

TITLE	Winnersh Farm Access
FOR CONSIDERATION BY	The Executive on Thursday 31 st March 2021
WARD	Winnersh;
LEAD OFFICER	Deputy Chief Executive - Graham Ebers
LEAD MEMBER	Executive Member for Business and Economic Development - Stuart Munro

PURPOSE OF REPORT (INC STRATEGIC OUTCOMES)

The report is to seek Executive approval to the grant of an option agreement to Taylor Wimpey Homes Ltd.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Executive is recommended to approve the grant of an option agreement to Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd to enable a secondary access to land at Mayfield for the purpose of residential development.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report seeks authority to enter into an option agreement with Taylor Wimpey Ltd which will enable the creation of a vehicular and pedestrian access across Council land at Winnersh Farm, for to the purpose of serving residential development, subject to planning permission.

The residential development of the Taylor Wimpey optioned land has been promoted as part of the Local Plan Update process. The Taylor Wimpey optioned land and the Council's land have been identified as a proposed residential allocation in consultation documents.

BACKGROUND

Taylor Wimpey Ltd hold an option to acquire circa 10.9Ha of land at Winnersh Farm (as shown coloured green on the plan attached) for the purposes of residential development, and have promoted it into the Local Plan Update (ref 5WI006 – land at Maidensfield).

The Council own the freehold interest in circa 7 Ha of land immediately to the South of the Taylor Wimpey Ltd optioned land. The Council's land is split into 2 parcels as outlined below:

- Planning consent (ref: 211772) has been granted for the delivery of a 150 pupil SEN School on 2.12Ha of the Council's land to the west, adjacent to Wheatfield Primary School (as shown coloured Blue on the attached plan), and,
- An outline planning application (ref 212404) for residential development on the residue of the Council's land (as shown coloured red on the attached plan) is currently under consideration by the local planning authority.

Taylor Wimpey Ltd approached Commercial Property seeking to agree access across Council land to serve the potential residential development of their optioned land (subject to planning).

Terms have subsequently been agreed (subject to all necessary Council approvals) for the grant of an option agreement between the Council and Taylor Wimpey Homes Ltd to enable the creation of a vehicular and pedestrian access across the Council's land.

The detailed terms of the agreement are commercially sensitive and are therefore set out in part 2 of this report.

BUSINESS CASE

Winnersh Farms, comprising both the Council's and Taylor Wimpey's sites, was identified as a proposed residential allocation (250 units) in the Draft Local Plan (2020). The Draft Local Plan presented a full draft plan document setting out proposals for where development should go and how it should be managed across the borough. Public consultation ran from 3 February to 3 April 2020.

Comments received as part of the consultation related to matters such as flood risk, traffic and access, noise and air pollution, contamination and that the site falls outside of the existing settlement boundaries. Details of the consultation responses can be viewed in the Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 Report on Initial Consultation Outcomes (January 2021).

In November 2021, the Council consulted on a Revised Growth Strategy for the local plan. This closed on 24 January 2022. The proposed residential allocation for the Winnersh Farms site was continued in the Revised Growth Strategy; with an increased capacity of 287 units.

The consultation response to the Revised Growth Strategy will need to be considered in due course. However, at this time the site is emerging as part of Council's strategy to meet the borough's housing need as defined by national planning policy and guidance.

A secondary access across Council land to the Taylor Wimpey site is considered by the highway authority and the local planning authority to be necessary for good placemaking and to make for a more sustainable form of development.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

The Council faces severe funding pressures, particularly in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. It is therefore imperative that Council resources are focused on the vulnerable and on its highest priorities.

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	£0	N/A	
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	£0	N/A	
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	£0	N/A	

Other Financial Information

None

Stakeholder Considerations and Consultation

Consultation has been carried out in respect of the development of the Council's and Taylor Wimpey's land as part of the Draft Local Plan and Revised Growth Strategy consultations as outlined above.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Confirmed.

Climate Emergency – This Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to playing as full a role as possible – leading by example as well as by exhortation – in achieving a carbon neutral Wokingham Borough by 2030

All development will need to meet the Council's relevant planning policies as at the date of the grant of any planning permission.

Reasons for considering the report in Part 2

The detailed terms of the agreement are commercially sensitive.

List of Background Papers

None

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