

Cherwell District Council

Council

21 October 2013

<h3>Graven Hill Potential Acquisition and Redevelopment</h3>

Report of Bicester Director

This report is public

Purpose of report

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval to add the potential acquisition and redevelopment of Graven Hill into the Policy Framework and make available the capital sums required as part of the budget.

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To add the potential acquisition and redevelopment of Graven Hill into the Policy Framework and make available the capital sums required as part of the budget.
- 1.2 To request a business case be prepared outlining the full implications of the potential acquisition together with a detailed analysis of the capital sums required to be brought to the December Executive to enable the Executive to make an informed decision with regards to the potential acquisition and redevelopment of this site.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 Since Autumn 2012 Officers have been in negotiation with the MOD to acquire Graven Hill, Bicester. There has been significant support and input from Government Ministers resulting in a Statement of Intent signed by both organisations to jointly commission an independent valuation. The reason why Government has been so supportive is that it delivers against a number of national policy objectives including release of public land, growth, off site manufacturing and the delivery of housing.
- 2.2 At their June 2013 meeting the Executive gave approval for Officers to proceed with technical, legal and financial due diligence.

- 2.3 Subject to the completion of due diligence providing necessary assurance **and** subject to a strong and detailed business case, a further report will be taken to December Executive recommending the potential acquisition and redevelopment of Graven Hill.

3.0 Report Details

- 3.1 The June 2013 report to the Executive is provided as a background document to this report.
- 3.2 It is necessary for Council to approve for the potential acquisition and redevelopment of Graven Hill to be added into the Policy Framework ahead of the Executive meeting in December.
- 3.3 The potential acquisition will be funded through a mix of capital reserves and prudential borrowing. The ability to prudentially borrow is already covered in Cherwell District Councils; Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Investment Statement 2013/14, Section 2.4, Page 6.

4.0 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 In order to further the potential acquisition and redevelopment of Graven Hill it is recommended that Council approve the recommendations as set out in this report.

5.0 Consultation

Government Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG)	CLG have been very involved in supporting Cherwell's potential acquisition and negotiations with the MOD in recognition of its support to national agendas on growth and release of public land assets.
Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)	HCA recognise the significant contribution this site will make to housing delivery and as an exemplar of new forms of delivery such as custom build and self build housing
National Association of Self Builders (NASB)	NASB recognise the opportunities for individuals and the local economy through large scale self build and custom build housing
Build Off Site	Build Off Site recognise the potential for off site Manufacturing in both the commercial elements and residential elements of the site
Forestry Commission	The regional office of the Forestry Commission have given advice and confirmed that this site provides an opportunity for local people to enjoy the extensive woodland and the benefits to the environment
Rail Freight Network (RFN)	RFN have provided a representative who has provided advice on the railway issues
Government Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS)	BIS have been involved in discussions about the commercial elements of the site and optimising benefits and value

Local residents

Over 200 potential residents of Graven Hill have been made contact with to gather views on self build, design etc. This has provided Officers with a sample of over 10% of potential residents from a range of household sizes and incomes and tenures.

6.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

5.1 The following alternative options have been identified and rejected for the reasons as set out below.

Option 1: To approve the recommendation

Option 2: To reject the recommendation

7.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

7.1 There will be detailed financial due diligence completed as part of a wider business case for acquisition. The ability to prudentially borrow is already covered in Cherwell District Council's; Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Investment Statement 2013/14, Section 2.4, Page 6.

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

7.2 Detailed legal due diligence is underway covering issues relating to title, contract as well as governance issues for the council in acquiring and developing Graven Hill. Addition of the acquisition of the site to the adopted policy framework enables the Executive to be given the legal authority to take future decisions relating to this matter.

Comments checked by:

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8.0 Decision Information

Key Decision (Cabinet/Executive reports only)

Financial Threshold Met: **Not applicable**

Community Impact Threshold Met: **Not applicable**

Wards Affected

Bicester All

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

District of Opportunity

Lead Councillor

Councillor Barry Wood
Leader of the Council

Document Information

Appendix No	Title
	None
Background Papers	
July 2013 Report to Executive on Graven Hill	
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