

Update on the former Bugle Public House

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 19 September 2017

1. This report is to provide an update on the progress of the proposed redevelopment of the former Bugle public house in Upper Halliford.

Background

2. The property was purchased from Trusts Inns in January 2016. Post purchase an in house project team was put together which then progressed to the procurement and appointment of a professional development team. Various options for the use of the rear grounds have been researched which included visits to Country Parks to assess if the site was large enough to fulfil such an option.
3. Numerous surveys have been completed to allow for the development of the site. These included ecological and bat surveys which have to be undertaken at certain times of year. A contaminated land survey was also undertaken as the site had historically been used for gravel extraction and it was unclear as to whether there had been any backfilling of the site. The whole site including the former public house sits in green belt land. There have, therefore, been ongoing pre application discussions with Planning due to the green belt constraints. There continues to be discussions with some of the local residents about regularising some of the land at the rear of gardens as encroachment over many years has taken place.

Current position

4. MH Architects were appointed to the project and have liaised closely with the Planning department to ensure that the scheme is compliant with planning policies.
5. A planning application was submitted on 26 June, 2017 for the site to be redeveloped to provide eight new apartments consisting of six x 2 bedroomed and two x 1 bedroomed apartments. Attached are the elevations and floorplans of the proposed development. The planning application was determined at Planning Committee meeting held on 23 August 2017 and at that meeting was agreed.
6. The Green Belt land to the rear of the site will be retained and enhanced as a natural habitat. Various initiatives are being considered to promote wider public access and use of the land. The Council's Sustainability team are currently assessing the potential of leasing out the former sports pitch area for allotments, as there is a high demand within the local area.

Next Steps

7. The tenders for demolition have been issued and returned. The Employers Agent is reviewing and will provide their recommendation. The Architect has put together a materials specification, which is to be sent to the Quantity Surveyor to be checked against the cost plan. The final cost plan will be provided in early September.
8. A Party Wall notice has been served to the neighbouring property but no response has been received in the 14 day response period. An appeal notice with an extension of 10 days has been sent. Legal will request a survey if no further response received to formalise the situation.
The Employers Requirements are being collated, and the tenders for the main contractors to be issued 6 September with a 5/6 week return.

Finance

9. The finances of the project, relating to the purchase price of the site, the demolition and the cost of the redevelopment dictate that the units will be marketed for private rent. This is to provide a financial return that will meet the expenditure. Should the development costs exceed the current projections, the fall-back position is that the flats could be sold on the open market. The preferred option however is to retain ownership of the development as an asset to the Council.

Timescales

10. It is expected that demolition of the existing building on the site will take place winter 2017, with construction of the new development commencing spring 2018.
The construction phase is programmed to be 12 months. Should the scheme progress as scheduled, completion and handover of the development would take place spring 2019.

Communication

11. There have been letters sent out to residents along with updates in the Borough Bulletin. Residents will continue to be updated at key stages by letter, the Borough Bulletin and updates on the website. It is also planned that appropriate updates will be installed on the hoarding surrounding the property.