

Report to:	EXECUTIVE
Relevant Officer:	Antony Lockley, Director of Strategy and Assistant Chief Executive
Relevant Cabinet Member	Councillor Ivan Taylor, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Partnerships and Performance
Date of Meeting:	27 February 2023

WHITEGATE MANOR (261 WHITEGATE DRIVE) - REDEVELOPMENT IN PRINCIPLE FOR SHELTERED HOUSING

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To agree the principle of redevelopment at Whitegate Manor, Whitegate Drive for sheltered accommodation using Housing Revenue Account resources. To acknowledge work undertaken to-date in regards to project feasibility and securing vacant possession of the building and confirm support to ongoing design work that will facilitate a detailed project proposal to be considered for approval by Executive at a future meeting.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To support the principle of redevelopment of the Whitegate Manor site using Housing Revenue Account resource for new-build sheltered housing.
- 2.2 To grant delegated authority to the Director of Strategy and Assistant Chief Executive to continue with detailed design work to develop a detailed scheme for consideration at a future Executive meeting and support the work to relocate existing users of the building to enable future demolition and redevelopment to take place.
- 2.3 To approve the transfer of land from the General Fund into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and consider opportunity for provision of a capital receipt to the general Fund for the land.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 To support the initial feasibility work already undertaken in relation to redevelopment of the Whitegate Manor site and to allow ongoing detailed design and site preparation works to continue. Further work is required to enable consideration of a fully designed and costed scheme by Executive for redevelopment to provide new dedicated sheltered housing

provision for Blackpool.

3.2 Blackpool's Housing Strategy 2018-2023 'Making Blackpool Better' states that a priority for the Council is to take forward plans for the redevelopment of all suitable land within the Borough. The document confirms that there is a lack of developable land within the Borough because Blackpool is intensely urban and compact in form. Much of the existing sheltered housing stock is no longer fit for purpose due to its age and typology, therefore there is both a demand for and a need to increase the number of suitable sheltered housing units available. The property is not suited, nor required for use as offices (its current use) and is not considered suitable for conversion having reached the end of the building's lifespan.

3.3 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.4 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:

4.1 The site could continue to be used as an office and storage facility. Failure to enable redevelopment (cleared site) would result in claw back of grant monies secured from the One Public Estate fund which support the site being made ready for redevelopment.

5.0 Council priority:

5.1 The relevant Council priority is: "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience".

6.0 Background information

6.1 Whitegate Manor is a Council owned building currently occupied as offices by six teams. Five of the occupiers are internal clients and one external. All will need relocating before the scheme can proceed. The site consists of one distinct existing property, its eastern boundary situated on Whitegate Drive, the A583, which links Blackpool town centre with Preston New Road. The site is located approximately 1.5 miles to the south-east of Blackpool town centre and just over a mile from the seafront, and in close proximity to District and Local Centre retail areas on Whitegate Drive. It is adjacent to Blackpool Centre for Independent Living with whom it has a shared access driveway to the north and whose operation will be unaffected by the redevelopment of Whitegate Manor. There are mature trees to the Eastern Boundary affording privacy and shade to the rear car park and the southern boundary is bordered by Ferguson Road.

- 6.2 The Council’s ambition is to provide high quality homes that make a significant contribution to its residents’ quality of life, reflecting our Borough-wide desire to create neighbourhoods that are desirable places to live in, and which inspire aspiration and a sense of hope. The Housing Strategy Team instructed the Whitegate Manor site be considered for redevelopment as new Council housing. Initial high-level feasibility was undertaken to demonstrate that demolition of the existing building and redevelopment for sheltered housing was potentially viable based on an indicative 20 unit scheme. Undertaking redevelopment to provide new, dedicated sheltered housing will allow for the release and reuse of existing sheltered housing units/ blocks that are no longer considered fit for current needs.
- 6.3 As with the Council’s development of other major new build housing developments the design and feasibility work is being supported by the support of officers from Blackpool Council, Blackpool Coastal Housing and Blackpool Housing Company (as the Council’s development agent).
- 6.4 A key requirement in the development of new housing is to promote and support community stability. As the project progresses there will be a need to engage and consult with a range of stakeholders including:
- Local residents;
 - Ward Councillors and relevant Cabinet Members;
 - Blackpool Centre for Independent Living;
 - Blackpool Planning and Highways departments.
- 6.5 An OJEU compliant procurement process was undertaken in 2020 which resulted in the appointment of a suitably qualified design team. Under the terms of the procurement they have been retained to undertake design work for redevelopment of Whitegate Manor as a Council ‘infill site’. The design team will be led by Cassidy and Ashton Architects, supported by a range of sub consultants in fields including landscape design, engineering and mechanical and electrical design. Design work will be to the end of RIBA Stage 3 (Planning).
- 6.6 The overarching aim of the proposed redevelopment is to *“provide new residential development, dedicated as Sheltered Housing, which improves the housing stock within the Borough, providing good quality homes that help to build communities and stabilise lives through the creation of positive places to live”*. The following objectives set the context for continued design works and articulate the key elements required to be met to enable a full approval for delivery to be considered:
- Objective 1: To ensure viable and comprehensive developments that achieve a balance between quality and value;
 - Objective 2: To provide new homes (flats) which are M43 compliant and therefore providing suitable living accommodation for those with mobility issues/ disabilities, and

are adaptable to meet changing needs over time;

- Objective 3: To meet any obligation in respect of securing Planning Permission;
- Objective 4: To promote place making and quality of life for the residents, including provision of an attractive and safe environment; and,
- Objective 5: To incorporate high-levels of environmental/ sustainability credentials into the design and operation of the new apartment block.

6.7 As a starting point, the following provides an overview of the key requirements being factored into design work:

- Block of 1 bed 2 person sheltered flats, range of 20-30 flats considered as likely most appropriate on the site;
- Fully accessible and adaptable for wheelchair users (M43), including lift provision;
- Building design to meet new Part L of the Building Regulations - helping to reduce operational energy use and cost;
- Heating - Air Source Heat Pumps to each flat/ or equivalent, depending upon advice from M&E - alternative options may be available for centralised type heating or high output pumps reducing the number required, further investigation on most suitable option is ongoing;
- Solar Panels – to be utilised by each flat and communal lighting;
- Warden call system required;
- Landscaped communal gardens and car parking (with Electric Vehicle provision), alongside separate provision for refuge and mobility scooter and bike store;
- Design detail and quality to reflect spatial context including prominent position on Whitegate Drive, adjacent residential and community uses.

6.8 The Council's Client team will work with the design team in order to submit a formal planning application in 2023. At the point a fully designed and costed scheme is considered viable from a financial perspective then a further formal approval will be sought from Executive to seek permission to deliver the project. A further procurement exercise will then be required to be undertaken to appoint a contractor to undertake the construction of the scheme.

6.9 The Whitegate Manor site is benefiting from grant monies provided through the One Public Estate programme (Brownfield Land Release Fund). This programme seeks to assist Local Authorities in repurposing surplus public estate for housing, regeneration, and other locally determined uses. The grant monies attributed to the site must be spent by the 31 March 2024 and will support enabling and clearance works to make the site ready for redevelopment.

6.10 If taken forward for full redevelopment, funding for the scheme would be split between borrowing against the Housing Revenue Account, to be repaid from the rental income accrued and a bid to Homes England for grant funding under the current Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26.

6.11 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

7.0 List of Appendices:

7.1 Appendix 6 – Site boundary plan

8.0 Financial considerations:

8.1 Current design and feasibility work is covered under the existing infill sites design fee. When the scheme design is finalised a formal cost plan will be produced and a scheme financial appraisal (using Brixx Development tool) undertaken. Subject to demonstrable viability, a full redevelopment proposal will be presented for consideration at a future Executive.

8.2 It is envisaged that the project will be funded primarily by the Housing Revenue Account. New affordable housing development on the site should stack up financially on its own terms over a defined payback period. Grant application to Homes England’s new Affordable Homes Programme 2021-2026, will be considered to support scheme viability.

8.3 The feasibility process will also explore the potential for a capital contribution from the scheme towards the land acquisition from the General Fund.

9.0 Legal considerations:

9.1 The site is within Council ownership. A Report on Title reveals no legal impediments in relation to redevelopment.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 Redevelopment requires relocation of existing users of the building.

10.2 OPE funding clawback.

10.3 Scheme viability/ deliverability – including securing grant funding from Homes England for new housing scheme.

11.0 Equalities considerations:

11.1 Proposed redevelopment seeks to provide a dedicated Sheltered Housing provision, this is specifically aimed at those aged 55 years and over. The design parameters also seek to ensure the new units will be fully accessible and adaptable for those with disabilities and in need of wheelchair use. It provides access to communal green space in an accessible location. Housing of this type is identified as needed based on the current and future demographics. There are currently 2029 applicants registered on My Home Choice for sheltered accommodation (1924 are aged 55 and over), with 63% requiring level access

accommodation due to mobility issues.

11.2 Many of the current sheltered housing stock is no longer fit for purpose due to its age and typology therefore there is both a demand and a need to increase the number of suitable sheltered housing units available. The majority of our sheltered housing stock is neither accessible nor adaptable for wheelchair users. Providing dedicated sheltered housing will also provide the opportunity to release larger properties which are currently underutilized to families in need and allow some of the current sheltered housing sites which are no longer fit for current needs to be considered for redevelopment.

12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:

12.1 Meeting new Part L of building regulations – additional building fabric insulation plus provision of renewable technology to provide heating/ hot water and solar panels to reduce operational carbon generated as well as reduce running costs for tenants and landlord.

13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:

13.1 Blackpool Coastal Housing. Corporate Leadership Team.

14.0 Background papers:

14.1 None.

15.0 Key decision information:

15.1 Is this a key decision? Yes

15.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number: 6/2023

15.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No

15.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

16.0 Call-in information:

16.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

16.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: 17 February 2023 Date approved:

18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

18.1

19.0 Summary of Discussion:

19.1

20.0 Executive decision:

20.1

21.0 Date of Decision:

21.1

22.0 Reason(s) for decision:

22.1

23.0 Date Decision published:

23.1

24.0 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

24.1

25.0 Executive Members in attendance:

25.1

26.0 Call-in:

26.1

27.0 Notes:

27.1