

Future development options for the former Holme Lacy Primary School in Herefordshire

Meeting: General scrutiny committee

Meeting date: Wednesday 22 September 2021

Report by: Cabinet member housing, regulatory services, and community safety

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

Dinedor Hill;

Purpose

To provide General Scrutiny Committee with an update in regards to the operation and future development of the former Holme Lacy Primary School.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- a) The Committee reviews the future development options of the former old primary school at Holme Lacy and determines any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive, which may enhance the effectiveness of the plans.**

Alternative options

1. The paper has been drafted at the request of the General Scrutiny Committee, providing an update on the proposed future development of the former Holme Lacy Primary School. As such, no alternative options have been identified

Key considerations

2. On 22 July 2021 the Cabinet Member housing, regulatory services, and community safety led the decision to proceed with an outline design for the former Holme Lacy Primary School to allow housing market assessment and for the designs up to and including planning submission for houses on this council owned site. The link to the approved decision: <http://hc-modgov:9070/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=8061>
3. The decision used the output of feasibility work at the council owned Holme Lacy Site which identified the site as being a suitable location at which to develop homes. However it was also explained that further work would need to be commissioned separately to complete outline design and commission full site surveys to fully understand the development opportunity.
4. The decision paper highlighted that the Holme Lacy Site offers the potential for offers the potential for suitable development to progress the council's aspiration of delivering affordable homes. The site also offers the opportunity to be sold on the open market and for the capital receipt be used to cross-subsidise alternative developments in other areas of the county. Any potential sale would be with outline planning permission which would ensure the council's net carbon zero building standard aspirations are delivered by any purchaser.
5. Housing need has been assessed to understand the housing need in Holme Lacy:
 - a. The initial document consulted was the Housing Market Area Needs Assessment, the assessment provides local level outputs on local housing need for the seven Housing Market Area's (HMA) with an urban/rural distinction between each HMA. The analysis is drawn from a scenario which looks at trends in population growth in each HMA and projects these trends forward.
 - b. Secondly, Home Point data was extracted. Home Point is the waiting list held by the council where applicants in housing need register for all forms of rented affordable housing.
 - c. In addition all vulnerable assessments are referred to and finally local intelligence of stock and the tenures in the given area were taken into account.
 - d. When all of that information is available an analysis was made and recommendations of dwellings numbers, bed sizes and tenure were given.
6. To support the decision a housing needs assessment was completed for the Housing Market Area. The assessment results indicated an estimated housing need of 106 dwellings per annum.

HMANA Hereford Rural HMA - Rental	80 units per annum
HMANA Hereford Rural HMA - Home Ownership (affordable)	26 units per annum
Home Point Data - Applicants who have registered for social housing in Holme Lacy	16 residents registered for rental
Current Housing Stock in the village	20 properties
Identified Vulnerable need	Zero

7. The site is a council owned asset which is currently not used. The site was released as an educational premises in January 2019. A decision was taken on 11 February 2019 to commission Keepmoat, one of the council's procured development partners the first stage appraisal in respect of a potential project at this site. Link to decision: <http://hc-modgov:9070/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=5660>
8. The initial output of the work from Keepmoat indicated a potential for the site to deliver a development of 26 homes excluding the school building which is to be retained and refurbished. However, this was a high level feasibility study and full surveys were not commissioned at that stage therefore no costs were incurred.
9. On completion of pre-application planning advice the proposal was amended to reduce the density to circa 20 dwellings providing a 100% mixed affordable housing scheme of affordable rent and shared ownership. The advice took into account the close proximity to existing homes on the western boundary and density in the south east of the site. The advice also indicated the need to enhance the connection and surface finish to the Public Right of Way to the east of the site. These will be reviewed as part of the next stage of the project.
10. On appointment of a design team the local community, Parish Council and Ward Member will be consulted with to help shape the design of the homes at the site, with the aim of achieving a net carbon zero design.
11. To ensure that key milestones have been communicated a timeline of previous project information has been created and is attached as Appendix 1 for reference.
12. Section 9 of the Housing Act 1985 (the 1985 Act) is the key power for councils to provide housing accommodation. It includes two sets of acquisition provisions: Sections 9(1)(b) and 9(2) - a local housing authority (LHA) may acquire houses – and alter, enlarge, repair or improve a house so acquired; Section 9(3) – a LHA can exercise the Section 9 powers to provide housing accommodation "in relation to" land acquired for the purpose of (a) disposing of houses provided, or to be provided, on the land or (b) disposing of the land to a person who intends to provide housing accommodation on it.

Community impact

13. The County Plan 2020 – 2024 aims to shape the future of Herefordshire and encourage and strengthen communities whilst creating a thriving local economy and protecting and enhancing the environment to ensure Herefordshire remains a great place to live, visit, work, learn and do business.
14. Delivering housing to help address the shortage of affordable housing in the County is intrinsically linked to the ambitions of the new County Plan 2020 – 2024:
 - a. Environment – protect and enhance our environment and keep Herefordshire a great place to live

- b. Community – strengthen communities to ensure everyone lives well and safely together
 - c. Economy – support an economy which builds on the County’s strengths and resources
15. Any proposed scheme at the Holme Lacy site would look to incorporate these aspirations as key elements of any proposed developments.

Environmental Impact

16. As the proposals are developed during this stage the council can heavily influence and retain full control of what is ultimately built as part of any scheme. This ensures that all the council’s sustainability policies and objectives can be met for the sites to be developed.

Equality duty

17. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the ‘general duty’ on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –

- a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

The equality duty covers the following nine groups with protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The decision does not discontinue services and has no detrimental impact for eligible service users.

- d) The development of a scheme will create greatly improved housing options for small numbers of vulnerable local residents who share protected characteristics either now or in the future. It is intended to where possible build to The National Development Space Standards with the aim of creating ‘Homes for Life’ and accessible accommodation for
 - e) wheelchair users or those with physical disabilities.
18. Consideration has been given to the types and standard of accommodation taking a fabric first approach to building design, maximising the performance of the components

and materials. Taking this approach can minimise the need for energy consumption which will assist in alleviating fuel poverty in the County it will also be cost beneficial to the occupant, demonstrating the council's commitment to equality and their pro-active approach to ensuring the right properties are available in the right location and built to a high specification to meet the their needs.

Resource implications

19. Capital prudential borrowing will be used to fund the next stage, the design work, allocated in the capital programme approved at Council in February 2021. If a scheme does not progress the costs will need to be funded from reserves, as they can no longer be capitalised. However if an affordable housing scheme is not financially viable there is an option to develop the site as an open market scheme and therefore revenue cost implications would be minimised as development costs can be funded from the capital receipt received.

Legal implications

20. There are no legal implications arising from this report or its recommendations.

Risk management

21. The key risks associated with the options outlined in the paper are as follows:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
Drainage at the site may be challenging for any development	A full survey to be completed of the site and various drainage solutions to be considered and costed during the design stage of the project.
Ensuring all stakeholders are kept informed of the key elements of the project.	A full communication strategy will be created to ensure all key stakeholders are kept informed of each and every stage of the project.

22. Risks are managed according to the council's risk management framework, aligned with corporate risk strategy and recorded on a service risk register, being escalated to the directorate or corporate risk register according to the significance of the risk

Consultees

23. Consultations have taken place with the Cabinet Members for Housing, Regulatory Services, and Community Safety
24. This paper and the recommendations contained within it incorporate comments received during the above consultations

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Timeline of Communications

Appendix 2 – Holme Lacy Site Plan

Background papers

None

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.