

EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD SHEET

Name of decision maker:	Cllr Margaret Griffiths
Portfolio:	Housing
Date of Portfolio Holder Decision:	

Title of Decision:	Redevelopment of garage courtyard adjacent to 7 Malvern Way, Hemel Hempstead
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Decision made and reasons:

To transfer the garage site to Hightown Praetorian and Churches Housing Association (HPCHA) at nil cost to enable the provision of 2 x four bedroom houses for social rent, subject to planning consent being granted.

Reports considered:

Background report attached.

Officers/Councillors/Ward Councillors/Stakeholders Consulted:

Head of Housing and Community Services
Affordable Housing Working Group
Ward Councillors
Residents adjacent to the site

Monitoring Officer/ Chief Financial Officers Comments:

Monitoring Officer: No Comments to add to the report.
S.151 Officer: Nothing to add to report.

Implications:

The redevelopment of this site will provide much needed affordable housing in the Borough and will reduce anti-social behaviour linked to the site.

Risk:

Failure to achieve planning permission could delay the delivery of the project and put additional pressure on staff resources.

Value for Money:

This report seeks approval for the disposal of Council owned land at nil cost. Generally, a local authority may not dispose of freehold property other than for the best consideration which can be reasonably obtained. However, for the purposes of this report, the Council can rely on the provisions of the 'General Consent under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 1988 for the disposal of land to Registered Social Landlords 2005'. Paragraph 5 in the Background of the report explains the nomination rights which will be secured by the Council if the proposed disposal receives approval. Nomination rights are valuable to the Council in that they are a means of discharging its responsibilities as a housing authority.

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Options Considered and reasons for rejection:

The site could be sold on the open market and provide the Council with a Capital Receipt of £268,100. This has been rejected for the following reasons:

- The Council needs to make the most of the current land resource and continue to pursue opportunities on its own land in order to help meet housing need.
- One of the Council's key visions is the delivery of affordable housing while protecting green space; the redevelopment of this site would support this vision.

Portfolio Holders Signature:

Date:

Details of any interests declared and any dispensations given by the Standards Committee:

For Member Support Officer use only

Date Decision Record Sheet received from portfolio holder:

Date Decision Published:

Decision No:

Date of Expiry of Call-In Period:

Date any Call-In received or decision implemented:

BACKGROUND REPORT

1. For a number of years the Council has worked in conjunction with Hightown Praetorian and Churches Housing Association to identify underused garage sites in the Council's ownership and to redevelop these for affordable housing. Most recently, this process has provided 50 new affordable dwellings on six sites in Bennetts End. In addition to providing much needed housing in existing residential areas of high demand this programme has also alleviated problems of anti-social behaviour associated with some of the former garage sites.
2. Following the completion of the Bennetts End sites, the garage site in Malvern Way is one of several to be considered by HPCHA as a potential site for redevelopment. The site comprises a roughly rectangular shaped portion of land with frontage onto Malvern Way and is currently occupied by a single terrace of five garages. All of the five garages are currently unoccupied and the most recent tenancy was terminated in July 2005.
3. Following discussions with planning officers HPCHA have prepared proposals for a scheme of 2 x four bedroom houses. The majority of schemes currently under development in Hemel Hempstead are providing one and two bedroom apartments, and whilst this reflects demand, 2 x four bedroom houses compliments our current affordable housing programme by providing family accommodation rather than flats and puts the site to good use.

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4. In order to help in the delivery of affordable housing it is proposed that the site be transferred to HPCHA at nil cost. The site has been valued at £268,100 by the Council's Valuation and Estates Manager.
5. The Council will receive 100% nomination rights to the dwellings when initially let, and 75% of any subsequent vacancies that arise.

6. Consultation

Residents and Ward Councillors were consulted in September 2007. A total of 52 properties were consulted and a summary of the feedback received is attached at Annex A.

Although there was some negative feedback received from the consultation, HPCHA are now very experienced in developments of this kind, which are within existing communities.

HPCHA are required to take into account planning guidance when submitting proposals for new developments including road access issues and parking ratios, and to follow guidelines with regard to overlooking and privacy issues. On previous sites HPCHA's contractors have liaised with individual residents to alleviate concerns regarding disruption during development.

Residents adjoining the site have been advised that once the formal planning application has been submitted, the planning department will follow the normal consultation process, as they would for any other application.