

## **Future Use of The Wells Site: Progress Update**

<b>Head of Service/Contact:</b>	Mark Shephard, Head of Property and Regeneration
<b>Urgent Decision?(yes/no)</b>	No
<b>If yes, reason urgent decision required:</b>	N/A
<b>Annexes/Appendices (attached):</b>	None
<b>Other available papers (not attached):</b>	S&R Committee Reports – Future Use of The Wells Site: 1 Feb and 26 Jul 2018

### **Report summary**

To provide an update on progress and present the proposed site configuration options for approval.

### **Recommendation (s)**

That Committee approves the:

- (1) Proposed site configuration Option C as described in this report.**
- (2) Commencement of consultation with residents on the proposed site configuration Option C.**
- (3) The Head of Property and Regeneration, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, Chairman and Vice Chairman of Strategy & Resources Committee, be authorised to finalise the Development Brief based on site configuration Option C and progress to submission of a planning application.**

## **1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy**

- 1.1 This proposal supports the Council's four year Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy specifically focusing on the Key Priority of Managing our Resources through maximising returns from properties and other investments, and identifying new sources of revenue and maximising our existing income.

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### 2 Background

- 2.1 At its July 2018 meeting, Committee approved an additional budget to cover all the costs in connection with the submission of a planning application for the Wells site.
- 2.2 It further considered the anticipated timeline and process for the submission of a planning application:-
  - September - proposed development brief site options to S&R Committee for approval.
  - October – consultation with residents (subject to S&R approval).
  - November – submission of a planning application.
- 2.3 The development brief will outline a scheme which unlocks the redevelopment potential of the site and meets the key criteria which were set.
- 2.4 The key criteria have been considered in the two earlier S&R Reports and include:-
  - Mixed use scheme comprising residential and a community facility of up to 1,500 sq ft (subject to self-management by the community)
  - Retention of Wicker Way public right of way
  - Provision of sufficient parking
  - Retention of a public children's playground
  - Provision of affordable housing
- 2.5 A development brief is undeliverable unless it is financially viable.
- 2.6 Any final scheme would need planning permission.

### 3 Site Surveys

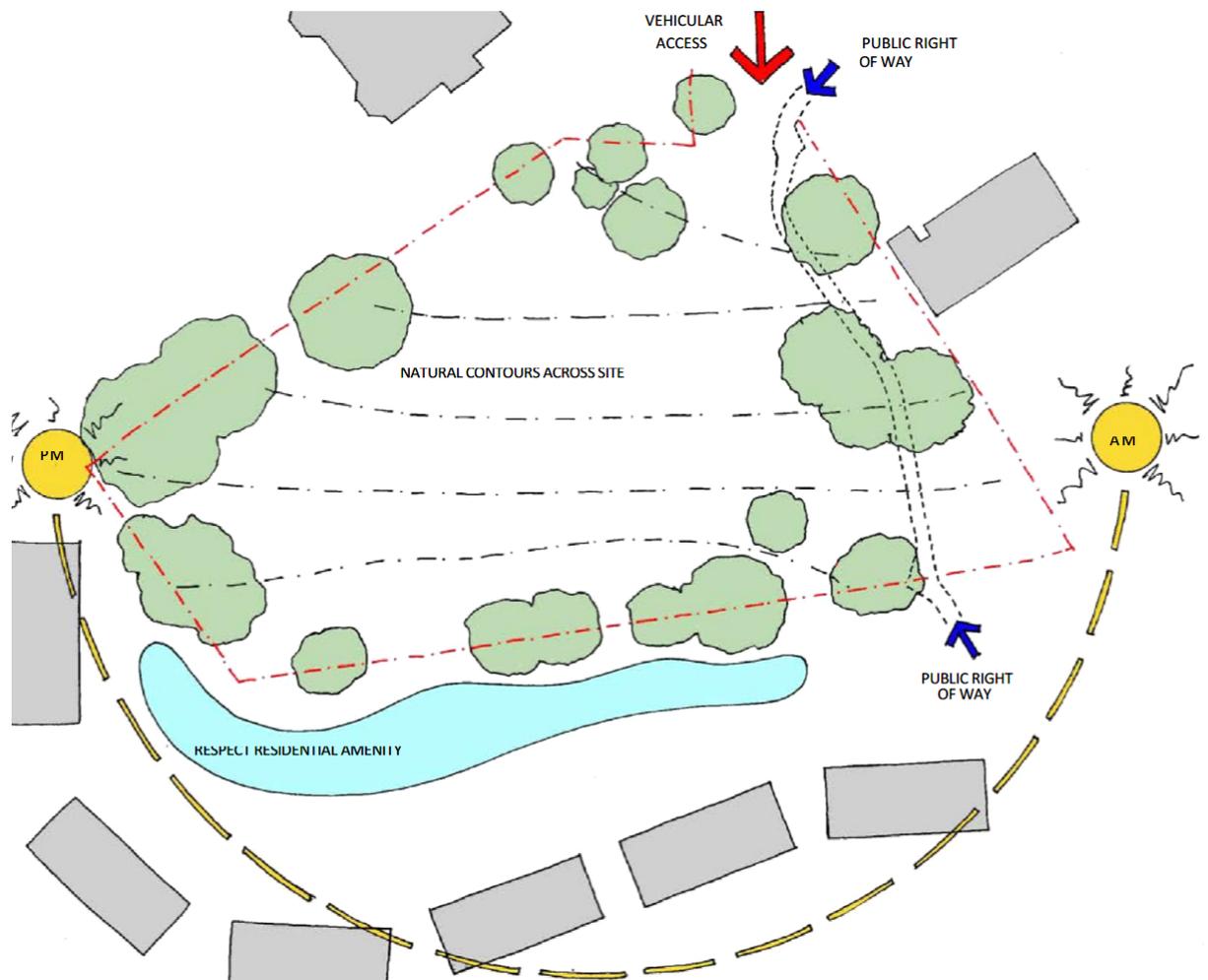
- 3.1 To assess the redevelopment potential of the site, a series of comprehensive surveys were undertaken to establish the site constraints and opportunities.
- 3.2 Such surveys include topographical, ecological, arboricultural, hydrogeological, contamination, drainage, transport and others. It is the primary function of the external professional team (consisting of development consultant, architect, planning consultant and quantity surveyor / cost consultant), to interpret the results and thereby quantify the site's redevelopment constraints and opportunities.

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3.3 The site is just under an acre (approximately 0.32 hectares) and its natural contours result in an overall fall of 5m (from the upper level by the entrance to the north off Spa Drive to the lower level by the south west corner). The existing building occupies the centre of the site with parking and a gated children's play area. The public footpath (Wicker's Way) runs north to south on the eastern boundary. Adjacent to the site to the north is the Karibu Residential Children's Home run by Surrey County Council. The site enjoys a good southerly aspect and faces onto the rear of the residential properties along Wells Way.

3.4 The site opportunities and constraints are shown below:-



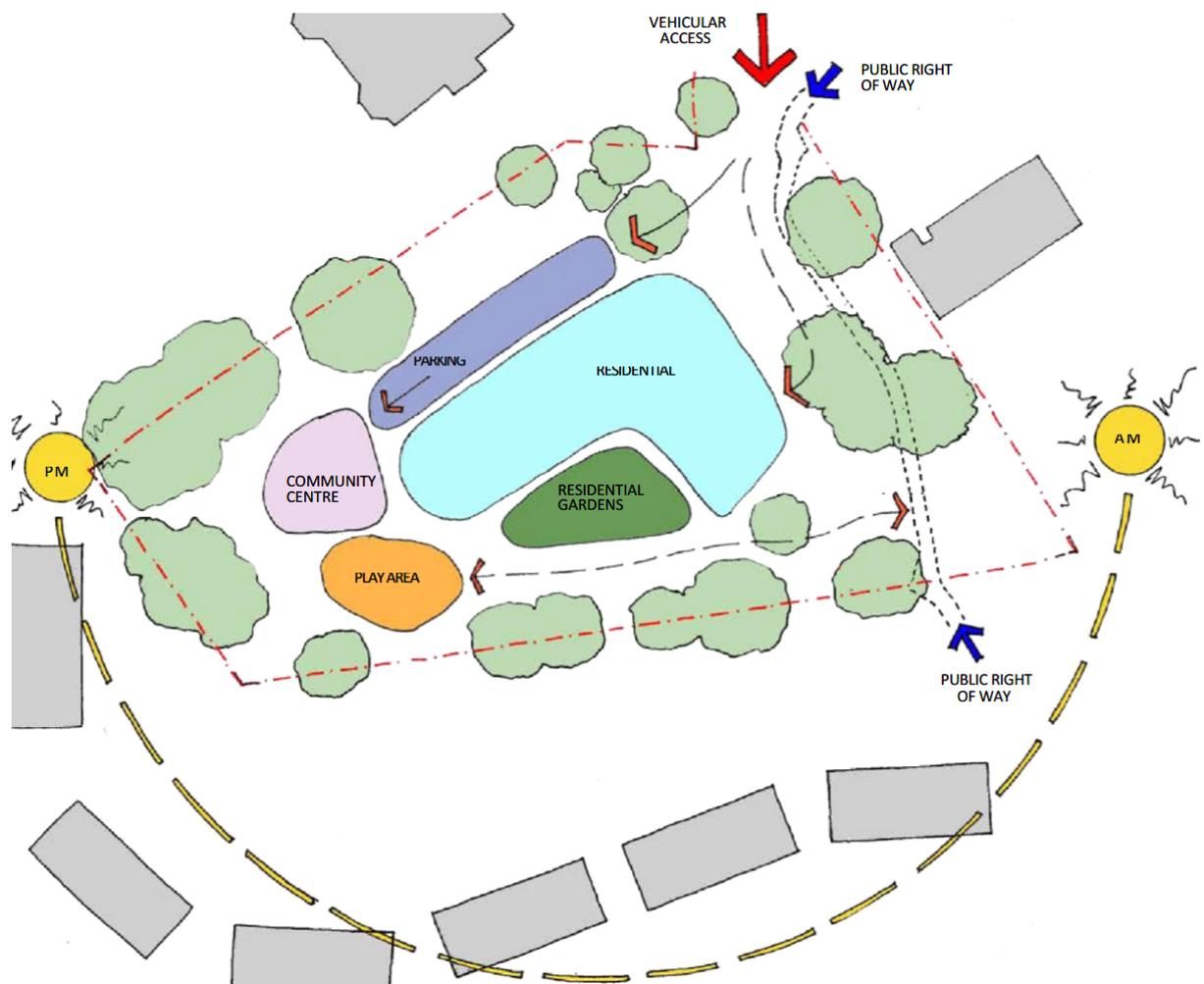
3.5 There are further less prominent constraints (for example, proximity to the historic Well), and their mutual combined effect is to not only concentrate redevelopment at the centre of the site, but to limit the density and massing options for the site.

#### 4 Site Options

- 4.1 The site naturally lends itself to three distinct layout options. Each option maintains vehicular access from Spa Drive and retains Wicker's Way, the public footpath connecting Spa Way with Wells Way to the south. All options also locate the buildings close to the centre of the site.

##### Option A

- 4.2 The proposed residential building would face south containing a private resident's garden with parking towards the north. The community facility would be located to the west with the adjacent play area. Option A is shown below:-



- 4.3 Whilst all uses are accommodated on the site, the community facility and play area are remote from both the vehicular and pedestrian access points and the public footpath. This would lead to considerably reduced accessibility for users and renders Option A unattractive.

### Option B

- 4.4 The layout builds on the public accessibility issues of Option A but importantly, maintains the attractiveness of the residential building facing south. It continues to form a natural residents garden with car parking wrapping around to the north and west.
- 4.5 The community facility is placed within the main residential building opposite the site's entrance and the play area is located next to Wicker's Way at the south eastern corner of the site.



- 4.6 Placing the community facility within the main residential building ensures it is more accessible but renders it remote from the play area. Furthermore, both public areas would be on different levels (due to the slope's 5m drop), and therefore Option B is deemed unattractive.

### Option C

- 4.7 The final option considers the community facility's location closer to the play area at a similar level and both close to Wicker's Way. This layout ensures accessibility to all the public areas is optimised and conveniently located.



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- 5.2 The natural falls of the site are exploited by forming a lower ground floor level facing the south. The proposed building would be three storeys (providing 23 residential units offering a mixture of one, two and three bedrooms), with a lower level forming the equivalent of a four storey building. This is considered optimum for the site location and adjacent buildings and part of the building would be under a shallow pitched roof to reflect the existing residential character of the locality.



- 5.3 The above site plan superimposes site configuration Option C to show the proposed development footprint. The light shading to the north shows the site entrance and parking with Wicker's Way to the east. The linear building is shown by the middle darker shading with the green shading to the south denoting the area reserved for the community facility and gardens.
- 5.4 The development brief will seek to maximise the overall massing and site layout to achieve the optimum level of accommodation whilst respecting the levels, landscape and existing scale and amenity of the location.

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### 6 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 6.1 On 26 July 2018, the Strategy and Resources Committee approved an amended £160k budget for the development brief to be produced and a planning application prepared.
- 6.2 The proposed consultation with residents and potential subsequent planning application can be undertaken within the existing budget.
- 6.3 **Chief Finance Officer's comments:** *Achieving planning permission would be a significant milestone for the site redevelopment. It would be expected to add value to the site, as detailed in the Confidential Annexe 1 of the Wells report presented to S&R on 26 July 2018.*

### 7 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising from the contents of this report. The Council will be treated as an ordinary developer in terms of any planning application and will be required to comply with any requirements the Local Planning Authority deems necessary.
- 7.2 **Monitoring Officer's comments:** *There are no comments arising from the contents of this report.*

### 8 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 8.1 None for the purposes of this report.

### 9 Partnerships

- 9.1 None for the purposes of this report.

### 10 Risk Assessment

- 10.1 The Site's development constraints have been considered and explained in this report. The challenges have been mitigated by seeking professional advice / instructing surveys where necessary and commissioning pre-application planning advice from the local planning authority.

### 11 Conclusion and Recommendations

- 11.1 If approved by Committee, the proposals set out in this report will enable the professional team to commence consultation with residents and progress the redevelopment of the Wells site.

**Ward(s) affected:** (All Wards);