

Report of Chief Officer Property and Contracts

Report to Director of Resources and Housing

Date: Thursday 20th July 2017

Subject: Request to suspend lettings, remove from charge and demolish 5 garages at Levens Bank, Halton Moor Leeds, LS15 0AU (G17 - 21)

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|--|---|--|
| Are specific electoral wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of ward(s): Temple Newsam | <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. Levens Bank garage site consists of 10 permanent Council owned garages arranged in 2 blocks of 5 garages (G17 to G21 and G22 to G26).
2. Of the 10 garages only 4 are occupied and 6 garages are void. Block G17 to G21 is completely void with only one void in the block G22 to G26.
3. The block G22 to G26 are in a reasonable condition and will be retained. Block G17 to G21 have been subject to constant vandalism and they are currently the focus for ongoing anti-social behaviour. Ward Members are supportive of having the 5 garages G17 to G21 demolished. Repair or refurbishment of the garages would not be effective use of Council resources given the lack of demand for rental.
4. A delegated decision is required to suspend letting of the garages G17 to G21, remove from charge and demolish the structures leaving the area for general car parking.

Recommendations

1. The Director of Resources and Housing is requested to approve the suspension of lettings, removal from charge and full demolition of garages including removal of abandoned contents and general debris of the 5 garages, G17 to G21 Levens Bank, Halton Moor, LS15 0AU.

Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Director of Resources and Housing to suspend lettings, remove from charge and demolish garages including abandoned contents for one block (5 garages – G17 to G21) at Levens Bank. (Location shown in Appendix 1).

2 Background information

- 2.1 The site comprises of 10 brick built garages within a cul-de-sac setting on Levens Bank. They are arranged in 2 rows of 5 garages.
- 2.2 Garages G22 to G26 are fully let apart from one garage and are currently in a reasonable condition. Garages G17 to G21 are all void and have been severely vandalised resulting in the structure being compromised. The site is attracting ongoing anti- social behaviour.
- 2.3 Due to on-going vandalism 3 garages are currently steel sheeted incurring security costs for the Council.
- 2.4 The garages are a blight on the area and their removal would improve the area and reduce the potential for anti -social behaviour.
- 2.5 The garages proposed for demolition form the boundary to fields at the rear. Following demolition and removal of the garages new fencing will be provided to re-secure the boundary to this area.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 There is concern over the deterioration of the fabric of the building following vandalism and anti-social behaviour and are a potential risk to the Council. To spend significant resources to refurbish the garages would not be money well spent given the low demand for garages in the area.
- 3.2 The block of garages proposed for demolition forms a boundary to open fields at the rear. On demolition and removal of the garages a new fence will be provided at this location to enable the defined boundary to be reinstated.

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 Ward members have been consulted by the Area Housing Manager. Feedback has been received from Councillors Coupar and Lyons who have both expressed their support for the proposed demolition. No response has been received yet from Cllr Hayden.
- 4.1.2 An initial consultation has been carried out with local residents on Levens Bank, Levens Close and 172-184 Cartmell Drive. A letter was hand delivered to these properties (Appendix 2). The Housing Officer has also spoken to a number of local residents who are all in support of the proposed demolition. No objections have been received to the proposal.

- 4.1.3 The proposal has been discussed at Delegated Decision Panel on 20th July 2017 and the Chief Officer of Property and Contracts and Chief Officer of Housing Management are both in support of the recommendation to demolish the garages.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 The 5 garages proposed for demolition are not occupied. Removal of the garages will not have any negative impact on services delivered to the community as alternative provision can be offered in close proximity in the area. An equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening assessment has been completed, (appendix 3).

4.2.2 Council policies and best council plan

- 4.2.1 The demolition of these buildings contributes to the Best Council Plan 2015-2020 outcomes by helping people to live within clean and well cared for areas. It may also help to reduce the number of recorded nuisance damage related incidents which is one of the 20 key indicators of performance.

4.3 Resources and value for money

- 4.3.1 The majority of the garages have been empty for some time and demand for garages at this location is in decline. There are costs associated with keeping the empty garages secure and loss of rental income.
- 4.3.2 Demolition of the garages will remove the maintenance responsibility for the garages.
- 4.3.3 The demolition and clearance of the garages will be carried out by the Council's internal service provider (Leeds Building Services). The demolition costs will be met by the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2017/18. The estimated cost for demolition (including removal of all structures, rubbish, and asbestos and the erecting of boundary fencing) is approximately £8,260.
- 4.3.4 Current rental income on a Council garage is £9.31 per week. Demolition of the 5 garages given the existing rate of rent will result in an annual rental income loss of £2,420.60. However as stated above the garages have been empty for some time and costs are being incurred to keep the structure secure from vandalism.

4.4 Legal Implications, access to information and call In

- 4.4.1 The report does not contain any exempt or confidential information
- 4.4.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report

4.5 Risk management

- 4.5.1 The demolition phase of the project is notifiable to the Health and Safety Executive under the CDM regulations. A health and safety plan will be

completed by Leeds Building Services Demolition Section at Ring Road Seacroft Depot.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The 5 garages G17 to G21 Levens Bank are currently a major blight on the area and a concern to the local community and Ward Members in regard to their condition. They are attracting significant anti-social behaviour from local youths.
- 5.2 Demolition of the garages and clearance of the site will remove a blight from the area.
- 5.3 The Director of Resources and Housing is requested to approve the suspension of lettings, removal from charge and full demolition of garages including removal of abandoned contents and general debris at G17 to 21 Levens Bank, Halton Moor, LS15 0AU

6 Background documents¹

- 6.1 Appendix 1 – Location Plan
- 6.2 Appendix 2 – Letter to residents
- 6.3 Appendix 3 – Equality Impact Assessment Form

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.