

Housing & Community Cohesion Policy Advisory Committee  
Maidstone Borough Council  
Maidstone House  
King Street  
Maidstone  
Kent  
ME15 6JQ

10 July 2024

Dear Committee,

### **Cambridge Crescent, Shepway – Support for Compulsory Purchase Order**

I am writing in support of your Committee discussion on the Compulsory Purchase Order request relating to the Shepway regeneration project.

#### **Background context**

There are nine leaseholders within the development boundary. To date we have followed a process for the decant of leaseholders, in line with relevant legislation, appropriate compensation packages and current best practice.

Whilst progressing a Compulsory Purchase was considered early on, given the largely positive and supportive attitude of residents towards the scheme, we sought to progress lease buy-backs through mutual agreement.

We established and recruited a Regeneration Coordinator role specifically to manage the decant process and provide support to guide customers and leaseholders through the moving process. Following the granting of planning permission for the regeneration scheme in late 2022, we started the decant process for Phase 1.

There was one leaseholder within the Phase 1 boundary. We sought to engage with them early as we were aware of the risks associated with a potentially lengthy

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negotiating process. However, despite continual engagement over a long period the acquisition took a significant amount of time and financial costs that was far beyond what was considered viable for the project. We need to avoid this happening in phases 2 and 3 to ensure the delivery of the project proceeds.

### **Looking ahead to phases 2 and 3**

Looking ahead to Phases 2 & 3, we commenced the engagement process for these eight leaseholders in Summer 2023. We have successfully completed the buy-back of two properties.

We have had positive engagement with several of the remaining leaseholders. However, we have faced some resistance and lack of engagement from a small number of leaseholders. We have been met with a reluctance to engage and highly inflated requests for compensation. This is now presenting a risk to the project timeline.

We have 6 leasehold properties to acquire (with 5 leaseholders as one leaseholder owns two properties). We would be happy to provide more details on the status of the discussions to the Policy Advisory Committee on 23<sup>rd</sup> July.

To mitigate risks and maintain project timelines, Golding has been discussing with Maidstone Borough Council Officers the possibility of progressing a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) for the remaining 6 leasehold properties in Phases 2 and 3. We are aware of the legal process and timelines involved. However, given the status of current negotiations, we cannot guarantee completion of this strategic regeneration project without the 'backstop' of a CPO running concurrently to ongoing negotiations.

Golding Homes will continue to engage with leaseholders and seek mutual agreement for the lease buy-backs. We do not envisage the need for a CPO to progress to a Public Inquiry and believe the commencement of will be sufficient to engage the remaining leaseholders, and we will be able to fully decant Phases 2 & 3 in line within the current project programme.

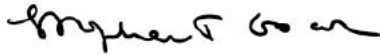
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As our strategic delivery partner on the Cambridge Crescent scheme, we are keen to work with Maidstone Borough Council on a way forward to ensure delivery of this much need regeneration project.

With Phase 1 underway, I would like to extend an open invite to Council members to visit the current site and see first-hand some of the great work that is being done to delivery this scheme for the community.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephanie Goad".

**Stephanie Goad**  
**Chief Executive Officer**  
E: [stephanie.goad@goldinghomes.org.uk](mailto:stephanie.goad@goldinghomes.org.uk)

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