

Report to: Executive Board - Monday 11th November 2002

DEVELOPMENT OF THE OXFORD RESETTLEMENT PROJECT
DISPOSAL OF LAND

<p>Report of: <i>Business Manager Neighbourhood Renewal</i></p> <p>Report Author: <i>Steve Northey, Housing Development Co-ordinator Tel no. 01865 252717 Email: snorthey@oxford.gov.uk</i></p> <p>Lead Member Responsible: <i>Housing Portfolio Holder</i></p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee Responsibility: <i>Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee</i></p> <p>Key Decision: <i>Yes: Project value over £200,000 (Article 13.03)</i></p>	<p>WARDS AFFECTED</p> <p>CENTRAL</p>
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SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report seeks authority to dispose of the site of the existing Nightshelter in Luther Street to Home Group Ltd for the development of the Oxford Resettlement Project. This project was approved by Council on 29th April 2002.

The Oxford Resettlement Project is a high priority in the Council's Single Homeless Strategy and will help meet the key strategic objectives of reducing inequality. The Project will give homeless people, including rough sleepers, the support to live independently and enable them to access mainstream housing services.

The Executive Board is ASKED:

- i) to forego nomination rights to the Oxford Resettlement Project in favour of Oxford Nightshelter Ltd to accommodate single homeless people
- ii) to approve the disposal of the existing Nightshelter at Luther Street to Home Group Ltd under Contract Procedure Rule 17 on the terms set out in section 3 of the report
- iii) to instruct the Neighbourhood Renewal Manager and the Legal Services Manager to complete the transfer of the land.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Committee approved the terms for the grant of a 99 year ground lease to Oxford Nightshelter in 1999 to facilitate the redevelopment of the Luther Street site for a new shelter. These were revised in 2000 but the lease was never pursued because funding could no be secured from the Lottery.
- 1.1 The Executive Board approved the redevelopment of the site for the Oxford Resettlement Project on 29th April 2002. To allow the building works to be carried out, a temporary Nightshelter was approved by Executive Board on 27th September 2002 at Albion Place.

2. PROPOSED USE OF THE SITE

- 2.1 Oxford Nightshelter Ltd currently provide a 50 bedspace direct access hostel in the old school building on the Luther Street site. The accommodation is very poor and the dormitory style deters potential users and prevents the development of effective services for single homeless people.
- 2.2 The current Local Plan requires that the Nightshelter, along with the Luther Street clinic, are retained in any redevelopment of the land around the old South Oxford Middle School.
- 2.3 The site itself adjoins the Luther Street Medical Centre which provides a doctor's surgery for homeless people. It is small and enclosed and development will be difficult, not least because any new development on the Nightshelter site will have party wall arrangements with the Medical Centre. In the view of the Property Manager, these factors make it unlikely that alternative high value uses would be found for this site.
- 2.4 The new Resettlement Project will have a range of accommodation available which will encourage people to make the transition to more permanent housing as follows:

Ground Floor

- 5 emergency bedspaces with wash basin and access to central catering
- training and recreation rooms
- residents laundry

First/Second Floors

- 20 fast access rooms with shower/wc and access to central catering
- 25 resettlement bedspaces with shower/wc and 4 shared kitchens (6/7 sharers)

Third Floor

- Offices and staff rest rooms

- 2.5 Rooms will be let on licences to give Oxford Night Shelter the security of being able to obtain possession quickly but they will be of varying lengths to give residents a level of security which matches the commitment they are making towards living independently. Emergency/ fast access bedspaces will be available on the same basis as currently while residents in the resettlement unit will stay for 6 to 12 months
- 2.6 Training and recreation rooms will be provided on the ground floor to encourage residents to develop the necessary lifeskills. Alcohol will be allowed in the new scheme for all service users. This will include both residents and those who use day services, such as the Luther Street Drop In.

3. DETAILS OF LAND DISPOSAL

- 3.1 Approval is Sought to dispose of the land (edged black on the attached plan) on a 99 year lease to Home Group Ltd at nil cost to reflect the Council's nomination rights, which are 100% of initial lettings and 75% of relets. In view of the nature of this project, Board is asked for the Council to forego its nominations in favour of the Oxford Resettlement Project
- 3.2 The Council is permitted to dispose of the land at a discount under General Consent A, Section 25 of the Local Government Act 1988 and this also includes consent to dispose under Section 32 of the Housing act 1985.
- 3.3 Home Group Ltd will be responsible for all repairs and maintenance of the new building and will issue licence agreements to residents. Oxford Nightshelter Ltd will manage the project under an agreement with Home Group which will set out the services to be provided, the operating policies and procedures and service monitoring arrangements.
- 3.4 Details of the site valuation are given on the Confidential Agenda.

4. DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

- 4.1 The temporary Nightshelter will be in operation by mid March 2003 and work will start on the Oxford Resettlement Project in April . Completion is programmed for Spring 2004.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The cost to the Council of disposing of the site at nil cost is the capital receipt foregone and this is equal to the value given in the Confidential Agenda.

THIS REPORT HAS BEEN SEEN AND APPROVED BY THE NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL MANAGER AND THE GROUP ACCOUNTANT
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