



Cabinet 27 April 2011

Supported Housing Scheme: Beetons Cottages, Bury St Edmunds (May11/11)

1. Summary and Reasons for Recommendations

- 1.1 Havebury Housing Partnership (Havebury) propose to purchase No 2 Beetons Cottages, Bury St Edmunds, which is currently empty. In addition they are also committed to purchasing No1 Beetons Cottage when this becomes vacant in the future. Both properties are currently owned by the Council and provide bungalow accommodation. They will both require substantial refurbishing to make them suitable for providing supported accommodation for five residents with severe learning disabilities, three in one dwelling and two in the other. It is proposed that there will be 24 hour care and support in both residences.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet is requested to approve:-
- (a) an allocation of up to £75,000 from the Council's Affordable Housing capital budget to be committed to enable the delivery of this scheme;
 - (b) that the £75,000 allocation be subject to being drawn down within 12 months from the date of this meeting; otherwise the allocation be withdrawn and can be reallocated to another affordable housing scheme within the Borough; and
 - (c) that if the scheme ceases to operate and Havebury Housing Partnership choose to dispose of the properties within five years the allocation of £75,000 be repayable in full.

3. Corporate Objectives

- 3.1 The recommendations meet the following, as contained within the Corporate Plan:-
- (a) Corporate Priority: 'To improve the safety and well being of the community'.
 - (b) Cabinet Commitments: 'Managing the future development of the Borough, and rural services'.
 - (c) Vision 2025: St Edmundsbury will be a place which: has a range of affordable housing.

Contact Details

Name
Telephone
E-mail

Portfolio Holder

Cllr Anne Gower
(01440) 706402
anne.gower@stedsbc.gov.uk

Lead Officer

Carole Herries
(01284) 757603
carole.herries@stedsbc.gov.uk

4. Background

- 4.1 This council's housing strategy has clearly identified priorities as follows: *'To meet the needs of vulnerable people in our community'* and *'to ensure a variety of appropriate housing is available to meet the needs of the community'*. The actions identified to meet these priorities include: *'to work in partnership with Supporting People and Social Care to identify supported housing needs, and to ensure the provision of appropriate accommodation to meet the needs of vulnerable people'*
- 4.2 With regard to people with learning disabilities, 'Valuing People' is the national plan for improving the lives of people with learning disabilities, their families and carers. This plan has had a direct impact on the traditional models for providing care and support. The requirement was that the use of NHS 'campus style' accommodation for people with learning disabilities should be discontinued by 2010. This was an extremely challenging target and one that is still being worked on in Suffolk. By working in partnership with ACS and Supporting People this Council is seeking to enable the provision of more supported housing schemes within the Borough for people with learning disabilities who are currently in existing residential homes, living out of the County or in transition from childhood to adulthood and require a different type of supported housing.
- 4.3 Officers have been working with social care to identify those people who may require supported accommodation within the St Edmundsbury area in the future. There are approximately 400 people with learning disabilities living in residential care placements within the County and without, and social care hope to move in the region of 120 of these in the next 2 years. Of those 120, approximately 40 have connections with the West of Suffolk, (approximately 25 of those specifically connected to St Edmundsbury) Not all of these people will require specialist supported accommodation (as will be provided by Beetons Cottages scheme or Lethrede in Risby) as some will be able to move to general needs accommodation in the community with significant support being provided to them at home.
- 4.4 The provision of specialised supported accommodation for people with severe learning disabilities has traditionally been difficult because of the nature of their needs, and has had to be in the main 'opportunistic' in nature. Development of specialised schemes therefore often relies on suitable properties in suitable locations becoming available that can be adapted to meet those needs and recently, Lethrede in Risby, and now Beetons Cottages in Bury St Edmunds have become available and are considered to be extremely suitable to meet these needs.

5. Current situation

- 5.1 The Council built numbers 1 and 2 Beetons Cottages in the late 1980s as service accommodation for two caretakers working at St Edmundsbury House and Depot. Following the tender of the Facilities Management contract for services at West Suffolk House and subsequent resignation of a caretaker, number 2 Beetons Cottages is now vacant and surplus to requirements for service delivery. Number 1 Beetons Cottages will become empty when the current resident retires.
- 5.2 On 20 October 2010 the Cabinet, as part of the Asset Management Strategy, approved that Number 2 Beetons Cottages be declared surplus and sold on the open market; and Number 1 Beetons Cottages be declared surplus when it becomes vacant.
- 5.3 All five of the intended residents for Beetons Cottages originate from this Borough and have their family still living here, but are currently placed out of the county in residential care. Beetons Cottages would provide ideal accommodation to meet their housing and support needs locally and enable them to move out of institutionalised care into settled

accommodation. They will be nearer to friends and families and able to return to their familiar communities. This is inline with Government's Valuing People and Valuing People. It will also help to meet our strategic housing responsibilities of providing suitable accommodation to meet the needs of our residents.

5.4 It is proposed that Havebury, as part of the commissioning of this project, will purchase the freehold for each cottage at a cost of £182,000. They will then be refurbished to provide a shared house, with individual rooms for the residents, communal space and staff accommodation as there will be twenty four hour support available for the residents. The refurbishment costs will be £71,053 for each cottage therefore, the total capital cost of the scheme will be £506,106. The refurbishment costs are necessary to make sure the homes are suitable for the new residents with severe learning disabilities. There will also be costs associated with providing furniture and fittings, which Suffolk County Council will fund.

5.5 The funding of affordable housing, whether supported housing or general needs, can be complex. In this case, the funding is calculated on the basis of Havebury purchasing the land and houses, and refurbishing them. The return on their capital investment is calculated on income they can receive from the rents they can charge on the properties over a minimum of 25 years, which is worked into the business plan for the scheme. Any shortfall in the income (in this case £160,000) has to be subsidised from other sources. In this particular case it is felt appropriate to apportion the shortfall to Suffolk County Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council as outlined below. By contributing £75,000 from the affordable housing capital budget, the Council will be helping to meet its strategic housing responsibilities.

5.6 The project will therefore be funded as follows:-

	£
Havebury Housing Partnership	346,106
Suffolk County Council	85,000
St Edmundsbury Borough Council	<u>75,000</u>
	506,106

6. Community impact *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and diversity issues)*

6.1 General

The provision of affordable housing at Beetons Cottages will help meet a local housing need in Bury St Edmunds and contribute to the overall supply of housing to meet demand.

6.2 Diversity

Beetons Cottages will be a specialist scheme for residents with learning disabilities. It will provide permanent housing with 24 hour support. It will have a positive impact for this client group, who currently have to live, in some cases, large distances from their families due to the lack of this type of accommodation in the area.

6.3 Sustainability

The refurbishment will improve energy, fuel and water efficiency of the property. The work would be carried out to current building regulations standards.

7. Consultation

7.1 The property was built as residential accommodation so no change of use is being proposed. Ward Councillors and the Portfolio Holder have been advised of the proposal and are supportive of it.

8. Resource implications <i>(including asset management implications)</i>								
8.1 Havebury is investing a sum from their resources to enable the affordable housing to be provided.								
8.2 Suffolk County Council will provide £85,000 (over half of the capital shortfall), the costs of furnishings and fittings and the revenue costs of providing this type of supported accommodation.								
8.3 It is requested the Borough Council commit £75,000 grant from the Affordable Housing capital budget to assist in delivering this scheme. The Borough Council's Affordable Housing capital budget has unallocated funds of £395,000.								
8.4 A capital receipt will be generated from the sale of these bungalows which will benefit the Council's General Fund. It has been agreed as part of the Asset Management Strategy and the income accounted for in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.								
9. Risk Assessment <i>(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)</i>								
9.1								
<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Risk area</th> <th>Inherent level of Risk (before controls)</th> <th>Controls</th> <th>Residual Risk (after controls)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Lack of provision of affordable housing to meet the specialist needs of applicants with learning disabilities.</td> <td>High</td> <td>Continue to develop suitable supported affordable housing.</td> <td>Medium</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Risk area	Inherent level of Risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual Risk (after controls)	Lack of provision of affordable housing to meet the specialist needs of applicants with learning disabilities.	High	Continue to develop suitable supported affordable housing.	Medium
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Lack of provision of affordable housing to meet the specialist needs of applicants with learning disabilities.	High	Continue to develop suitable supported affordable housing.	Medium					
10. Legal or policy implications								
10.1 The sale meets the statutory duty of best price, in accordance with s123 of the Local Government Act 1972.								

Ward affected	Minden Ward	Portfolio Holder	Haverhill and Housing
Background Papers		Subject Area	Housing