

Report for: **Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel**

Title: **Woodside Avenue and the Cranwood Housing Development Site**

Report
Authorised by: **David Joyce, Director of Housing, Regeneration and Planning**

Lead Officer: **Robbie Erbmann, Assistant Director Housing**

Ward(s) affected: **Muswell Hill**

Report for Key/ Non Key Decision: No

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1. This report summarises the process through which the Council sought to include Woodside Avenue in the Cranwood development site before accepting that the site would not include that land.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel is recommended to note this report.

3. Background information

- 3.1. In 2014, the site of the former Cranwood Care Home site was included as part of the portfolio of sites for development under the Haringey Development Vehicle (HDV). Capacity studies indicated that a development of between 62 and 98 new homes could be achieved on the site.
- 3.2. These proposals and the subsequent HDV designs for a scheme of 62 homes presupposed the demolition of the adjoining terrace of eight three-bedroom houses at 102 to 116 Woodside Avenue. The Council was the landlord of six of the homes; the freeholds of 104 and 106 Woodside Avenue had been sold under the Right to Buy. The demolition of these houses was based on two key factors:
- 3.1.1 Demolition would increase the footprint of the site by around 50% (from its red line on the plan below to include the areas marked in blue) and because of significant constraints within the smaller site increase its capacity by up to 100%.
- 3.1.2 Haringey's Local Plan Site Allocations DPD includes within its boundary both the former care home and 102 to 116 Woodside Avenue, establishing a preference for the whole site to come forward together for new residential development.



- 3.3. In July 2018, the Council decided to end the HDV and instead begin a programme of direct Council housing delivery. Officers resumed negotiations to acquire 104 and 106 Woodside Avenue.
- 3.4. At the same time, a private developer was negotiating with the owners of both properties in an attempt to acquire both and create a ransom strip along the Cranwood site. The Council's offer to purchase the Properties needed to be attractive enough to incentivise the freeholders to sell to the Council rather than to the developer.
- 3.5. In September 2018, Cabinet agreed to acquire 106 Woodside Avenue for £2.15 million and 104 Woodside Avenue on terms delegated to the Director of Housing, Regeneration and Planning and the Director of Finance. It was anticipated that the terms for 104 would be similar to those for 106.
- 3.6. In spite of exceeding its basic market value, the sum of £2.15m was felt to represent value for money for three reasons:
 - 3.6.1 The acquisition of 104 and 106 would unlock the whole site and enable the delivery of up to 98 new homes instead of around 40. Most of the additional homes would have been desperately-needed Council homes.
 - 3.6.2 Up to 20 of the new homes would have been for market sale – and these would have ensured that the Council not only recovered the money spent to acquire 104 and 106 Woodside Avenue, but also brought substantial additional funds into the HRA to support the delivery of even more Council homes.
- 3.7. Subsequent negotiations to purchase 104 Woodside Avenue stalled because the owner sold an option on the property to the private developer. Negotiations resumed, and by May a potential deal was reached for acquiring 104 Woodside Avenue.

- 3.8. In April 2020, Quality Review Panel recommended that the Council’s designs for the site should be revised down to 62 homes.
- 3.9. Throughout this period, the Council was in discussion with the four secure tenants at Woodside Avenue to explore options for rehousing them either in new homes on the existing site or elsewhere in the borough. The tenants remained adamant throughout the process that they wanted to remain in their existing homes.
- 3.10. In June 2019, the Council decided to respect the wishes of the secure tenants to remain in their existing homes and therefore to terminate negotiations towards the acquisition of 104 Woodside Avenue.
- 3.11. The Council are now progressing a smaller scheme of 42 homes on the site of the former care home: 32 for social rent and ten for market sale. In the new proposals, the eight existing homes at Woodside Avenue will be retained – four occupied by secure Council tenants, three used by the Council to provide homes for homeless families, and one occupied by the remaining freeholder.
- 3.12. Statutory 105 consultation with residents at Woodside Avenue is not necessary for the new scheme because of the exclusion of their homes from the development site. Nevertheless we will of course take a thorough approach to engagement. We are engaging with members around the new proposals before engaging residents and community stakeholders – including the residents of Woodside Avenue - in November. After concluding the engagement process, we will consider all submissions carefully, adapting our proposals where necessary. The planning process, of course, is another opportunity for community and political oversight; and, once planning permission has been achieved, the development proposals will be taken to Cabinet for approval. We are aiming for a start on site by November 2021.

4. Contribution to strategic outcomes

- 4.1. This report aims to provide information so that the Scrutiny Committee can hold the Council accountable for the steps taken in relation to Cranwood and Woodside Avenue, and support the Borough Plan’s commitment that Haringey will be a council that uses its resources in a sustainable way to prioritise the needs of the most vulnerable residents
- 4.2. This report sets out the steps the Council has taken to maximise housing delivery at the Cranwood site in order to support the Borough plan’s Housing Priority: “We will work together to deliver the new homes Haringey needs, especially new affordable homes”. In particular, the steps described in this report were taken to support the Council’s commitment “to deliver 1,000 new council homes at council rents by 2022”.

5. Statutory Comments

- 5.1. The assistant Director for Corporate Governance has been consulted on the content of this report. Any comments have been incorporated into the report. Comments from Finance and Strategic Property have also been incorporated into this report

6. **Use of appendices**

6.1. None

7. **Local Government (Access To Information) Act 1985**

Not applicable