

**NORTH SOMERSET COUNCIL
DECISION**

DECISION OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HR, ASSET MANAGEMENT, CAPITAL PROGRAMME & TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME WITH ADVICE FROM THE SECTION 151 OFFICER OF THE COUNCIL, CORPORATE SERVICES DIRECTORATE

**DECISION NO: CSD119****SUBJECT: WESTON LINKS SITE, HERLUIN WAY, WESTON SUPER MARE****BACKGROUND:**

The Council holds the freehold interest in the Weston Links site on Herluin Way subject to a 125 year lease granted to Avoncrest Developments Ltd from 13/1/1994. The lease was originally granted for the development of the site as a 9-hole golf course and golf driving range with some supporting commercial development which was never delivered.

Over a number of years the site has been allocated for various alternative potential uses leading up to its inclusion within Weston's Housing Zone. During this period the Council entered into a Joint Land Agreement (JLA) with Avoncrest to allow for a residential led mixed use scheme. Under the terms of the JLA Avoncrest are tasked with preparing a Masterplan for the site and undertaking any other work/tasks necessary as part of preparing the site to take to the market for development. The Agreement provides that after meeting any of Avoncrest's costs with bringing the site forward any surplus receipt from a future disposal would be shared 55/45 in favour of the Council.

The designation of the site as part of the Housing Zone brings an expectation that it should be possible to speed up and simplify the process of house building on brownfield land through locally led partnerships. The introduction of Housing Zone status represents an opportunity to break down some of the barriers that might hold back development. Housing Zones are an opportunity for local authorities to set out a vision for the transformation of large brownfield sites locally, and through the support government is offering, take the lead in realising that vision in partnership with public and private sector organisations.

One of the immediate benefits from the Housing Zone designation is that it opens the door to secure potential funding opportunities through the HCA. To date this has resulted in the loan facility of up to £1.7m to fund the purchase of the Police Station/Magistrate Court including ancillary costs as well as capacity funding allocations nearly totalling a £1m. It has also led to the recent discussions for the HCA to purchase Locking Road Car Park from the Council.

HCA's ongoing involvement with developments in Weston-Super-Mare have also resulted in their offer to acquire Avoncrest's interest in the Weston Links site. Their offer to purchase Avoncrest's interest should therefore be seen in the context of the Council's

ambition to invest and grow the town in a sustained fashion and the government's commitment to support the ambition through granting Housing Zone status and directing enabling investment.

The agreed heads of terms for the HCA to acquire Avoncrest's interest in the site include the following:

1. The Council to consent to Avoncrest transferring its interest in the 1994 Lease and 2014 Joint Land Agreement (JLA) to HCA
2. The Council to consent to the immediate surrender of the 1994 Lease leaving the HCA holding the 2014 JLA with a liability to prepare a Masterplan and remediation strategy in order that the site might be taken to the market. The HCA's investment to get the site to market is initially to be capped at £550,000 but the Council will have no liability to contribute towards any of the site preparation costs
3. The Council to agree to work with the HCA to help the HCA to maximise the viability of the development of the site, to include discussions regarding extending the Masterplan to include other land held by the Council, subject to future member approval
4. The arrangements for sharing any surplus returns from the site are to remain as in the existing JLA with the Council receiving 55% and HCA receiving 45%. If future agreement is reached to extend the Masterplan site by including additional Council land the equity share proportions will be renegotiated to reflect the value of the respective interests.

DECISION:

1. That the Council consents to the transfer of Avoncrest's current interest in the Weston Links site on the terms reported above

Reasons:

To facilitate HCA's acquisition of Avoncrest's interest in the site

Other Alternatives Considered:

None

Financial Implications:

None

Implications for Future Years:

None

Signed:

Councillor Pasley
EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR HR, ASSET MANAGEMENT, CAPITAL
PROGRAMME & TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Dated:

Signed:

Section 151 Officer, North Somerset Council

Dated: