

24 March 2014

Agenda Item: 6

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR TRANSPORT, PROPERTY & ENVIRONMENT

LAND BETWEEN WEST CARR ROAD & ORDSALL ROAD, RETFORD

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval of the Finance & Property Committee to the sale of land between West Carr Road and Ordsall Road, Retford, DN22 7EA, subject to contract and planning, as set out in the exempt appendix.

Information and Advice

2. Some information relating to this report is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Having regard to the circumstances, on balance the public interest in disclosing the information does not outweigh the reason for exemption because divulging the information would significantly damage the Council's commercial position. The exempt information is set out in the exempt appendix.
3. The land between West Carr Road and Ordsall Road, Retford comprises approximately 5.21 hectares (12.87 acres), shown as hatched black on the attached plan.
4. The site (shown as hatched black on the attached plan) was granted outline planning consent for residential development on the 14th February 2011 and has been extensively marketed since July 2011 by Lambert Smith Hampton for sale by informal tender, subject to contract and detailed planning permission/reserved matters.
5. Little interest was initially shown and this was considered to be due to a decline in the market, an onerous 30% affordable housing provision linked to apartments, a relatively low density and a high proportion of open space provision.
6. In May 2012 the agents received an attractive offer, subject to contract and planning, (with potential for further uplift if affordable housing percentage reduced) from Oakdale Homes. However after the sale was approved by Finance & Property Committee on the 17 December 2012 the purchaser withdrew from the purchase at legal stage indicating that it considered the purchase cost too high.
7. The selling agents re-marketed the site and invited tenders from interested parties based on a closing date of 29 November 2013 and two tenders were received as

detailed in the 'Bid Summary' in the attached exempt appendix with details of the preferred bidder set out in the same.

8. Part of the residential development site (located to the north of the access road as shown cross hatched black on attached plan and identified by the text box and arrow) comprises the former car park area that used to serve the now demolished old Ordsall Hall Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre.
9. Concerns have been expressed by local residents citing difficulties for visitors and staff in parking at the adjoining Retford Leisure Centre and Post 16 Centre, who currently use a part of the County Councils adjoining residential development site as an unauthorised overspill parking area.
10. A petition signed by a significant number of objectors was presented by Cllr. Ian Campbell (ref: 2014/062) on 27th February 2014 to the Chairman and the County Council meeting for what was described as the 'overspill car park at Retford Leisure Centre'. The petitioners object to the selling and potential development of the Retford Leisure Centre/Post 16 Centre Overspill Car Park on Old Hall Drive, and urge Nottinghamshire County Council to look at other alternatives and retain the number of parking spaces currently available.
11. It should be noted that the removal of the above area from the residential development site would impact substantially on the capital receipt that the County Council would derive from the sale of the land for development.
12. The preferred bidder has confirmed that the consequent reduction in the offer figure would equate to approximately 43% of their offer figure. It should be noted that the developer considers that the exclusion of this land would result not only in the loss of some fifteen house plots but would also reduce the value of the houses that would be built on the opposite side of the access road facing on to what would be then be a car park.
13. It is therefore proposed that whilst the sale of the residential development site to the preferred bidder is progressed, a period of up to two months is allowed to explore other alternatives including possible sale of the former car park area to appropriate parties to see if they are interested in acquiring for a consideration acceptable to the County Council. In the event in principle terms for the sale of the car park to an interested party are agreed, this would form the subject of a further report to this Committee prior to the sale proceeding with the preferred bidder.
14. The Committee should note that both the Retford Leisure Centre and the Post 16 Centre are subject to a Private Finance Initiative (PFI). In relation to the Leisure Centre it is subject to a back-to-back agreement which means that costs associated with any additional parking provided will pass on to the County Council.
15. It should be noted that a further matter has been raised in relation to a gate in the southern boundary that was provided when the Post 16 Centre was constructed as a possible means with which to provide a shorter access route for students to the detached playing fields on Ordsall Road through the residential development site.
16. Although the gate has not been used in the interim it has been suggested that it could be linked to the construction of a footpath access when the residential site is

developed. This matter was considered previously but was rejected having regard to the impact on residential site layout and purchase price, cost of construction, cost of maintenance and concerns of the then prospective purchasers. The current preferred bidder has similar concerns and stated that it could not accept this as a route across the development.

17. On a related matter the Committee should be aware that the provision of the detached playing fields on Ordsall Road is not a statutory requirement.
18. At the current time it is proposed that no route is reserved for the footpath link however, should the need arise in the future, this will be considered by Committee at that time.

Other Options Considered

19. Retention of the land for other purposes is not appropriate as the land is surplus to requirements.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

20. To secure a capital receipt.

Statutory and Policy Implications

21. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

1. That approval is given to the sale of land between West Carr Road and Ordsall Road, Retford, DN22 7EA, subject to contract and planning, as set out in the exempt appendix.
2. That the above approval is subject to a maximum two month delay to provide an opportunity to explore options for resolving car parking associated with the sale as outlined in the report.

Jas Hundal

Service Director, Transport, Property and Environment

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Peter Grinnell 07753 625269

Constitutional Comments (CEH 27.02.14)

22. The recommendation falls within the delegation to Finance and Property Committee. When disposing of land, the Council is required to obtain the best price reasonably obtainable on the open market. Members should satisfy themselves of this if approving the recommendation.

Financial Comments (TR 27.02.14)

23. The sale will generate a capital receipt which will be used to help fund the Capital Programme.

Background Papers

24. Report to Finance and Property Committee of the 17 December 2012.

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

25. Ward(s): Retford West
Member(s): Councillor Ian Campbell

File ref.: /PG/SB/01965

SP: 2583

Properties affected: 01965 - Surplus site - prev Retford Post 16 Ctr