

Report of Chief Officer – Property & Contracts

Report to Director of Environments and Housing

Date: June 2016

Subject: Adoption of Land, Renew.

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Bramley
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. In the early 1990's the Council agreed to dispose of large areas of land in Bramley to Leeds Partnership Homes, now known as Renew, for the purpose of developing affordable housing in partnership with several Registered Providers.
2. As part of the development a number miscellaneous sites where either not developed or adopted appropriately to either an Registered Providers or the council and still remained under the ownership of Renew.
3. Renew have recently contact the Council with a proposal to transfer the subject sites to the Council at Nil consideration as the company is in the process of being closed down.

Recommendations

4. That the Director of Environments and Housing.
 - a) Accept the transfer of the roads and footpath's Wensleydale Drive as detailed at appendix 1 at Nil Consideration
 - b) Accepts the transfer of the subject site at Wensleydale Drive and agrees to fund the costs of bringing the site up to adoptable standard at the council expense.

- c) All of the subject sites are to be vested with Housing Services once the transfers have been completed.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 To seek approval from the director of Environments and Housing to accept the transfer of land as detailed in the recommendation from Renew at Nil Consideration.

2 Background information

- 2.1 The council in the early 1990's disposed of large areas of land in Bramley to Leeds Partnership Homes (LPH), now known as Renew, for the purpose of developing Affordable Housing in partnership with a number of Registered Providers (RPs).
- 2.2 LPH along with a number of RPs developed approximately 270 residential units on the surrounding land in the 1990's.
- 2.3 The subject sites identified in the recommendation were not transferred either the developing RP or the Council and remain in the ownership of Renew
- 2.4 Renew have recently informed the council that they intend to close down the company and as such wish to transfer the ownership of sites to the council at Nil Consideration.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 Renew are now looking to close down the organisation and as such have offered the council the transfer of sites at Nil Consideration. The details of the sites are as follows.

Vacant Land and Highways

- 3.2 The highways and land as detailed in appendix 1 are part of the adopted Highways.
- 3.3 The transfer of the sites to the council will incur no additional maintenance resources for the council as they are already part of the Adopted Highways and included within the regular maintenance cycles.
- 3.4 Discussions have been held with colleagues in Highways who have no objections to the land being transferred to the council.

Scrub Land at Wensleydale Drive

- 3.5 The land off Wensleydale Drive as shown in appendix 1 is scrub land with no development potential due to the topography and is heavily planted.
- 3.6 Colleagues in Parks and Countryside have inspected the site and it is in a poor state of maintenance. P&C have advised that to bring the site up to an adopted standard would cost in the region of £18,500.

- 3.7 Renew have advised that they do not have sufficient capacity to either bring the site up to standard or provide a financial contribution to cover the cost of these works. Therefore the cost of these works will need to be met via the Councils own reserves.
- 3.8 Renew have advised that they are looking to dispose of two freehold interests in properties to existing leaseholders and will look to transfer the proceeds of the sale to the council to contribute to bringing the Wensleydale Drive site up to adoptable standard.
- 3.9 Renew are unable to provide a timeline or estimated value of the freehold interest at this time but will keep officers informed of progress.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Officers in Highways and Parks and Countryside have been consulted on this proposal and are supportive of the proposals subject to funding being identified to bring the Wensleydale Drive site up to adoptable standard.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.1 An equality, diversity cohesion and integration screening exercise has been carried out and is attached as an appendix. This has confirmed that equality, diversity, cohesion and integration considerations have been effectively considered in relation to this proposal and that a full impact assessment was not required.

4.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan

- 4.3.1 Bringing the sites back into council ownership will assist in making the area a cleaner safer place to live which a key priority is set out in the City Priority Plan.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 Parks & Countryside have advised the maintenance fees to bring the Wensleydale Drive site up to an adoptable standard would be in the region of £18,500 which would need to be sought from the councils own resources.
- 4.4.2 Renew have previously advised that they intend to dispose of freehold stock within their own ownership to help fund the above works, however timescales and the amount that these freeholds will achieve are unknown at this time.
- 4.4.3 Highways have advised there is no financial or resources issues with taking on the subject land as they are already part of the adopted highways.
- 4.4.4 Renew have offered to contribute £1,500 to the councils legal fees in relation to the transfers.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 The proposal constitutes a significant operational decision and is therefore not subject to call in.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 Potentially Renew would not be able to sell the freehold of the subject properties described in point 3.8 & 3.9 and as such the council would need to fund the works via its own resources.

4.6.2 By taking the sites into council ownership will ensure that the subject sites are maintained and added to the regular maintenance cycles.

5 Conclusions

5.1 The subject sites as detailed within the recommendation are currently owned by Renew.

5.2 Renew are looking to close down the company and have offered to transfer the subject sites to the council at Nil Consideration

5.3 With the exception of bringing the Wensleydale Drive site up to adoptable standard, the council accepting the subject sites would not pose any operational or significant service implications.

6 Recommendations

6.1 That the Director of Environments and Housing.

a) Accept the transfer of the roads and footpath's as detailed at appendix 1 at Nil Consideration

b) Accepts the transfer of the subject site at Wensleydale Drive and agrees to fund the costs of bringing the site up to adoptable standard at the council expense.

c) All of the subject sites are to be vested with Housing Services once the transfers have been completed.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.