

EXECUTIVE DECISION RECORD SHEET

Name of decision maker:	Cllr Margaret Griffiths
Portfolio:	Housing
Date of Portfolio Holder Decision:	17 January 2008

Title of Decision:	Redevelopment of vacant land adjacent to 37 Parr Crescent, Hemel Hempstead
Decision made and reasons:	<p>To transfer the site to Hightown Praetorian and Churches Housing Association (HPCHA) at nil cost to enable the provision of 1 x three bedroom house for social rent, subject to planning consent being granted.</p>
Reports considered:	<p>Background report attached.</p>
Officers/Councillors/Ward Councillors/Stakeholders Consulted:	<p>Head of Housing and Community Services Affordable Housing Working Group Ward Councillors Residents adjacent to the site</p>
Monitoring Officer/ Chief Financial Officers Comments:	<p>Monitoring Officer: No Comments to add to the report. S.151 Officer: Nothing to add to report.</p>
Implications:	<p>The redevelopment of this site will provide much needed affordable housing in the Borough and will reduce anti-social behaviour linked to the site.</p>
Risk:	<p>Failure to achieve planning permission could delay the delivery of the project and put additional pressure on staff resources.</p>
Value for Money:	<p>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.</p>

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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 £124,500. 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:

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Date Decision Record Sheet received from portfolio holder: 17 January 2008

Date Decision Published: 17/01/08 Decision No: PH/004/08

Date of Expiry of Call-In Period: 24 January 2008

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 and other parcels of land in the Council's ownership and to redevelop these for affordable housing. Most recently, this process has provided 50 new affordable dwellings on six garage sites in Bennetts End.
2. Following the completion of the Bennetts End sites, the site in Parr Crescent is one of several to be considered by HPCHA as a potential site for redevelopment. The site comprises an irregular shaped portion of land with frontage onto Parr Crescent and has over a number of years been the subject of complaints from local residents and ward councillors due to anti-social behaviour issues. The land borders a public footpath and is currently tarmac surfaced.
3. HPCHA, following discussions with planning officers, has prepared proposals for a three bedroom house on the site. The majority of schemes currently under development in Hemel Hempstead are providing one and two bedroom apartments, and whilst this reflects demand, a three bedroom house compliments our current affordable housing programme by providing family accommodation rather than flats and puts the site to good use.
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 £124,500 by the Council's Valuation and Estates Manager.

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5. The Council will receive 100% nomination rights to the dwellings when initially let, and 75% of any subsequent vacancies that arise.
6. The transfer of the site is dependent upon HPCHA securing planning permission.

7. Consultation

Residents and Ward Councillors were consulted in December 2007. A total of 34 properties were consulted and a summary of the feedback received is attached at Annex A.

The majority of respondents were in favour of the proposed development, and negative feedback was only received from one resident.

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.