

150 THORNHILL ROAD – Older Person Accommodation.

BRIEFING NOTE - 4TH SEPTEMBER 2015



BACKGROUND

In December 2014, Cardiff Council's Cabinet gave authority to appropriate the former children's home at 150 Thornhill Road into the HRA so that the building could be remodeled to provide self-managed older persons 'independent living' units. The site itself is not big enough to be considered for a 'Sheltered Housing' block with on-site management, but there is a definite demand in this area for designated older-person units.

The proposals for the site are being taken forward by Housing Development within the Communities Directorate. A financial viability was undertaken to determine the likely pay-back period of the initial HRA investment against the projected rental income and on-going maintenance of the building. This proved satisfactory to the Directorate and the scheme is now progressing.

The Council's Projects, Design and Development (P.D.D.) service were commissioned to complete the detailed design options for the reconfiguration of the building with a brief to split the project into two separate phases:

Phase 1

This initial phase focuses on remodelling the existing building and will provide eight self-contained flats, 6 one bed flats and 2 two bed flats. Each flat has its own entrance from a communal corridor and are fully accessible for residents with poor mobility as there is a lift serving the upper floor. The flats are designed to be flexible units that are 'future-proofed' for a change to a tenant's needs and should not need adaptation at a later stage. Each flat has consideration for wheelchair access, incorporates level access shower rooms and complies to RNIB standards.

There is also a proposed communal room at ground floor level for shared use by residents and removal of the multi-use games area. Improvements are proposed to the external communal areas with improved pedestrian access to both the rear communal gardens and the access out to the public footpaths (the route to the local centre).

Existing vehicular access & parking is sufficient for the number of flats being proposed.

The final plan has now been submitted for planning approval submitted for planning which should be determined by the end of September

Phase 2

A further development (phase 2) is currently being designed to create a small number of older person bungalows to the external space at the front of the site. It is proposed that these are built on the area currently taken up by the multi-use games area (MUGA) which is to be removed by Parks for use elsewhere. These proposals will be subject to further consultation and planning approval in the future. Current options indicate that between 4-6 bungalows can be accommodated on the site.

Progress to date

A decision on the planning application for Phase 1 is anticipated on 29th September 2015. P.D.D. are currently detailing the designs and compiling a tender package with a view to

going out to tender in November. The current programme indicates a start on site in April 2016.

P.D.D. is unable to improve on timescales identified in their programme but are currently investigating an advance tender package to undertake some landscaping works prior to the wider refurbishment in April 2016.

Feasibility designs for Phase 2 have recently commenced. A meeting has been set up to review progress at the end of September.

CONSIDERATIONS

Although local facilities are not close enough for the building to be considered for 'Sheltered' older person accommodation, there are local services in the way of a bus route, shop and pharmacy to render the building suitable for 'designated' elderly accommodation.

The Scrutiny Committee had previously raised the issue of adequate bus provision and this has been reviewed. The Cardiff Bus route passing 150 Thornhill road was re-routed back in 2013. Cardiff Bus now only operates as far north as Excaliber Drive.

Bus provision is still available, however, via Stagecoach - which passes 150 Thornhill Road each way every 30 minutes. However, unlike in England where the service is free for those with free bus-pass, there is a standard charge in Wales.

A transport statement commissioned for this project has identified the need to improve the eastern bus stop servicing the building. This will be included within the proposals and will most probably include the provision of a pedestrian crossing over Thornhill road.

CONSULTATION

Local resident consultation took place on the relocation of the Youth Offending Services to 150 Thornhill Road, this proposal was not well received and a large number of objections were made. During the consultation many of the residents suggested the alternative of residential accommodation for the elderly.

Children's Service's sent and update letter to approximately 600 local residents in November 2014 to advise on the development options under consideration and the transfer of the site to the communities directorate.

Two further letters were sent from Housing Development to the local community in January and June 2015 to advise of the intended proposals and submission of a planning application.

Ward member consultation has taken place during the course of the developments and have been involved in design and material choices and agreed all correspondence.

APPROVED PLANS

Approved floor plans are provided as separate documents.