

**STAFFORD BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
MEETING WITH STAFFORD AND RURAL HOMES
& STAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL**

10 DECEMBER 2007

Name of Attendees:-

Carla Rendell	-	Director of Property, Stafford and Rural Homes
Alex Yendole	-	Principal Planning Officer, Stafford Borough Council
Naomi Perry	-	Planning Officer, Stafford Borough Council

- The notes of the previous meeting between Stafford Borough Council and Stafford and Rural Homes were agreed with no changes.
- The purpose of the meeting was to analyse and assess the land portfolio held by Stafford and Rural Homes. A strategic review of sheltered housing owned by Stafford and Rural Homes together with related assets has been carried out including specialist information from an architect to consider future development options for the Housing Association. The sheltered housing land portfolio makes up about one third of the total housing stock held by Stafford and Rural Homes. A number of significant development opportunities have been highlighted.
- Stafford and Rural Homes have three strategic options for the future of sheltered housing. This following consideration of a full range of options including demolition and reuse, refurbishment and development of small infill plots and garage sites. Although some of the property is reasonably modern parts of the portfolio fails to meet agreed national standards for mobility and accessibility especially related to the elderly. Some property is not suitable for future use or conversion so demolition is the only option and comprehensive redevelopment. Two schemes have been identified for demolition. The programme of future expansion will involve some demolition and rebuild of sheltered housing.
- Staffordshire County Council has an over-supply of traditional sheltered housing. Nevertheless there has been a reduction of 300 - 400 sheltered housing schemes in the recent past through the right to buy initiatives. However extra care housing is at a premium and significant supply is required in the future across the Stafford Borough area together with medical support facilities. In particular extra care housing is needed in Stafford and Stone with a loss of 40 - 50 units per year. A 60 bed extra care scheme has been proposed at the former St George's Hospital site by Fred Pritchard Associates (Development).
- The principles of the review and investment programme were established by the Stafford and Rural Homes Board on 6 December 2007. A further review concerning demolition and re-use of existing stock will be carried out over the next six to nine months with a detailed evaluation of the portfolio and timescales established. There is a policy for vacant property to be sold or re-developed to free up new land.

- A number of maps were tabled in order to identify the Stafford and Rural Homes land portfolio, although a number of sites were retained by Stafford Borough Council at the point of transfer. These areas were identified on the map.
- The main contact from Stafford and Rural Homes in Staffordshire County Council is John Goosey. A number of potential development locations were identified through the discussion and highlighted on the maps.

Stafford

Hall Close will be subject to further evaluation as it is not suitable for elderly accommodation. There is the possibility of demolition and rebuild for general needs housing on this site.

St Leonard's Close is a priority site which has a limited life expectancy. There is the potential for a sheltered housing scheme on this two acre site close to the town centre. Furthermore the site would be suitable for new extra care housing provision including health and social care facilities. A meeting with Staffordshire County Council, Stafford and Rural Homes, Stafford Borough Council and the South Staffordshire Primary Care Trust is required in order to discuss realistic levels of housing and service provision together with the feasibility of some green network / public open space being used for part of the development.

Pennycroft site on Corporation Street would involve demolishing the annex to the current tower and constructing a new extra care housing scheme of at least 60 units. This site is close to the town centre.

North Walls contains a number of dwelling units requiring re-development. Development options have been discussed with Staffordshire County Council regarding purchasing the neighbouring derelict building although this has now been sold to a third party. In terms of site assembly at North Walls Stafford Borough Council has set out its proposal to construct a multi storey car park on the existing North Walls car park. Therefore this will limit the extent of any new scheme.

Jubilee Court requires £3 million of upgrading and major refurbishment to provide an on-going future facility and potentially deliver an extra 12 units on the site by mid 2008. Staffordshire County Council has offered to financially support this work with up to £300,000 in order to ensure the new units come forward.

Tithe Barn Court is completely unsuitable in terms of its existing use and should be converted, via change of use, for sheltered housing to general needs housing. Discussions are required with Stafford General District Hospital because of the site's location with the potential for new staff accommodation.

Marston Road currently has 102 units for sheltered housing but further extra care provision is required. This site is to be retained for the next 10 years with improved community services developed. Stafford Borough Council has not been prepared to sell its land in this location to support an extra care housing scheme. In the same location Staffordshire County Council is considering selling its extra care housing at Foxholes and using the capital receipts to support new site investments elsewhere.

Stone

At Priory Road near the Mansion House surgery Stafford and Rural Homes owns land which could be made available in the longer term for new housing. However such as scheme would require site assembly with Stafford Borough Council owning the frontage area onto Lichfield Road. General needs housing would be the priority in this area although there could be links to new health and social care provision through the expansion of the Mansion House surgery.

Longhope Drive will be retained with some investment work in order to expand the site. Part of the development involves a Grade II listed building with such work requiring Listed Building consent. A consultation process led by Stafford and Rural Homes will take place in September 2008 in order to consider the potential impacts of significant new residential development north of Stone along Eccleshall Road.

Eccleshall

A key issue in Eccleshall is John Pulwith Court, known as Vicarage Court, which is totally unsuitable as a sheltered housing scheme and is within the Conservation Area. The building does not lend itself to conversion or improvement. Therefore the site should be sold in order to bring forward a new development scheme of extra care housing and sheltered housing in the Burgage area off Stone Road. This development would involve part or total demolition and re-build of the existing properties and could include a health and social care facility to support the extra care provision in this location. There are considerable demands for extra care housing in the Eccleshall area in the next 5 to 10 year period.

Gnosall

There is a large site at Monks Walk, partly owned by Stafford Borough Council and partly owned by Stafford and Rural Homes. The bungalows at Impstones and Monks Walk are not an efficient use for this site so therefore demolition and re-development in the next 10 years is a possibility to provide extra care housing in the area. However there will be a requirement for adequate parking as part of any scheme.

Barlaston area

Barlaston Park has significant potential for new development and will be considered in specific detail by Stafford and Rural Homes during 2008 / 2009.

Meadow Court off Old Road in Barlaston provides a scheme with a 10+ year time horizon but the building requires up to £1 million investment to extend the use of the site for sheltered housing. However there is no potential for extra care housing in this location. Nevertheless the neighbouring land has a Health Centre with the potential for expansion into a health and social care facility, to be discussed by Stafford Borough Council and the relevant Primary Care Trust.

The Haywoods

Stafford and Rural Homes to check what garage land has been sold at Mill Court. The sheltered housing scheme at Dobree Court and Wolseley Court suffers from a lack of facilities in the village and a poor bus service to the area meaning residents feel isolated. Minor improvements will take place but no significant new development. Poor access to the car park at the rear and lack of facilities means that this land will not be used for new residential development.

Blythe Bridge

Stafford and Rural Homes to retain the sheltered housing scheme near the A50 roundabout and the blocks of flats which have recently been refurbished. There are no development plans for this area.

Hixon

The Croft is steep sloping and has some issues. The Parish Council want the site to be tarmacked but this would lead to significant drainage issues in the area and there is reluctance from Staffordshire County Council to finance new infrastructure for the sewerage system.

Haughton, Swynnerton, Seighford & Yarnfield

Stafford and Rural Homes to consider land at Royds Close during 2008 / 2009. These warden patrolled flats have been excluded from the right to buy scheme. There is development potential in this area. Swynnerton, Seighford and Yarnfield have some potential for new rural affordable housing provided there is policy support from Stafford Borough Council. Further consideration during 2008 / 2009.

- In terms of significant new development land coming forward in the Stafford Borough area over the next 20 years Stafford and Rural Homes' role will be to purchase affordable houses as shared equity properties in conjunction with existing registered social landlords. Continued dialogue will be needed with Stafford Borough Council in order to identify potential sites. When allocations are being brought forward by developers Stafford and Rural Homes will purchase the properties, with third parties, in order to establish a portfolio of shared equity and rented properties for the future. Section 106 agreements lead to affordable homes being built, which are 40 – 50% the market price cost. The land and property purchase is funded through future rents. Stafford and Rural Homes wish to have an input into site design and locations for affordable housing.
- **Dates of Future Meetings:** January / February 2008 including Karen Armitage, Paula Furnival, South Staffs Primary Care Trust and Stafford Borough Council to identify potential new development sites in a range of locations. Further meeting in February / March 2008 to discuss how the development strategy will be progressed and implemented in the future.

Note prepared by Alex Yendole, Forward Planning Section.

Date: 19/12/2007.