

**Forward Plan reference number: FP/223/08/18**

<b>Report title:</b> Land for Housing Development in Harlow: Purford Green Primary School Former Junior Block (HAR006)	
<b>Report to:</b> Councillor Gagan Mohindra, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Councillor Louise McKinlay, Cabinet Member for Finance, Commercial and Traded Services	
<b>Report author:</b> Gwyn Owen, Head of Essex Housing Tel: 033301 36120 Email: <a href="mailto:Gwyn.Owen@essex.gov.uk">Gwyn.Owen@essex.gov.uk</a>	
<b>Date:</b> 20 December 2018	<b>For:</b> Decision
<b>Enquiries to:</b> Daniel Taylor – Senior Development Operations Manager Tel: 03330 130 124 email: <a href="mailto:Daniel.Taylor@essex.gov.uk">Daniel.Taylor@essex.gov.uk</a>	
<b>County Divisions affected:</b> Harlow South East	

**Confidential Appendix**

This report has a confidential appendix which is not for publication as it includes exempt information falling within paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1. This paper seeks approval to draw down funding to progress a scheme at the site of the Former Junior Block of Purford Green Primary School, Harlow, Essex (the Site) to full planning determination stage (the Project).
- 1.2. A further report will follow to agree the next steps if planning permission is granted on the Site.

**2. Recommendations**

**Cabinet Member for Economic Growth:**

- 2.1. To agree to invest £419,000 capital and £5,000 revenue to progress the Site to planning approval by July 2020 which includes detailed design, planning, technical design, contractor tender, site preparatory works and ECC internal costs.

**Cabinet Member for Finance, Commercial and Traded Services:**

- 2.2. To approve the new addition to the capital programme of £111,000 in 2018/19.

- 2.3 To agree the drawdown from the Transformation reserve of Revenue costs of £1,000 in 2018/19, £3,000 in 2019/20 and £1,000 in 2020/21 for the purposes outlined at 2.1.

### **3. Background and proposal**

- 3.1. The Site is an Essex County Council (ECC) owned site of 1.038ha, and is the former Purford Green Junior Block. It is located in Little Bray, about a mile and a quarter to the south east of Harlow town centre in a primarily residential area. The primary school remains on the eastern boundary of the Site. The property comprises a former single storey junior school building in a poor state of repair, exposing ECC to ongoing maintenance liabilities. The building was vacated as part of the amalgamation of the junior and infant school to form the Purford Green Primary School, which is based in the infant school block. The former junior school site is retained by ECC and it is not required for future school provision.
- 3.2. The Site is an ideal location for the development of a housing scheme; it is within a residential area with close linkages to the town centre. A housing scheme on this Site will deliver 35 new units to meet local housing need, a reduction of asset maintenance liabilities by approximately £10k per year and will support economic growth and regeneration and protect the greenbelt by developing on available brownfield land, and would generate a capital surplus. The proposal for planning permission is to clear the existing site and for 35 units to be built. Expected values of capital receipts from sales are informed by comparable market valuations undertaken by sales and marketing experts Strutt and Parker.
- 3.3. ECC's Essex Housing team, on the basis of advice from consultants, has carried out a feasibility assessment that has assessed the suitability of the Site for development and the likelihood of obtaining planning permission for the Scheme. Pre-planning application meetings will be held with Harlow District Council planners to inform the Scheme design work going forward.
- 3.4. Arcady Architects have been engaged by the Essex Housing team to undertake an initial assessment of the Site's capacity. Build costs were provided by Oxbury Chartered Surveyors and development appraisals were then developed by Strutt and Parker. The Scheme proposal is considered to be achievable in terms of the Site capacity and acceptable in planning policy terms.
- 3.5 Due diligence referenced above has not indicated any particular issues with the development of the Site other than those specifically set out in the confidential appendix. More detailed due diligence will be undertaken as part of the design and planning phase.

- 3.6 ECC's Essex Housing team will manage the project. The key milestones as follows:

Milestone Description	Target Date
Detailed design and planning application preparation	January 2019 - November 2019
Planning permission secured	January 2020
Technical design and Contractor tender	November 2019 - June 2020
Decision to determine Construction/Disposal Approach	July 2020

#### 4. Options

Option 1 – recommended – to carry out required actions to obtain planning permission for a viable development scheme and obtain tender quotations for direct delivery before a further decision is brought forward for disposal/development.

Option 2 – dispose of the Site on the open market, before planning permission is obtained. This option would realise the land value, however the developer returns would be foregone.

#### 5. Next Steps

- 5.1 ECC will continue to work with the Site and progress its planning application with Harlow District Council. Once planning has been obtained, a further report will be brought to consider whether ECC wish to embark on the development of the Site and therefore seek to appoint a contractor, or to sell the Site at that stage.

#### 6. Consideration of Implications

##### 6.1. Financial Implications

- 6.1.1. £111,000 will be added to the capital programme for 2018/19, with the remaining project cost being drawn down from existing Essex Housing capital programme allocation.
- 6.1.2. Given commercial sensitivity, the financial implications associated with this project are set out in the confidential appendix.

##### 6.2 Legal Implications

- 6.2.1 ECC has the power under the Local Government Act 1972 to acquire land and power under the Local Authorities (Land) Act 1963 to develop land for the improvement or development of its area. The aim of this scheme relate principally to ensuring that housing is available to meet the needs of Essex residents.
- 6.2.2 Any future building contract will need to be procured in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

## **7. Equality and Diversity implications**

- 7.1 Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 creates the public sector equality duty which requires that when ECC makes decisions it must have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act
  - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 7.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation.
- 7.3 An initial equality impact assessment carried out on 20 August 2018, indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic and a section 2 Equality Impact Assessment is not considered necessary.

## **8. List of Appendices**

- 8.1 Confidential Appendix
- 8.2 Equality Impact Assessment

## **9. List of background papers**

- 9.1 None

<b>I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Councillor Gagan Mohindra, Cabinet Member for Economic Development</b>	21.12.18
<b>I approve the above recommendations for the reasons set out in the report.</b>	
<b>Councillor David Finch, Leader of ECC signed off on behalf of Councillor Louise McKinlay, Cabinet Member for Finance, Commercial and Traded Services.</b>	21.12.18

Land for Housing Development in Harlow: Purford Green Primary School Former Junior Block

**In consultation with:**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Executive Director for Corporate and Customer Services (S151 Officer)</b>  <b>Margaret Lee</b>	18/12/2018
<b>Monitoring Officer</b>  <b>Kim Cole</b> on behalf of  <b>Paul Turner</b>	20/11/2018