

APPENDIX 3

REPORT TO: ROD TRUAN, PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR HOUSING

DATE: 26 SEPTEMBER 2012

TITLE: DISPOSAL OF EMPTY PROPERTIES

**LEAD OFFICER(S) ANDREW MURRAY, HEAD OF HOUSING (01279 446676)
WENDY MAKEPEACE, AREA HOUSING MANAGER (01279) 44342**

This is not a Key Decision

This is not on the Forward Plan.

Call-in Procedures may apply

This report is for decision to be made by the Portfolio Holder

This decision will affect 2 Wards.

RECOMMENDED that

- A** The disposal of 1 – 21 Wissants for the provision of affordable housing is approved.
- B** The demolition of 28 Pytt Field is approved.

REASON FOR DECISION

- A** The disposal of 1-21 Wissants will enable the regeneration of the block and the area. All 21 properties are currently derelict and are attracting anti social behaviour and are subject to ongoing vandalism. The resulting redevelopment of this site would support the town's regeneration and neighbourhood strategy and will provide additional social housing assisting the Council in tackling housing need.
- B** The demolition of 28 Pytt field will prevent further structural decline and dilapidation of the property as it is un economical to pursue structural and decent homes repairs.

BACKGROUND

- 1 The properties were identified for disposal/demolition in 2011 as part of the Housing Revenue Account Business Planning process with the Cabinet approving disposal of a number of empty properties to be excluded from the final Housing Revenue Account (HRA) debt settlement. .

1 - 21WISSANTS

- 2 The block of 21 bedsit properties was subject to a long term lease with the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NACRO) which came to an end in 2011. NACRO have informed the Council they do not wish to renew the lease and enter into another agreement for the use of the block.
- 3 The properties were identified for disposal in 2011 as part of the Housing Revenue Account Business Planning process with Cabinet approving the disposal of a number of empty properties, including 1-21 Wissants. Cabinet agreed that they be excluded from the final Housing Revenue Account (HRA) debt settlement.
- 4 The design of this block sets it aside from neighbouring blocks and its immediate neighbourhood and local environment it is now regarded as an “eye sore” by the local residents.
- 5 The proposal to dispose of 1-21 Wissants to an RSL will provide the town with additional affordable housing and much need family sized accommodation Enquiries have been made through the Stansted Area Housing Partnership in relation to the potential redevelopment of the site and a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) has shown interest in the site and could attract national housing grant funding

28 PYTT FIELD

- 6 The property at 28 Pytt Field is a small end of terrace 1 bed room bungalow which shows signs of significant structural subsidence and is therefore currently unable to be let or be used for temporary accommodation.
- 7 The cost of demolition would be met from allocated budgets within the housing capital program structural budget.

IMPLICATIONS

Regeneration & Enterprise

The Regeneration Team are working with the Stansted Area Housing Partnership on proposals for development of the site to support housing and regeneration objectives.

Author: Cath Shaw, Assistant Chief Executive: Regeneration and Enterprise

Regulation (includes Sustainability)

Demolition of the Wissants building will require planning permission in advance of any redevelopment.

Author: Graeme Bloomer, Head of Regulation

Finance

The absence of these properties from inclusion in the debt settlement figure means that there are no long term financial implications for the HRA Business Plan. Disposal or demolition at this time would be clearly advantageous.

Author: Simon Freeman, Head of Finance

Housing

The proposed development would support the need for new affordable housing to address the acute housing need at Harlow.

Author: Andrew Murray, Head of Housing

Community & Customer Services (includes Equalities and Social Inclusion)

The proposed course of action will result in unattractive sites, which could be a target for vandalism, being transformed into much-needed affordable housing. Both of these outcomes will contribute to social inclusion and social cohesion.

Author: Lynn Seward, Head of Community and Customer Services

Governance (includes HR and ICT)

Adhering to the Constitutional and Statutory requirements the disposal of the site will unburden the Council of its liability under occupiers liability.

Author: Mike White, Head of Governance

Background Papers

NB: These are papers referred to in the preparation of the report that are not attached as appendices but that are available for public or Councillor study.

Glossary of terms/abbreviations used