

CABINET – 9TH FEBRUARY 2023

Report of the Scrutiny Commission

REVIEW OF SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION – ST MICHAEL’S COURT, THURMASTON

Purpose of Report

To consider the comments and recommendations of the Scrutiny Commission in relation to the Review of Sheltered Accommodation – St Michael’s Court, Thurmaston.

Recommendation of the Scrutiny Commission

That the Cabinet be informed that the Commission did not support the recommendations set out in the report of the Director of Housing and Wellbeing.

Reason

The Commission, having carefully considered and asked questions on the report did not feel that the Cabinet should approve the recommendations set out.

Meeting Discussion

- i. Members expressed concerns over the proposals and believed that the loss of the sheltered accommodation at St. Michael’s Court would be detrimental to the community. Members stated that they felt there was a need for bungalows in the area, but that there was also a need for sheltered accommodation.
- ii. It was anticipated that the approved Thorpebury Park development would include an Extra-Care Scheme, providing support to a significant number of older and disabled residents. It was raised that the proposed development was distanced from the central Thurmaston area and would not include a bus route, making it difficult for older and disabled residents to access services and facilities in Thurmaston and the wider area. It was acknowledged that shops and services would be included within the Thorpebury Park development, and that this would lead to a new community being formed. It was likely that the older and disabled residents living in the Thorpebury Park development would no longer be part of the Thurmaston community.
- iii. There were a number of void spaces within St. Michael’s Court. It was raised that eight of the void spaces were vacated following discussions about the redevelopment of the area.
- iv. St. Michael’s Court was considered to be unattractive due to the lack of bathing facilities in dwellings as bathrooms were shared.
- v. There were 164 expressions of interest for properties in Thurmaston, 19 of which were from residents aged 60+. It was raised that the proposed

development would take a number of years to complete and that there were residents waiting for available properties now.

- vi. There were approximately 60 sheltered accommodation properties ready to let across the Borough. The Director of Housing and Wellbeing agreed to circulate information on these properties, specifically the number of bedsits and self-contained properties.
- vii. It was highlighted that nationally there was a significant shortage of sheltered accommodation properties and that the demand was not being met. However, Charnwood did meet the need for the demand of sheltered accommodation.
- viii. The initial intention was for replacement multi-story sheltered accommodation to be developed on the site of St. Michael's Court. However, this was compromised due to the presence of the listed church next door.
- ix. Members felt that the proposed development would not allow for sufficient parking in the area. It was highlighted that each property would include a double bedroom, but only one parking space. There was no on-street parking available and it was suggested that older or disabled residents may require regular visits from carers. It was confirmed that discussions with the Architects were ongoing and that parking was a consideration.
- x. It was confirmed that pre-application advice had been received from the Planning Department at the Council prior to the development of the proposals. There had been ongoing discussions with the Planning Department and Architects appointed to plan the works. Any proposals would be subject to planning permission.
- xi. There had been some remodelling of some sheltered schemes over time, although the technical complexities of refurbishing the site in full were not viable.
- xii. There would be no return on investment for between 46-52 years, although it was highlighted that the purpose of the development was to meet a social need, in addition to being a financial investment.
- xiii. The land at St. Michael's Court could achieve approximately £400k on the open market.
- xiv. Some members felt that alternative options from those set out in the report should be identified and considered. It was also suggested that the other options with the report be further considered.
- xv. The Lead Member thanked the Scrutiny Commission for their scrutiny on the subject and stated that there were a number of valuable comments and issues for consideration raised.

Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

Scrutiny Commission Procedure Rule 11.12 sets out the procedure by which a report of a Scrutiny Committee should be considered by Cabinet.

Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

The information in this in the Cabinet report is not affected by the recommendation of the Scrutiny Commission.

Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

Financial Implications

There are no further financial implications associated with the recommendation of the Scrutiny Commission.

Risk Management

There are no specific risks associated with the recommendations of the Scrutiny Commission.

Key Decision:	Yes
Background Paper:	Scrutiny Commission Minute 86 2022/23, 6th February 2023.
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