

Report of: Area Leader

Report to: The Outer South Community Committee
(Ardsley & Robin Hood, Morley North, Morley South and Rothwell)

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Date: 26th November 2018

For discussion

Sugar Hill Close & Wordsworth Drive, Oulton, Rothwell - item of community interest

Purpose of report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide background information on the proposals for development at Sugar Hill Close and Wordsworth Drive estate in Oulton, as background to the committee considering the issues involved.
2. The report is in response to concerns raised by the local community in relation to the changes and the Chair of the Community Committee has agreed that this item should be considered and discussed at the Community Committee.

Main issues

3. Sugar Hill Close and Wordsworth Drive are an estate of 71 properties. They are privately owned having historically been British Coal properties. They are now owned by a company called Pemberstone who have owned the site for 17 years.
4. A planning application has been submitted to the Council proposing the demolition and replacement of the properties.
5. The Council has a number of different roles in these circumstances:
 - As planning authority, it has a statutory responsibility to fairly determine the application in line with planning policy. At the time of writing this is not complete.
 - As democratic representatives of the community, Councillors role includes to hear the views of local residents affected and the views of the wider community. The deputation by the Sugar Hill Close and Wordsworth Drive residents to full council and the discussion at community committee are part of

- this responsibility.
- In the event that rehousing becomes an issue, the Council's Housing Leeds service will provide appropriate support.
6. The Council notes that the properties are all privately rented and it is a well-established community where some residents have lived for many years and have established ties to the area.
 7. A small number of tenants have regulated or assured tenancies and in these cases the owner will only be able to recover possession, on the basis that they wish to demolish the properties, if they make the tenant an offer of comparable alternative accommodation.
 8. The majority of tenants, however, have assured shorthold tenancies which have limited security of tenure and they can be required to leave their homes at relatively short notice and seek alternative accommodation, despite some having lived in the properties for many years.
 9. Meetings have been facilitated by the Council with the developer. These will continue through the process.
 10. In respect of identifying a new property to rent, the residents have expressed concern about affordability in the private rented sector in the Rothwell area and the difficulty they will face in staying in this locality.
 11. The Council's Housing Options Service have undertaken visits to residents of the estate and established background information on each individual tenancy. They will provide housing advice in relation to tenancy agreements and in applying for council housing. Officers from the Housing Options team followed up their initial visits with a letter setting out the position for individual tenants so they have further clarity on their rights and this will be followed up by further visits. In addition tenants have direct numbers for the team to raise individual questions.
 12. Sugar Hill Close and Wordsworth drive residents have been invited to address the committee and representatives of Pemberstones have been invited to attend.

Conclusions

13. The report sets out an item of community concern in the Outer South area of Leeds and the Chair of the Community Committee has agreed that this should be considered by the committee.

Recommendations

14. The Community Committee is asked to note the content of the report and comment as appropriate.

Background documents

15. None.