	the community reflecting the diversity of the local population, helping	o bring
people together and foster good relations	s between di	different groups.	
I have concluded that there is/should be:			
No major change - no adverse equality	Positive im	mpacts identified	
impact identified			
Adjust the policy/decision/service			
Continue with the	A more det	letailed equalities impact assessment is not required.	
policy/decision/service/plan/project			
Stop and remove the policy/decision/service			
Reasons and documentation to support conclus	ions		
Section four - Implementation - timescale for	<sup>·</sup> implementa	ntation	
Section Five – Sign off			
Responsible officer: James Barrah Health and H	lousing	Health and Housing Theme	
Theme Manager		Date: 21 <sup>st</sup> June 2013	
Date: 21 <sup>st</sup> June 2013			
Published on: 2 <sup>nd</sup> July 2013			
Next review date:		Date logged on Covalent	

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- shown otherwise
- · Any discrepancies in dimensions or details on or between these drawings/specifications should be drawn to the attention of the boon brown and or the engineer in writing for clarification Drawing prepared solely for the use of client, as detailed in text box,
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30 31	Flat	2	3	73	786	КНА				
31	Flat	1	2	59	635	KHA				
	FOG	2	4	89	958	KHA				
32	FOG	1	2	69	743	KHA		 1		
				58		TDBC	DIS	 		
33	Flat	1	2		624					
34	Flat	1	2	58	624	TDBC	DIS			
35	Flat	2	4	84	904	TDBC				
36	Flat	2	4	84	904	TDBC				
37	House	2	4	79	850	TDBC	<u> </u>			
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38	House	2	4	79	850	TDBC		 -	TOTAL SITE	
39	Flat	1	2	58	624	TDBC	DIS			-
40	Flat	1	2	58	624	TDBC	DIS	t	type	No.
41	Flat	2	4	84	904	TDBC		2b4p	house	
42	Flat	2	4	84	904	TDBC		3b5p	house	2
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43	House	6	9	186	2002	TDBC		4b7p	house	
44	House	2	4	79	850	TDBC		5b8p	house	
45	House	2	4	79	850	TDBC		6b9p	house	
46	House	3	5	90	969	TDBC		1b2p	flat	3
47	House	3	5	90	969	TDBC		2b3p	flat	10
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48	House	3	5	90	969	TDBC		1b2p	FOG	
49	House	3	5	90	969	TDBC		2b3p	FOG	
50	House	3	5	90	969	TDBC		2b4p	FOG	
51	House	3	5	90	969	TDBC	I	1b2p	FOS	
52	FOG	2	3	71	764	TDBC		.oup	++	
53	House	3	5	90	969	TDBC		Total		92
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73	Flat	1	2	51	527	TDBC				
74	Flat	1	2	50	549	TDBC				
75	Flat	1	2	49	538	TDBC				
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78	FOS	1	2	54	581	TDBC				
79	House	3	5	90	969	TDBC				
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80	House	3	5	99	1066	TDBC	<b>—</b>			
81	House	3	5	99	1066	TDBC				
82	House	5	8	158	1701	TDBC				
83	House	4	7	111	1195	TDBC				
84	House	4	7	111	1195	TDBC				
85		4		58	624	TDBC	DIS			
	Flat		2					 		
86	Flat	1	2	58	624	TDBC	DIS			
	Flat	2	4	84	904	TDBC				
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ł	06/13	M-bike parking added	jm
3	05/13	Revised following highways comments	jm
:	05/13	Layout revised following client comment	jm
	05/13	Layout revised following client comment	jm
)	05/13	Layout revised following client comment	jm
)	04/13	Layout revised following consultation	jm
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Scale	1/500 @ A1	Date	04/2013
Drawn	JM	CHKD	JM
DWG No.	3272/101	Rev.	Н