

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>New Homes for Neighbourhoods – Small Sites Design Competition</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>15 June 2016</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Nick Hibberd, Acting Executive Director Economy, Environment &amp; Culture</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Jo Thompson</b>	<b>Tel: 29-1466</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>Hollingdean and Stanmer, Moulsecomb &amp; Bevendean. St Peter's and North Laine and Patcham</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 Building new homes on council land is a council priority and essential if City Plan housing targets are to be met and the city's housing crisis tackled. The council's New Homes for Neighbourhoods (NHFN) programme addresses this undersupply by identifying suitable vacant land and infill sites to develop new homes across the city. This report focuses on the results of the recent Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Design Competition targeted at four of the council's smaller, more challenging sites included within the Small Site Strategy (agreed by Housing Committee, March 2014). The Design Competition was one of a number of innovative pilot projects identified in the Strategy to deliver housing units on the smaller sites within the NHFN programme.
- 1.2 The report recommends that all four winning designs be taken forward for further design development work. Of the four designs, the Judging Panel expressed a strong preference for the two highest scoring schemes (Hinton Close and Natal Road) to be developed first and now move into the detailed design stage. The report also outlines a strategy for the delivery of the two remaining schemes, both of which have merit but would benefit from further site investigation and surveys, in order to achieve greater certainty of cost and feasibility prior to undertaking more detailed design development work.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Housing and New Homes Committee agree the following recommendations:

- 2.1 Note the winning designs for the four sites included within the RIBA Design Competition, namely: Hinton Close, Natal Road, Frederick Street and Rotherfield Crescent (see Appendix 1).

- 2.2 That the two highest scoring designs (Hinton Close and Natal Road) are taken forward to detailed design stage and undergo further financial appraisal before coming back to Committee for final scheme approval.
- 2.3 That further site investigation and surveys are undertaken in relation to the two remaining schemes (Frederick Street and Rotherfield Crescent), in order to achieve greater cost certainty to support the detailed design development work.

### **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 In March 2014, Housing Committee agreed a Small Site Strategy targeted at unlocking council owned sites within the City that are considered potentially challenging to develop by virtue of their size, context, overlooking issues and/or restricted access. This Strategy emphasised that a different solution for the smaller sites was needed if the Council is to meet its housing targets and play its part in tackling housing need in the City. Soft market testing with potential development partners and informal discussions with smaller builders and architect practices, revealed an interest amongst these companies in working with the council to deliver housing on these smaller sites.

#### **The Competition**

- 3.2 In response to this interest expressed by architects, the council launched an Open Design Competition in March 2015, in partnership with RIBA Competitions. Practising registered architects in the UK were invited to develop innovative design proposals for small-scale housing developments on four council owned sites:

- Hinton Close, Hollingdean
- Natal Road, off Lewes Road
- Frederick Street, North Laine
- Rotherfield Crescent, Hollingbury

- 3.3 Competitors were asked to select and develop strategic design approaches for two of the four sites. In total, 146 submissions from architects were received for the four sites within the Competition. The breakdown was as follows:

Hinton Close – 34 submissions

Natal Road – 37 submissions

Frederick Street – 36 submissions

Rotherfield Crescent - 39 submissions

- 3.4 The key project stages are summarised in Appendix 2. The submissions were scored and reduced to a shortlist of five submissions for each site by a Technical Panel made up of council and RIBA representatives from the fields of architecture, planning and housing. The financial information submitted by architects in support of their schemes, was also independently assessed and scored by a Quantity Surveyor. The five shortlisted design proposals for each site which made it through the technical assessment were displayed at four public exhibitions held in venues close to the sites. Local residents were asked to score and comment on the design proposals either at the public exhibitions or online through the council's consultation portal. The results of this consultation

were analysed by officers and RIBA Competitions and formed 15% of the overall marks going forward. Council Planning Officers were also consulted at this stage and provided summary feedback on each of the shortlisted schemes.

- 3.5 The 20 design submissions (i.e. 5 designs per site) were then assessed by a Judging Panel comprising:

<b>Simon Barker</b>	<b>Barker Shorten Architects LLP</b> [acting as the RIBA Architect Adviser]
<b>Sam Smith</b>	<b>Programme Manager, Estate Regeneration Team,</b> Brighton & Hove City Council
<b>Nigel McCutcheon</b>	<b>Architecture Manager, Property &amp; Design,</b> Brighton & Hove City Council
<b>Ododo Dafe</b>	<b>Income Involvement &amp; Improvement (Housing),</b> Brighton & Hove City Council
<b>John Currell</b>	<b>Asset Manager, Property &amp; Investment,</b> Brighton & Hove City Council
<b>Francesca Iliffe</b>	<b>Sustainability Officer, Planning,</b> Brighton & Hove City Council
<b>Grant Shepherd</b>	<b>Brighton University</b> (Architecture Faculty)

This exercise resulted in the selection of 4 winning designs. Although the process of selection was undertaken blind i.e. all entries submitted were anonymous to members of the Judging Panel, the 4 successful schemes were designed by just two practices. These were:

**Sutherland Hussey Harris (SUHUA), Edinburgh** – Natal Road and Hinton Close

**Innes Associates, London** – Frederick Street and Rotherfield Crescent

- 3.6 Anonymity was lifted at Phase 2, with feedback from the Phase 1 assessment issued to the authors of each preferred scheme. The winning practices were then given six weeks to develop their design ideas further, to demonstrate the viability of the proposals and their ability to assemble a team to deliver the scheme. Clarification interviews were held in Brighton on 24 March 2016. Teams were asked to prepare a presentation (based on the submitted material) of 20 mins duration for each site to clarify aspects of the proposed design approach, the potential cost of implementing the design ideas and discuss methods of working etc. The remainder of each team's allocated 2hr slot was taken up with questions in which Judging Panel members sought clarification on any issues that remained unclear following the presentations.
- 3.7 In the final phase of the New Homes for Neighbourhoods competition, the successful architectural practices were not competing against one another for the same site. An appraisal of the technical and financial viability of the preferred scheme for four different sites was undertaken, with each site presenting a different set of opportunities, challenges and constraints. The Panel recognised that the degree of challenge that teams had faced in seeking to refine their initial

proposals into deliverable schemes varied between sites, with some being more inherently difficult to develop-out than others.

### The results

- 3.8 Judging Panel members felt their understanding of the schemes and appreciation of the relative merits of the approaches to each site had benefited greatly from the presentations. They were appreciative of the creative effort that both sets of teams had put into developing their respective pairs of sites. Following the presentations, each member of the Panel scored each scheme against the Award Criteria, with scores averaged to arrive at an agreed consensus score (see Fig 1).

**Fig 1 – Final scores**

CRITERION	SUHUHA [Score out of 10]		INNES ASSOCIATES [Score out 10]	
	Hinton Close	Natal Road	Rotherfield Crescent	Frederick Street
i. Response to feedback and refinement of proposal ideas following Phase 1 assessment	8.33	7.33	6.00	7.83
ii. Financial and technical viability of the proposals with clear balance of creativity versus pragmatism	7.83	7.67	5.83	6.83
iii. Ability to deliver the project and demonstration of understanding of Client requirements	8.67	8.33	7.17	7.33
<b>TOTAL</b> [Out of 30]	<b>24.83</b>	<b>23.33</b>	<b>19.00</b>	<b>21.99</b>

- 3.9 In order to be awarded a contract, the preferred team for each site needed to score a minimum of 6 points against each of the Award Criteria. However, since the design for Rotherfield Crescent put forward by Innes Associates only narrowly failed one criterion, council officers felt that it would be appropriate for all four designs to be taken forward for further design development work.
- 3.10 If the four winning schemes were to proceed to construction stage, the accommodation schedule would be as follows:

#### Hinton Close

3 houses comprising:  
2 x 2 bedroom houses  
1 x 3 bedroom house

### **Natal Road**

2 semi-detached houses comprising:  
2 x 3 bedroom house

### **Frederick Street**

4 apartments comprising:  
1 x 2 bed flat (basement)  
3 x 1 bed flat (ground, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2nd floor)

### **Rotherfield Crescent**

4 houses comprising:  
2 x 2 bedroom houses  
2 x 3 bedroom houses

### **Next steps**

- 3.11 Of the four designs, the Estate Regeneration Members Board have expressed a strong preference for the Hinton Close and Natal Road schemes to be developed first, given their high scores and readiness to proceed to the planning application stage. Subject to committee approval, the winning architects (Sutherland Hussey Harris - SUHUHA) will be commissioned to take the preferred schemes forward to the detailed design stage for both sites. A final scheme design, together with a breakdown of rent levels and the amount of HRA investment required, will be brought back to Housing and New Homes Committee for final sign off ahead of the submission of the planning application anticipated in Autumn 2016.
- 3.12 The council will actively explore procurement options for the construction phase with the architects (SUHUHA) and the council's Procurement team, to ensure that best value-for-money is achieved. Officers will also commission the architects (Innes Associates) of the remaining two schemes to carry out further site investigation and surveys, the results of which will be fed back to the council to give greater cost certainty before commencing the detailed design stage. Both the Frederick Street and Rotherfield Crescent sites present potential challenge in terms of the potential for abnormal costs associated with bringing the sites forward for development. The preferred scheme for Frederick Street, for example, involves the construction of a basement which could incur costs resulting from ground works, diversions, party wall issues etc. Further site investigation i.e. Ground Penetration Radar Survey, party wall survey etc. would therefore help to clarify total scheme costs ahead of a planning submission.

## **4 ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The small and constrained former HRA garage sites did not attract any interest from potential development partners when soft-market testing was undertaken in 2013 to develop new council homes on this land. At that time, a range of delivery options was explored but it was felt that the Design Competition route would offer the best solution, especially given the interest of local architects and builders in developing new homes on these sites. Frederick St was identified as an additional site and added to the competition after this.

## **5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

5.1 A wide range of communication and consultation has taken place with residents and other stakeholders for sites included in the New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme including:

- Briefings and updates for ward councillors
- Presentations and Q&A at local resident association meetings
- Presentations and stand at tenants' and leaseholders' Citywide Conference.

In addition, information has been made available on the New Homes for Neighbourhoods page of the council's website and in the council tenants' and leaseholders' newsletter Homing In.

5.2 Local ward councillors for the four sites included in the Design Competition, were informed of these potential sites for housing before the Competition was launched. Since then, they have received regular briefings updating them on progress in relation to the different stages of the project. The five shortlisted design proposals for each site which made it through the technical assessment were displayed at four public exhibitions held in venues close to the sites. Local residents were asked to score and comment on the design proposals either at the public exhibitions or online through the council's consultation portal. The results of this consultation were analysed by officers and RIBA Competitions and formed a percentage of the overall marks.

5.3 If Committee endorses the recommendations in this report, then the winning architects and Estate Regeneration Project Manager will agree a strategy to facilitate further engagement with the local community on the preferred scheme designs at the pre-planning application stage.

## **6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

6.1 The HRA Capital Programme 2016/17, approved at Policy & Resources committee on 11th February 2016, includes a £1.0m budget for the development of new builds at the RIBA Design Competition sites mentioned in the main body of the report.

6.2 In the case of Natal Road and Hinton Close, detailed financial viability modelling will be undertaken once the final design and development plans are known. There will be a further report to Housing New and Homes Committee to agree the final scheme design, the contribution from the HRA and required level of borrowing.

6.3 Until further site investigation and surveys are undertaken to provide greater cost certainty at Frederick Street and Rotherfield Crescent, financial modelling will not be carried out.

6.4 To date, the costs of design and investigative works for the architects have been funded by the honorarium received by them for the winning designs. The costs of recommendations 2.2 and 2.3, for the detailed design, investigation and survey

works will be met within the HRA Capital Programme Feasibility & Design budget for new homes.

*Finance Officer Consulted:*                      *Craig Garoghan*                      *Date: 20/05/16*

Legal Implications:

- 6.5 The Housing and New Homes Committee has overall responsibility for the council's housing functions. The recommendations in this report fall within the Committee's powers.

*Lawyer Consulted:*                      *Liz Woodley*                      *Date: 23/05/16*

Equalities Implications:

- 6.6 An increase in housing supply will increase the opportunity to provide new, well designed homes to local households registered in need. New development provides an opportunity to better meet the needs of particularly vulnerable households including those, such as existing elderly residents, who may be under occupying their current home.
- 6.7 An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out for the New Homes for Neighbourhood programme and updated with details of specific schemes.

Sustainability Implications:

- 6.8 The council's Sustainability Officer (Francesca Iliffe) was included on the Judging Panel and her recommendations on how the scheme designs can be improved in terms of their sustainability performance, have been fed back to both architectural practices.
- 6.9 In order to obtain planning consent, the new homes will be required to meet sustainability standards for energy and water efficiency equivalent to Code for Sustainable Homes Level 4. The council will also encourage the use of Solar Photo Voltaic systems, wherever possible, on new housing developments.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 6.10 All of the sites included in the Competition are either former garage or car parking sites, which can attract flytipping and other types of anti-social behaviour. The development of new homes on these sites will help to regenerate and improve the neighbourhoods.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 6.11 There are a number of risks and opportunities associated with developing new homes on small, challenging sites, including:

- Increases in construction and other costs
- Local resident opposition to individual schemes
- Improving neglected spaces that can be subject to anti-social behaviour
- Making best use of the council's assets

6.12 All risks will be logged and assessed with mitigation measures put in place where possible.

Public Health Implications:

6.13 There are strong links between improving housing, providing new affordable homes and reducing health inequalities. Energy efficient homes which are easier and cheaper to heat will also help support the health of households.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

6.14 The New Homes for Neighbourhoods programme of building new homes on council land, supports the council's priorities for the economy, jobs and homes. The development of new housing has a strong economic multiplier impact on the local economy, estimated at over £3 of economic output for every £1 of public investment, creating jobs and supply chain opportunities.

6.15 Every new home built on small sites helps meet the city's pressing housing needs and the council's Housing Strategy 2015 priority of improving housing supply. Building new homes also bring benefits to the council in the form of New Homes Bonus payments and new council tax income.

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. Winning Designs
2. Key Project Stages

**Documents in Members' Rooms**

None