

Report of Chief Officer of Property and Contracts

Report to Director of Resources and Housing

Date: Thursday 20th July 2017

Subject: Demolition of garages at Stonecliffe Garth, Leeds, LS12 5BJ and also garages at Stonecliffe Mount, Leeds, LS12 5BH

Are specific electoral wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of ward(s): Farnley and Wortley		
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?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:		

Summary of main issues

1. There are total of 14 permanent Council garages between two locations on the Stonecliffe Estate, namely G1 to G8 at Stonecliffe Garth and G1 to G6 Stonecliffe Mount, Leeds 12.
2. At Stonecliffe Mount all the garages are empty and at Stonecliffe Garth only two are currently let. Both garage sites are in a poor state of repair with significant vandalism to the concrete sectional side panels and roofing structures. Security of the blocks is difficult to maintain due to constant vandalism and the local housing office has confirmed that they have no demand for garages in this location. There is alternative provision that can be offered in the area if the tenants of Stonecliffe Garth wish to continue renting a council garage on the estate.
3. It is not considered that refurbishment and repair of the garages is an effective use of Council resources given the low demand for garages in this location. Demolition and removal of the garages would remove a blight from the area and reduce incidence of anti-social behaviour and vandalism of these structures.
4. Both sites have been considered for potential in regard to development of new affordable housing. Stonecliffe Mount has been identified as having potential to accommodate a bespoke property that would meet registered local need in the area. Stonecliffe Garth does not offer development potential but it is recommended to

demolish the garages and leave as general parking provision given the density of housing and car ownership in the area.

5. A delegated decision is required to suspend lettings, take the properties out of charge and demolish the garages leaving Stonecliffe Garth as general parking provision area and declaring Stonecliffe Mount site surplus to requirements. Stonecliffe Mount to then be taken forward by the Council's Housing Growth Team for the potential development of a bespoke property in conjunction with a housing association.
6. Ward Members and the Local Housing Office have been consulted on the proposals and their comments noted in this report.

Recommendations

7. The Director of Resources and Housing is requested to authorise the following:
 - 7.1. The suspension of lettings, removing the properties from charge and carrying out the full demolition and removal of the garages and abandoned contents at G1 to G8 Stonecliffe Garth and G1 to G6 Stonecliffe Mount.
 - 7.2. Following demolition the cleared site of Stonecliffe Mount to be declared surplus to operational requirements and for the site to be taken forward by Housing Growth Team for potential development of a bespoke property to meet local need in the area.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the approval of the Director of Resources and Housing to suspend lettings, remove from charge 14 Council owned permanent garages across two locations at G1 to G8 Stonecliffe Garth and G1 to G6 Stonecliffe Mount and demolish and clear the site. (Location plan is attached at Appendix 1).

2 Background information

- 2.1 The garages at these locations are of concrete sectional construction with a pebble dash finish and felted roofs. They are currently in a poor state of repair and their structures significantly compromised through vandalism. Repair and refurbishment costs for the blocks of garages would be unviable given both the extent of the damage together with the lack of demand.
- 2.2 The housing office has confirmed that there is no demand for these garages at this location with residents preferring open parking facilities.
- 2.3 At Stonecliffe Mount all six garages are void with half being long term empty (in excess of eight years).
- 2.4 At Stonecliffe Garth only two garages are occupied with the others being long term void. Attempts to market the garages to local residents have proved unsuccessful with general parking facilities on the estate being the preferred option for most people.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The garages at both sites are in a very poor state of repair with concern about the safety of the structures following vandalism to the side panels and roofs. The garages are deemed to be beyond economic repair and to spend significant resources to refurbish the garages would not be money well spent given there is no demand for garages at this location and no guarantee of reletting them if refurbishment was carried out.
- 3.2 Housing Leeds Investment Strategy Team is working closely with City Development Housing Growth Team in identifying opportunities for garage sites which have been deemed no longer fit for purpose. The Housing Growth Team undertake a capacity study based on the local identified need and the size of the sites. Both sites have been considered by the Council's Housing Growth Team for potential in regard to development of new affordable housing. Stonecliffe Mount has been identified as having potential to accommodate a bespoke adapted property that would meet registered local need in the area. There are currently a list of 42 named families who require a bespoke property across the city as identified by Adult Social Care and Children's Services. Stonecliffe Garth does not offer development potential but it is recommended to demolish the garages and leave as general parking provision given the density of housing and car ownership in the area. This view is confirmed with Highways and Planning.

- 3.3 The development opportunity at Stonecliffe Mount could be packaged with other local identified development sites and advertised to members of the Leeds Affordable Housing Framework where expressions of interest will be invited in order to select a preferred registered provider delivery partner
- 3.4 Consultation on any potential housing design and capacity studies will be carried out by the Housing Growth Team in due course as part of the formal planning process.

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

- 4.1.1 Ward Members have been advised of the proposals for both sites on 17th February 2017. Comments have been received back from both Councillor David Blackburn and Councillor Anne Blackburn which express concern at the loss of garages from the estate and lack of investment in them historically ultimately leading to their demise and current poor state of repair. Councillor David Blackburn supports the demolition of unusable garages and creation of parking provision only. Both Councillor Ann and David Blackburn do not support development of new housing at Stonecliffe Mount as they feel this will negatively impact on parking in the area for existing residents.
- 4.1.2 The Councillors have been advised that if the Stonecliffe Mount site was to be taken forward a parking survey could be undertaken to better understand impacts of development if it is a concern locally or was required by planning.
- 4.1.3 Consultation has been carried out with the remaining two garage tenants at Stonecliffe Garth and both are happy to be offered a garage at Stonecliffe Grove and have signed up for their new tenancies. This will help to consolidate occupancy of the garages at Stonecliffe Grove.
- 4.1.4 Housing Growth Team have discussed with relevant internal departments (Highways and Planning) the outline proposal for potential development of the sites with Stonecliffe Mount being the one identified as most suitable for one bespoke two bedroomed property. The property would have allowance for two car parking spaces, which is in line with current planning practice.
- 4.1.5 The proposal has been considered at Housing Leeds Decision Panel held 9th March 2017 and the recommendation is supported by the Chief Officer for Property and Contracts and the Chief Officer for Housing Management.
- 4.1.6 In view of the concerns raised by local ward members the Chief Officer of Property and Contracts has raised this with Councillor Coupar, Executive Board Member for Communities. Councillor Coupar is supportive of the recommendation in this report which is part of the overall review of garages sites across the city.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

- 4.2.1 An equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening assessment has been completed at Appendix 2. There are only two garage tenancies active out of the two sites and consultation has been undertaken to offer alternative provision in the area which the tenants are happy to accept. The demolition of these garages would have minimal impact on provision given that there is no demand in the immediate vicinity for garages and only low demand across the estate as a whole. The removal of the garages has the potential to impact positively on the local community by removing a blight from the area and creating general parking space for use by local residents. The provision of a new affordable bespoke home would benefit a local family in need of specially adapted accommodation that is currently not available in the area.

4.3 Council policies and best council plan

- 4.3.1 The proposals outlined within the report supports the delivery of the 2016/17 Best Council Plan priority of providing enough homes of a high standard in all sectors and contributes towards the delivery of the Best Council Plan outcome of everyone in Leeds to live in good quality, affordable homes within clean and well cared for places
- 4.3.2 Demolition of the garages may help to reduce the number of recorded nuisance damage related incidents which is one of the 20 key indicators of performance.
- 4.3.3 Delivery of new affordable housing is an integral part of the Housing Growth and High Standards in all Sectors Breakthrough Project.
- 4.3.4 The delivery of affordable and specialist housing across Leeds underpins the Council ambition for Leeds of a Strong Economy and a Compassionate City

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 The total cost for demolition for the two sites is approx. £15,800 (Stonecliffe Garth £7,500 and Stonecliffe Mount £8,300). The work will be carried out by the Council's internal service provider (Leeds Building Services). The costs include for removal of the structures, any asbestos and rubbish remaining in the garages and leaving the area for general parking space. Total costs will be met by the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2016/17.
- 4.4.2 There is a net loss of income to the council as if the garages were able to be fully let they would generate an annual rental income of £6,784.96. Current total annual income from the two garages in use is £970.
- 4.4.3 Demolition and removal of the garages alleviates the council of ongoing maintenance responsibilities and security costs.

4.5 Legal Implications, access to information and call In

- 4.5.1 The report does not contain any exempt or confidential information.
- 4.5.2 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

4.6 Risk management

- 4.6.1 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 based at Ring Road Seacroft Depot.
- 4.6.2 There is a risk of further structural deterioration if the garages are not demolished in the near future which is a health and safety risk for the Council.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The garages at Stonecliffe Mount and Stonecliffe Garth are in a poor condition with some significant structural damage to the side panels and roofs. There is low demand for the garages with only two of the ten currently occupied. Given the extent of the damage to the structure the costs to repair and refurbish would not present value for money given there is no guarantee that this would generate any new demand for them. Ward Members and residents support demolition and creation of general parking space. A delegated decision is required to suspend lettings, remove from charge and demolish the garages. Approval is also sought that following demolition to declare Stonecliffe Mount garage site surplus to departmental requirements and for Housing Growth Team to take this site forward for new housing development of a bespoke property.

6 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Director of Resources and Housing is requested to authorise the following:
- The suspension of lettings, removing the properties from charge and carrying out the full demolition and removal of the garages and abandoned contents at G1 to G8 Stonecliffe Garth and G1 to G6 Stonecliffe Mount.
 - Following demolition the cleared site of Stonecliffe Mount to be declared surplus to operational requirements and for the site to be taken forward by Housing Growth Team for potential development of a bespoke property to meet local need in the area.

7 Background documents¹

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – site plan to show location of garages proposed for demolition at Stonecliffe Garth and Stonecliffe Mount
- 7.2 EIA

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.