

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

12th February 2013

## DISPOSAL OF HEWELL ROAD SWIMMING BATHS AND ADJACENT PLAY AREA FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr M Shurmer & Cllr P Mould
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Sue Hanley, Deputy Chief Executive/ Executive Director – Leisure, Environmental & Community Services
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	Yes
Key Decision	

### **1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 On 4th October 2011 the site of Hewell Road Pool (including the adjacent play area), was declared surplus and Officers were tasked with identifying options for the disposal of the site for residential use.
- 1.2 This report brings forward a proposal for the disposal to a Registered Provider for the development of affordable housing, to be selected on the basis proposed within the report and subject to a further report to the Executive following the outcome of the selection process.
- 1.3 The site will be offered to the Council's preferred Registered Provider partners to submit a development proposal which will be assessed by a Member & Officer group in accordance with the selection criteria (appendix 2).
- 1.4 Should the selection process fail to identify a suitable development by a Registered Provider the option to sell the site on the open market for housing development will be included in the further report referred to at 1.2, above.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Executive Committee is asked to RESOLVE that:**

- 1) the option to dispose of the Hewell Road swimming baths site and adjacent play area (plan at appendix 1) by sale or transfer for the development of affordable Housing to a Registered Provider from the Council's Preferred Partner list be pursued;**
- 2) the selection criteria (appendix 2) be agreed;**

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- 3) **Officers invite development submissions for the site from the Council's Preferred Partner Registered Providers;**
- 4) **a selection panel be formed of Members, and supported by Officers to assess and evaluate the submissions and nominate the proposed partner; and**
- 5) **the selection panel brings a further report to the Executive for the formal selection of the successful submission.**

**3. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The Council's Capital Programme currently has allocated £210,000 for demolishing the swimming baths. This will no longer be required.
- 3.2 The Council is currently paying to secure the site at £137 per week and the cost to date is:

31 Jan 12 to 31 Mar 12	£ 964.81
Apr – Jun 12	£1,513.87
Jul – Sept 12	£2,458.42
Oct – Dec 12	<u>£1,901.22</u>
Total	£6,838.32

- 3.3 The development of affordable housing will increase the Council's new homes bonus.

**Legal Implications**

- 3.4 The site was declared surplus by the Executive Committee on 4th October 2011 and Officers were tasked with identifying options for disposing of the site for residential use. The first proposal, as set out in this report, is to invite development submissions from the Council's Preferred Partner Registered Providers for a development of affordable housing to be put forward and approved by Executive following selection through an approved assessment process, as also set out in this report.
- 3.5 Under the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 it is permissible to make disposals at less than best consideration if those disposals contribute to the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area.

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- 3.6 As the preferred option being recommended by Officers is for disposal to a Registered Provider (RP) the sale at an under value amounts to the Borough Council providing financial assistance under sections 24 and 25 of the Local Government Act 1988 for which a section 25 General Consent for disposal of land to an RP is required. The proposal comes within General Consent A which provides that a Local Authority may provide an RP with any financial assistance or any gratuitous benefit consisting of disposal to the RP of land for development as housing accommodation.
- 3.7 A further condition of the Consent is that the aggregate value of the proposed assistance and any assistance provided previously to this or any other RP under this Consent A in the same financial year does not exceed £10 million.
- 3.8 A further report to the Executive Committee will be required at the conclusion of the selection process, either to recommend the successful development or, should no successful development be chosen, to consider an alternative disposal, likely to be to sell the site on the open market for residential housing use.

**Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.9 Hewell Road swimming baths was closed to the public on the 31 January 2012.
- 3.10 The Council's preferred partners for the development of affordable housing was approved at Council on 14th September 2009 and includes the following registered providers
- a) Accord/Redditch Coop Homes
  - b) Festival
  - c) Rooftop
  - d) Sanctuary
  - e) Bromsgrove District Housing Trust & West Mercia
- 3.11 The Council has not disposed of any land through this partnership therefore Officers have created the attached selection criteria (appendix 2) to ensure the selection of a provider is robust.
- 3.12 A Member selection panel is required to assess the submission against the agreed criteria.

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**Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.13 The disposal will assist in meeting the affordable housing demand and increase the supply of affordable housing in the Borough and assist in mitigating the impacts of Welfare Reform.
- 3.14 The proposal will mean the loss of a play area however Officers have confirmed this play area is not well used and suffers with anti social behaviour.
- 3.15 Local Ward members Councillor Stephens and Councillor Hill have advised they are in agreement with the inclusion of the play area within the disposal. At the time of writing this report Councillor Quinney had not been able to provided comments on this proposal.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

<b>RISK</b>	<b>CONSEQUENCE</b>	<b>CONTROLS</b>
No proposal is submitted or no successful development selected.	Affordable homes not built and site remains vacant and Council still incurs costs to secure.	Unsuccessful outcome to first option for disposal will result in alternative option, to sell property on open market, to be made.

**5. APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1 – Site Plan  
Appendix 2 – Development brief and selection criteria.  
Appendix 3 – Site valuations (Confidential)

**6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Preferred Partner Policy

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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