1. PURPOSE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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<th>Purpose of Report:</th>
<th>To seek approval for the Development Brief to guide the redevelopment of St Leonards Hospital, St Leonards</th>
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<td>Recommendations:</td>
<td>It is RECOMMENDED that: Members accept the Development Brief for the St Leonards Hospital site, which will guide the future submission of a planning application for the residential redevelopment of this site.</td>
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<td>Lead Members:</td>
<td>Cllr S Gibson – Lead Member for Housing Cllr M Dyer – Lead Member for Environment</td>
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<td>Wards:</td>
<td>St Leonards and St Ives East</td>
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<tr>
<td>Contact Officer:</td>
<td>Lynda King – Development Control Team Leader</td>
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2. BACKGROUND

2.1. Members will be aware that the St Leonards Hospital site, which lies to the south of the A31 south of St Leonards, has largely been redundant for many years and that there have been a number of planning applications granted in recent years for its redevelopment.

2.2. The site is currently occupied by three NHS uses – the Community Hospital, Ambulance Training facility, and equipment and stores building. These three uses will remain on the site. The remainder of the site is largely empty, with the majority of the old war time hospital buildings that previously stood on the site having been demolished.

2.3. The site lies within the Green Belt, and is subject to Policy VTSW7 of the Christchurch and East Dorset Local Plan Part 1 – Core Strategy (2014). This Policy identifies that the site is identified as a Previously Developed Site in the Green Belt, in accordance with the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, and sets out prerequisites for its future development which include the approval of a development brief.

2.4. Areas of the site are also of nature conservation importance, and the level of development proposed will require a SANG.

3. Principle of development on the site

3.1. As noted above, this site lies in the Green Belt and therefore any development proposals have to strictly adhere to both national and local policy that relates to the control of development in this sensitive area.

3.2. Paragraph 89 of the NPPF allows for ‘limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed sites (brownfield land), whether redundant or in continuing use (excluding temporary buildings), which would not have a greater impact on the openness of the Green belt and the purpose
of including land within it than the existing development.’ More detailed criteria to guide development on the site are set out in Policy VTSW7 of the recently adopted Core Strategy.

3.3. Consent was previously granted on the site for the development of an age restricted care village and associated facilities (03/01/0666/OUT and 03/07/0925/REM). Both consents have now lapsed and there are no extant consents on the site. These applications were considered under the existing national Green Belt policy set out in PPG2, which was more restrictive than current national policy.

3.4. Your officers have been in detailed negotiations with the agents acting on behalf of the current prospective developers, a large housing association, for a number of months to develop a framework for the future planning application. Negotiations have also included Natural England, Dorset Wildlife Trust and other interested parties to ensure that the nature conservation importance of the site is protected and a SANG can be delivered adjacent to the site on Forestry Commission land.

3.5. The agents acting for the prospective developer held a public exhibition in the nearby St Leonards Hotel on 29th August 2013 to discuss an early iteration of the plans with local residents, which was generally favourably received, with some concerns about the impact of the access to the site off Boundary Lane rather than the A31.

3.6. A further public exhibition was held on 16th July to discuss the plans contained within this Brief.

3.7. The Brief, which is attached as an appendix to this Report, sets out in detail the planning history of the site, the various planning constraints that apply to the land, and sets out a framework for the residential development of the site for a mix of open market and affordable housing which meets the provisions of the relevant policies in the Core Strategy relating to affordable housing, mix of house types, open space provision and nature conservation protection. The indicative plan also provides for an 80 bed care home. The document confirms that the existing cricket pitch on the site will be retained, and a new pavilion/community building will be included within any future development. It also outlines the extent of the development area to comply with Green Belt policy and confirms that all residential development will not exceed two storeys in height.

3.8. Your Officers are of the opinion that the Brief now represents a suitable way forward to guide the development of this important Green Belt site, which is also environmentally sensitive, in a manner which will comply with both national and local planning policy.

4. IMPLICATIONS

Corporate Plan & Council Objectives

4.1. ENVIRONMENT – ENV2 Manage the conflicts between developing the built environment and protecting the natural environment. ENV3 Ensure that the principles of sustainability are embedded in the conduct of the Council’s business.
4.2. **HOUSING – H1** Enable provision of housing appropriate to meet all needs. H2 Promote sustainable housing development. H3 Facilitate innovative approaches to housing need.

**Legal**

4.3. None

**Environmental**

4.4. The site is in an environmentally sensitive location. Key issues being the Green Belt and wildlife on the site as well as provision of affordable housing, open space, a SANG, and impact upon the local road network. These have been investigated, noted and considered in the Development Brief.

**Financial and Risk**

4.5. None

**Equalities**

4.6. The public consultations were held at venues which are accessible. The Development Brief does not adversely affect any of the protected characteristics in any particular way. Equalities especially accessibility, will be an issue for any development that will need to addressed through the planning application and building regulation processes.

5. **CONCLUSION**

5.1. The St Leonards Hospital site is sensitive and the Core Strategy has identified it as a site for potential redevelopment but only provides a policy outline (Policy VTSW7).

5.2. There is a need to develop Policy VTSW7, to provide greater detail which will influence any potential development of the site. For credibility as part of the planning process, this will need to be in the form of an adopted Development Brief.

5.3. The Development Brief for St Leonards Hospital, which is proposed for adoption is provided at Appendix 1.

**Background Papers:**

**Appendix 1 : Redevelopment of the former St Leonards Hospital Development Brief.**