

**Report of Chief Officer Property and Contracts**

**Report to Director of Resources and Housing**

**Date: 16<sup>th</sup> November 2017**

**Subject: Request to demolish 4 Council garages at Mill Pit Lane (G1-4), Rothwell Leeds 26, and declare land surplus to departmental requirements**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of ward(s): Rothwell	<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. Mill Pit Lane garage site consists of 4 permanent Council owned garages which are all void.
2. The garages are in poor condition and would require significant investment to renovate with no potential of increased demand. Demand for Council garages has been decreasing over the last 10 years in many areas and there are costs to the Council associated with keeping the empty garages secure.
3. The site potentially offers opportunity for the land to either be offered for sale which a neighbouring private resident may be interested in or converted to car parking or grass. There is no potential for the land to be used for housing as it is too small.
4. A delegated decision is required to suspend letting of the garages, remove from charge and demolish the permanent garages on this site and declare this site surplus to operational requirements.

**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 at G1-4 Mill Pit Lane, Rothwell, LS26. The Director is also asked to declare the site surplus to departmental requirements.

## **Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from the Director of Resources and Housing to remove from charge and demolish the 4 garages including abandoned contents at Mill Pit Lane. The site to be then declared surplus to departmental requirements and for the Housing Growth Team to consider selling the land on the open market.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 The garage site is located at Mill Pit Lane in Rothwell. Appendix 1 shows the location.
- 2.2 Two of the garages have been void for more than ten years, one more than five years and one became void earlier this year. There has been no interest in renting these garages since they became void.
- 2.3 The garages would require significant investment to bring them up to a reasonable standard and there is no guarantee that they would be rented due to the location. The Land Enquiry Team are in discussion with a neighbouring owner occupier regarding the possible sale of the land to increase their garden size. If the purchase does not materialise Housing propose to tarmac the area to provide spaces for four cars to park or return to grass.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 All the garages are void so there would be no loss of garages for tenants in this case.
- 3.2 Approval for demolition of the garages is being sought regardless of whether the neighbouring residents are interested in purchasing the patch of land. The garage site is in decline and would require significant investment to bring the structures up to a standard that would potentially encourage interest in renting them. Housing Management has no waiting list for this location. Given existing patterns of low demand there is no guarantee that investing in renovating the garages would generate increased interest and therefore it is not considered to be spending money wisely by investing in this site.
- 3.3 The garages form a boundary to the gardens of 17 Mill Pit Lane and 43 Oakwood Drive. Following the demolition of the garages, fencing will be erected to the boundaries affected.

## **4 Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 Ward members have been consulted on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2017 and are supportive of the plans to demolish the garages.
- 4.1.2 An initial consultation about the demolition of the garages was carried out with residents of Mill Pit Lane and Oakwood Drive on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017, to which there was no adverse response to.

4.1.3 The proposal has been discussed at Housing Leeds Delegated Decision Panel on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017. The Chief Officer of Property and Contracts and Chief Officer of Housing Management are both in support of the recommendation to carry out demolition.

4.1.4 The Housing Office were consulted on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2017 and fully support the plans to demolish the garages.

4.1.5 The proposal has been discussed at Housing Leeds Delegated Decision Panel on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2017. The Chief Officer of Property and Contracts and Chief Officer of Housing Management are both in support of the recommendation to carry out demolition and declare the site surplus to departmental requirements with a view to the site being sold, used for parking or returned to grass.

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

4.1.1 An equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening assessment has been completed, see Appendix 2.

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

4.2.1 If the land is sold it will contribute towards the Best Council Plan of being a more efficient and enterprising council and spending money wisely. If we keep the land it will contribute to towards the priority of enhancing the quality of our public realm and green spaces.

#### 4.3 **Resources and value for money**

4.3.1 The majority of the garages have been empty for over five years and demand for garages at this location has been in decline for over ten years. There are costs associated with keeping the empty garages secure

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 any boundary fencing required) is approximately £7000.

4.3.4 The garages are not currently earning any rental income and as there has been no new interest in renting the garages for over five years, it is not anticipated that there will be any future rental income from the site.

#### 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 City Development to agree terms of the disposal of the site.

## **4.5 Risk management**

- 4.5.1 There is no concern at this stage from residents about the demolition or future uses of the site

## **5 Conclusions**

- 5.1 The garages at Mill Pit Lane are in a poor state of repair and unpopular with demand decreasing over the last five years. All four garages are currently void.
- 5.2 Demolition of the garages and clearance of the site will remove a blight from the local area and redevelopment of this location by either offering the land to neighbouring properties or adding the area to the Grounds Maintenance contract meets the Best Council plan outcomes and priorities.

## **6 Recommendations**

- 6.1 The Director of Resources and Housing is requested to approve the removal from charge and full demolition of garages including removal of abandoned contents and general debris at G1-4 Mill Pit Lane, Rothwell, LS26. The Director is also asked to declare the site surplus to departmental requirements and for the site to be considered for sale, converted to parking or returning to grass.

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

- 7.1 Appendix 1 – location plan
- 7.2 Appendix 2 – Appendix 2 – Equality Diversity Cohesion and Integration Screening Form

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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.