

**19 April 2022**

**Agenda Item: 14**

## **REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR, PLACE**

### **TOP WIGHAY FARM: SELECTION OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNER**

#### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To provide an update on the Top Wighay Farm site delivery and seek approval to agree the preferred development partner to deliver the residential element of the project.
2. To delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Place, in consultation with the Service Director Finance, Infrastructure & Improvement, and with appropriate legal advice to finalise details of the legal documentation to give effect to these proposals.

#### **Information**

3. Some information relating to this report is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.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 to this report.

#### **Background**

4. The Nottinghamshire Plan 2021 – 2031 states that we'll continue to develop our major sites, boosting housing and job opportunities. We'll develop Top Wighay Farm as a blueprint for sustainable living in Nottinghamshire and will develop more sites over the coming years to supply quality housing for our residents and new job opportunities. We want Nottinghamshire to be a place where young people and young families have the opportunity to put down their roots and live healthy and fulfilling lives. In order to achieve this, we know that quality housing in good locations is vital. We will therefore work with developers and the Government to bring forward new housing that meets the needs of our growing population and everyone who wants to build their future here.
5. By embracing the ethos of working with Government and developers in order to bring forward new housing, the Council has been very successful in securing funding to deliver key infrastructure and to secure outline planning permission in order to de-risk the site and make it more commercially attractive to the market. Making the best possible use of the land will make a critical contribution towards fulfilling the Council's ambitions for the county and for the housing needs of its communities.

6. Despite recent development and construction industry setbacks because of the Covid 19 pandemic the Top Wighay Farm development has moved forward and considerable progress has been made in keeping to the delivery programme. As approved by Policy Committee (15 January 2020), an outline planning application for the development of the whole site for a mixed-use scheme predominantly 805 houses was submitted to Gedling Borough Council. On the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 Gedling Borough Council resolved to grant outline planning permission for the whole site, including 805 houses plus areas for employment, a local centre, and a primary school. On the same date, the initial infrastructure project was completed, providing a signalised junction to the northern access into the site as well as a fourth arm of a roundabout into the southern section. These are two fundamental achievements for delivering the Council's objectives for better housing and job creation.
7. In order to deliver the residential element of Top Wighay the Council is seeking a development partner from the Homes England's Delivery Partner Panel 3. The process to select the partner through this approach was set out in the report to Policy Committee (16 October 2019).
8. The process for selecting the house builder partner consists of several key stages, namely: Expression of Interest (EOI); followed by a sifting stage; and then an Invitation to Tender (ITT). After this selection process is completed and a preferred development partner is selected, the Council will enter detailed contract discussions in order to formalise a Development Agreement between the two parties. Once completed, the developer will then be responsible for the building of the houses and associated works.
9. Following a positive response to the Expression of Interest stage of ten experienced developers, a sifting brief was sent to the ten in order to reduce the number of potential developers down to five. The next stage was an Invitation to Tender from the shortlist of five. A summary and assessment of the five bids is provided in the Exempt Appendix to this report.
10. Approval is required for appointment of a preferred development partner and the formalisation of these arrangements through a Development Agreement as set out in the Exempt Appendix to this report.

### **Other Options Considered**

11. As detailed in the exempt appendix.

### **Reasons for Recommendations**

12. To enable the sale of a surplus asset and to secure a capital receipt to the County Council and to provide much needed housing and employment for this location.

## **Statutory and Policy Implications**

13. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1) To note the update on the Top Wighay Farm site delivery and to agree the preferred development partner to deliver the residential element of the project with key terms set out in the Exempt Appendix.
- 2) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director, Place, in consultation with the Service Director Finance, Infrastructure & Improvement, and with appropriate legal advice to finalise details of the legal documentation to give effect to these proposals.

**Adrian Smith**  
**Corporate Director, Place**

**For any enquiries about this report please contact:** Matthew Neal, Service Director, Investment & Growth, Tel: 0115 977 3822

### **Constitutional Comments (EP 07/04/2022)**

14. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Economic Development and Asset Management Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

### **Financial Comments (GB 07/04/2022)**

15. The financial implications of this report are set out clearly in the exempt appendix. Any capital receipts as a result of this project will be used in line with the Council's capital receipts policy.

### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

- None.

### **Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected**

- Electoral Division: Newstead
- Members: Councillor Chris Barnfather