



<b>Subject:</b>	Disposal of Land for Housing - former Grove Primary School Site & Whiterock Road
<b>Date:</b>	22 June 2018
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Gerry Millar, Director of Property & Projects
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Cathy Reynolds, Estates Manager

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Some time in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	The purpose of the report is to seek approval in principle to the disposal of Council owned land to two Housing Associations for the development of housing.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	1. Members approval is sought in principle to the disposal of land at: (i) the former Grove Primary School site to Grove Housing Association and (ii) Upper Whiterock Rd (adjacent 265 Whiterock Rd) to Radius Housing Association. The disposal of these lands are subject to valuation by Land & Property Services and detailed terms to be agreed by the Estates Manger and City Solicitor.

	<p>2. Members are asked to note that there are other housing proposals in respect of various Council lands currently underway. Further reports will be brought back to Committee in the near future regarding these proposals. Members should also note that in recent years a number of surplus Council lands have been sold for social housing purposes.</p>
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p>The Council owns the former Grove Primary School Site at North Queen Street, which it acquired in December 2012. The site extends to approximately 2.5 acres (Location Map at Appendix 1) and adjoins the Council owned Grove Playing Fields and is located opposite the Old Grove Leisure Centre site.</p>
3.2	<p>Members will be aware that, as part of the Belfast Investment Fund (BIF), there are proposals for the development of the former Grove Leisure Centre site as a community and youth facility. The Strategic Policy &amp; Resources Committee, at their meeting on 24 November 2017, gave approval to move the project proposal to Stage 2 (Uncommitted) under BIF. An Economic Appraisal process is currently underway in respect of this project.</p>
3.3	<p>The former Grove Primary School site is held in the Councils Corporate Landbank as a surplus asset and a planning appraisal has been undertaken which indicates that it may be suitable for development of housing. Grove Housing Association, supported by NIHE, wish to acquire the site for the development of social housing. Their initial proposal is for 24 units, although there will be scope for some further development on the site at a later stage.</p>
3.4	<p>It should also be noted that the site adjoins lands owned by NIHE at Alexandra Park Avenue who have recently agreed the sale of their lands for private housing development. The development of these combined lands (all of which are currently lying vacant) for private and social housing, together with the BIF proposal for the community /youth facility, will significantly contribute to the regeneration of this area from a social and economic perspective.</p>
3.5	<p>The Council also owns an area of land, extending to 3.7 acres, at the upper end of Whiterock Road (adjacent 265 Whiterock Rd), to the rear of New Barnsley Crescent. A location plan is attached at Appendix 2. This land is located within the development limit for Belfast and zoned for housing within the Belfast Urban Area Plan (BUAP) 2001. The Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan (BMAP) 2014 also zones it for social housing. The land is not currently used for any operational purposes.</p>

3.6	<p>Radius Housing Association have expressed an interest in acquiring the land for housing development and the NIHE have indicated their support. The initial proposal by Radius Housing Association indicates a potential development of 39 units although further feasibility work will be required to inform the development potential of the land.</p>
3.7	<p>The lands are located in close proximity to the Peace IV Shared Spaces Local Action Plan area. Members will be aware that the Shared Space capital project element includes the creation of a 'necklace' of 11 shared spaces. Members may also be aware that other lands at Ballygomartin Road, also located in close proximity to this Local Action Plan have recently been purchased by a private developer, for the purposes of a housing development. The development of the Council lands by Radius Housing, as well as the development of the privately owned lands, would integrate well into the overall Peace IV proposals.</p>
3.8	<p>On a more general note, Members will be aware that the Council has previously disposed of various surplus lands to Housing Associations. This includes lands at Glen Road, Colin Glen, Clara Street, Templemore Avenue and Stewart St / Raphael St (adjacent the Markets area) and agreement for land at McClure St. A total of over 300 social housing units have been built on the lands already disposed of by the Council. There are also ongoing discussions in relation to various other Council lands for the development of social housing, which will be brought back to Committee in due course. A further report is to be brought back into Committee in the near future in relation to the Masterplan for the Gasworks Northern Fringe lands which includes proposals for social housing, as well as the development of further lands for social housing at Glen Road in West Belfast.</p>
3.9	<p>In addition, following a decision of the City Growth &amp; Regeneration Committee on 9 May 2018 a Strategic Site Assessment analysis is being undertaken to review the Council's city centre surface level car parks which will consider the potential for redevelopment, including locations best suited for development for housing, mixed use and car parking etc. This assessment is also considering opportunities for further land assembly including other adjoining lands in public sector ownership (including DfC and NIHE lands). This could result in more comprehensive development than simply considering the development of the Council's lands in isolation. This site assessment work will also consider planning, density, site constraints and opportunities for maximising development potential, whilst also taking into account city centre car parking requirements. Similar site appraisal reports were previously undertaken for the lands at Grove, Glen Road, Gasworks etc prior to recommendations on disposal.</p>

3.10	<p>The Belfast Agenda recognises that housing is key issue in creating sustainable communities and that affordable and safe housing is fundamental to the quality of life for our residents. The NIHE is identified as a key community planning partner and the Belfast Agenda highlights that social housing has an important role to play in creating the type of city we want Belfast to be in the future. One of the key priorities in the Belfast Agenda is to increase social and affordable housing in the city and a stretch goal for 2021 is to deliver 1800 social housing units and agree a city target for affordable housing. The development of the lands at Grove and Upper Whiterock Road will therefore contribute towards these goals. As referred to above, further proposals will also be brought forward in the near future in respect of other Council owned lands for the development of housing.</p> <p><u>Finance &amp; Resource Implications</u></p>
3.11	<p>The disposal of the land will result in a capital premium for the Council. Land and Property Services will value the land.</p> <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p>
3.12	<p>None associated with this report.</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Appendices – Document Attached</b>
	<p>Appendix 1 – Map showing former Grove Primary School site, North Queen Street</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Map showing land at Upper Whiterock Road.</p>