

Report of: Head of Property and Contracts

Report to: Chief Officer Property and Contracts

Subject: Request to agree to lease land off Margetson Road to Drighlington Parish Council for use as allotments

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Morley	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. A local allotment group in Drighlington have been seeking an appropriate site in the area to set an allotment. A site has been identified off Margetson Road and Drighlington Parish Council are willing to take over the management of the site under their obligation as the allotment authority.
2. The area in question (highlighted on the attached plan) is vested with Environment and Housing and managed by Housing Leeds. The land has no operational use for the Department and has no development potential. Furthermore the only way for machinery to access the site is through the adjoining farmer's fields and therefore the site has become a maintenance issue for Housing Leeds.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Chief Officer of Property and Contracts agree to grant a lease to Drighlington Parish Council in order to manage the land off Margetson Road (highlighted on the attached plan) as an allotment site. The terms of the lease are to be approved by the Director of City Development.

Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to grant a license to Drighlington Parish Council for the use of the land off Margetson Road as an allotment site.

2 Background information

- 2.2 Back in 2011 local residents in Drighlington formed an allotment group called 'Dig for Drig'. The group began searching for a suitable allotment site and were initially interested in a site off Wakefield Road, however this site has development potential and the proposal to use it for allotments was therefore rejected.
- 2.3 The group then expressed interest in the land off Margetson Road as a potential allotment site (highlighted on the attached plan). Drighlington Parish Council would be willing to manage the site as part of their obligation as the allotment authority under a lease agreement, the terms of which would be agreed by the Director of City Development.
- 2.4 Internal consultation regarding the proposal took place on 22/11/2011 where no objections were raised regarding the proposed use of the site as allotments. It was however noted that there was potential asbestos contamination on the site due to previous garage roofs not being demolished properly. Highways therefore advised a full survey of the site should take place before any proposals are agreed.

3 Main issues

- 3.5 The site off Margetson Road (highlighted on the attached plan) has been identified through internal consultation as suitable for allotments. The site is vested with Environment and Housing and managed by Housing Leeds.
- 3.6 A group of local residents are interested in using the site for allotments and the Asset Management division within Housing Leeds have received confirmation that Drighlington Parish Council are willing to take on the management of the site as allotments under their allotment obligations as Parish Council.
- 3.7 A lease agreement would be drawn up between Leeds City Council and Drighlington Parish Council, the terms of which would be agreed by the Director of City Development.

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 4.1.1 Local Ward Members, Area Management and residents who's properties surround the site have been consulted on the proposal and only supportive comments have been received by ward members who fully support the proposal.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 4.2.2 An equality, diversity cohesion and integration screening exercise has been carried out. This has affirmed that equality, diversity, cohesion and integration

considerations have been effectively considered in relation to this proposal and that a full impact assessment was not required.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.3 The proposal supports the following City and Council Priorities:

- Increase a sense of belonging that builds cohesive and harmonious communities; by supporting local residents groups to work together for the benefit of the community.
- Improving quality of life for residents; growing and consuming vegetables is known to be beneficial to health and also promotes new skills and learning for those residents who have not previously been involved in growing their own food.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.4 The Department has no operational use for the land and the area is difficult to maintain due to narrow pedestrian access

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.5 There are no adverse legal implications. The terms of the lease will be negotiated and approved by the Director of City Development in line with the Delegated Functions of the Council. The report is not eligible for call in.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.6 The risks to the proposal are that a survey of the site may uncover asbestos contamination as highlighted through internal consultation. Housing Leeds are in the process of investigating the levels in the soil and will take any necessary action to remedy the situation. The advice received through internal consultation was to ensure a full survey of the site is undertaken before any works commence and to build raised beds and import spoil therefore managing any potential risks.

5 Conclusions

5.7 It is concluded that the Department has no operational use for the site in question. It is therefore recommended the site be managed by Drighlington Parish Council under a formal lease agreement for the purpose of allotments.

Recommendations

5.8 It is recommended that the Chief Officer of Property and Contracts agree to grant a lease to Drighlington Parish Council in order to manage the land off Margetson Road (highlighted on the attached plan) as an allotment site. The terms of the lease are to be approved by the Director of City Development.

- 5.1 The Background documents¹
- 5.2 Plan identifying the site

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.