

SUBJECT:	Bells Hill, Stoke Poges
REPORT OF:	Officer Management Team - Director of Services Prepared by - Head of Environment

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to discuss the possible transfer of management of land at Bells Hill, to the Parish Council.

2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

- 2.1 This matter is related to the Council's medium-term aims of a thriving and sustainable district, which protects the Green Belt and character of the area and enhances the quality of the built environment.

3. Background

- 3.1. The new development at Bells Hill contains an area of amenity space - this is land owned and retained by the Council and did not form part of the Lease to Persimmon. This has been landscaped and maintained by the developer, Persimmon, during the construction of the development. The site is shown on the plan at Appendix A, edged in red.
- 3.2. A commuted sum of £70,000 to maintain the amenity space within the development has been paid by the developer to South Bucks District Council.
- 3.3. Now that the development has been completed, the District Council will resume the maintenance of the amenity space.

4.0 Discussion

- 4.1 The Parish Council has expressed an interest in taking over the maintenance of the amenity space. It is proposed that once the District Council's responsibility for the maintenance commences (officers are aiming to achieve this by the end of the year), the responsibility for the maintenance of the amenity space is transferred to the Parish Council under a lease agreement.
- 4.2 The advantage of this approach is that the amenity space can be managed locally.
- 4.3 The commuted sum payment that Persimmon Homes made to the District Council would be transferred to the Parish Council to enable them to invest the sum to fund the maintenance works.
- 4.4 The details of the maintenance required on the site and the exact nature of what can be undertaken on the site will be agreed between officers and the Parish Council.

4.5 The Parish Council would be required to liaise with the adjacent private flats managing agent, affordable housing provider and the Medical Centre as required.

4.6 The Lease is intended to be co-terminus with the Lease granted to Persimmons in 2006, and at a peppercorn rent to include a break-clause option.

5. Resources, Risk and Other Implications

5.1 It is proposed that the commuted capital sum of £70,000 that Persimmon Homes made to the District Council would be transferred to the Parish Council to enable them to carry out the works.

5.2 In the current financial situation the Council receives about 1.5% on the invested money so this equates to circa £1,050 per annum. This income would be lost but this would be cost neutral as this would be balanced by the cost savings in not having to maintain this site.

5.3 This transfer would lessen the burden on the District Council's limited landscape maintenance budget.

6. Summary and Recommendation

6.1 The PAG is asked to indicate whether the Portfolio Holder should recommend to Cabinet that

- i.) The responsibility for the maintenance of the amenity space should be undertaken by the Parish Council.
- ii.) The commuted sum of £70,000 be passed to the Parish Council.
- iii.) The exact legal mechanism to achieve this is delegated to the Head of Environment in consultation with the Head of Legal services and the Resources Portfolio Holder.

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Background papers	Previous reports on this matter.