

**Report of** Chief Officer of Property and Contracts

**Report to** Director of Resources and Housing

**Date:** Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017

**Subject:** Request to suspend letting and remove from charge 2 garage plots at a temporary garage site at Newton Close, Leeds, LS26 0TJ

Are specific electoral wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of ward(s): Ardsley and Robin Hood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input 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 There is a temporary garage plot site at Newton Close Rothwell, LS26.
- 2 Housing Leeds have recently carried out emergency demolition of several abandoned derelict temporary garage structures at this location following the serving of Tort notices and consultation with the local community including Ward Members. The structures were in a dangerous state and have been abandoned for a number of years but recently been the subject of vandalism, attempted arson and were attracting anti-social behaviour from local children. Only 1 garage remains which is in good condition and the owner wishes to retain the plot for which rent is being paid.
- 3 Approval is sought to suspend the letting of two official plots (G8 and G11) leaving only plot G13 in charge. There is no demand for use of this site for temporary garages and local residents would benefit from the area being used for general parking as the properties do not have any driveways and parking is only available on the surrounding narrow streets.
- 4 Ward Members and local residents have been consulted and are supportive of this proposal.
- 5 The site is unsuitable for redevelopment of new housing due to its proximity to existing dwellings (bungalows) and the size of the site. It is recommended that the site be kept for informal parking.

## **Recommendations**

6. The Director of Resources and Housing is requested to approve the suspension of lettings and removal from charge of the temporary garage plot sites G8 and G11 at Newton Close, Rothwell, Leeds, LS26 0TJ.

### **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 and remove from charge temporary garage plot numbers G8 and G11 at Newton Close, Rothwell, Leeds 26

### **2 Background information**

- 2.2 Newton Close is a temporary garage plot site. A temporary site is where residents rent a plot of ground from the Council and erect their own garage structure for which they are responsible for all maintenance and removal at the end of its use. Appendix 1 shows the location of this site.
- 2.3 All but 1 of the garages at this location had not been in use for a considerable length of time. They had deteriorated into a dangerous derelict state which recently has attracted anti social behaviour from local children resulting in the need to take emergency action to demolish the structures and clear the site. Tort notices were served and previous owners have not been possible to contact.
- 2.4 Local residents and Ward Members were concerned about the safety aspect of the structures and anti social behaviour the site was attracting.
- 2.5 There is a need for parking in the area and the clearance of this site now provides general off road parking close to the surrounding properties.
- 2.6 There is no demand for garages in the given location or waiting list for residents wanting to erect their own structures.

### **3 Main issues**

- 3.7 The site has capacity to provide space for general car parking which would benefit local residents many of whom are elderly and currently have to park their vehicles on the road which causes congestion for larger and emergency vehicles to negotiate.
- 3.8 The site has been reviewed by the Housing Growth Team in City Development for consideration of new housing development. However it is deemed unsuitable given its location and size and the pressure for parking in the area.
- 3.9 The local housing office have no waiting list for the plots and there is no desire from local residents to erect their own structures at this location Only 1 plot remains in use at the edge of the site and the structure is good condition currently.
- 3.10 To prevent the situation occurring again in respect of unmaintained structures it is proposed that the empty plots be taken out of charge and the area left for general resident parking.

Approval is sought to suspend the lettings and removal from charge for the plot references G8 and G11 Newton Close.

## **4 Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

4.1.1 Ward Members, local residents and the tenant of the remaining plot have all been consulted and are in support of the proposal.

4.1.2 The recommendation in this report is supported by the Chief Officer of Property and Contracts and Chief Officer of Housing Management having been considered at the Housing Leeds Delegated Decision Panel held 20<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

4.2.1 These are empty plots and there is no displacement of tenancies as the one remaining plot that is currently rented will be retained for the foreseeable future. There is no demand for plots at this location so removal of this facility has no impact on services delivered to the community. The site being left for general parking is of benefit to the local community. An equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening assessment have been completed at Appendix 2.

### **4.3 Council policies and best council plan**

4.3.1 The clearance of the derelict structures contributes to the Best Council Plan 2015-2020 outcomes by helping people to live within clean, safe and well cared areas. Removal of the source for anti social behaviour has also helped to reduce the number of recorded nuisance damage related incidents which is one of the 20 key indicators of performance.

4.3.2 Lack of resident car parking facilities is an issue that has been raised in the STAR survey and leaving the site for this purpose will benefit the local residents.

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 The current rent for a plot is £108.36 therefore removal of the two plots in charge at this location will result in a loss of rental income to the value of £216.72.

4.4.2 Taking the plots out of charge will alleviate the council of any future costs associated with removing redundant and derelict structures where the owners cannot be traced.

### **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 The removal of the derelict structures was carried out after the Tort notices had been served on the structures and due time expired. The process was confirmed with Legal Services. There are no legal implications in respect of removing the plots from charge.

## **4.6 Risk management**

- 4.6.1 Removing the plots from charge and restricting the use of the site for parking purposes only removes the risk of any new structures being erected that are subsequently not maintained by owners or that might become a potential for anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 There is no demand for plots at this location and the site has no development potential. The one remaining plot will be kept in charge as long as the owner keeps the garage in good condition and rent is paid for the plot.
- 5.2 There is need for a local parking facility and this site provides the opportunity for residents to park near their homes off the main estate road.
- 5.3 Approval is needed to suspend the letting of the redundant plots and take them out of charge.
- 5.4 The local community and Ward Members fully support this proposal.

## **6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Director of Resources and Housing is requested to approve the suspension of lettings and removal from charge of the temporary garage plot sites G8 and G11 at Newton Close, Rothwell, Leeds, LS26 0TJ.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – site plan.
- 7.2 Appendix 2 - Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening Assessment
- 7.3 Appendix 3 – Delegated Decision Notification

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<sup>1</sup> 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.