

Agenda item No. 6

Title:	Land at Queens Road Westbury
Portfolio holder:	Cllr Graham Payne – Property and Estates
Reporting officer:	John Follows – Property and Estates Service Manager
Key decision:	Yes

Purpose

To brief Cabinet on the proposed development at Queens Road Westbury which will deliver affordable homes on a garage site in the town and to gain approval for progressing the disposal of the site.

Background

A plot of land (see plan in Appendix 1) has been leased to the West Wiltshire Society of Model Engineers (WWSME) for several years who have miniature railway on the site which is used once or twice per week during the summer.

The land is surrounded by garages owned by West Wiltshire Housing Society (WWHS) and can only accessed across their land. They therefore ransom the site for any development by the Council.

WWHS have proposed purchasing the site to permit the development of affordable homes on the site.

Key issues

Delivery of affordable homes is a Council priority and this site provides a windfall of 12 affordable homes on a site which combines WWDC land with WWHS surrounding garage land.

WWHS have proposed sale for £250,000 plus fees. If we were to go to the open market they would ransom any development making it difficult to deal with any other developer.

WWSME need to be relocated and an alternative site has been identified and work is well advanced on the project.

District Valuer opinion has been sought and we have received a report stating that the offer is not below market value.

WWHS have run consultations in Westbury and the proposals have been positively received.

Effect on strategies and codes

Disposal of the site supports the corporate spotlight area of meeting housing need. The supporting principles of sound financial management and the aim of asset management plan to align council landholdings with corporate objectives also lend weight to this option.

Risk management implications

There is a risk of further future development on the parking provided on the site or the plans being altered to produce higher densities of housing. The council will insert covenants in the conveyance to claw back any overage which might arise if this occurs in the future.

There is a risk that relocating WWSME will cost more than estimated in which case the consideration for the site will reduce by £5,000.

Finance and performance implications

A capital receipt in the order of £250,000 will be realised, subject to planning permission.

Options and way forward

Do nothing – no affordable homes and no capital receipt.

Sell the site – contribute to meeting housing need and obtain capital receipt of £250,000.

Legal and human rights implications

None

Next steps

The sale will be subject to planning permission which is currently being sought by WWHS however solicitors will be instructed following approval of the sale.

Recommendations

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- approve sale of the site.

Key decision box

Statement of reason for key decision	Capital value may exceed £250,000 at point of sale.
Options considered and rejected	See options section above.
Date of implementation	12 December 2007

Background papers

Background papers are available in Property and Commercial Services Office G38.

Appendix 1 Queens Road Westbury, Site Plan

