

**Report of Chief Officer Property and Contracts**

**Report to Director of Resources and Housing**

**Date: 27<sup>th</sup> February 2018**

**Subject: Request to demolish 19 permanent garages at Dolphin Road, LS10 4AB and declare land surplus to departmental requirements**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of ward(s): Middleton	<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. Dolphin Road garage site consists of 19 permanent Council owned garages, 17 of which are void and two tenanted.
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 or used for a bespoke property.
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 G1-19 Dolphin Road, Middleton. The Director is also asked to declare the site surplus to departmental requirements and allow City Development to take the site forward for housing growth purposes.

## **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 19 garages including abandoned contents at Dolphin Road. The site to be then declared surplus to departmental requirements and for the Housing Growth Team to take the site forward and develop proposals for new housing development at this location.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 The garage site is located at Dolphin Road, Middleton. Appendix 1 shows the location.
- 2.2 Half of the garages have been void for more than ten years, and the others mostly more than five years apart from three which have been in void between two and four years. 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 could be rented due to the location. Most of the surrounding houses have their own driveways within the boundaries of their own properties.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 All but two of the garages are void so there would be minimal loss of garages for tenants in this case. The two current garage tenants will be offered garages on a nearby site.
- 3.2 Approval for demolition of the garages is being sought regardless of whether the site is progressed through Housing Growth. The garage site is in decline and would require significant investment to bring the structures up to a standard that could potentially encourage interest in renting them. Housing Management has no waiting list for garages at 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 garden of 467 Ring Road Middleton. The garages also form a boundary to land which appears to have been disposed of previously and left to become overgrown and the former temporary site which is also overgrown. These sites should be looked at if the land is marketed for new housing development. Following the demolition of the garages, fencing will be erected to the boundaries affected where required.
- 3.4 All relevant Tort notices will be served on garages where there are abandoned contents and these will be removed and disposed of as part of the demolition.

## **4 Corporate considerations**

- 4.1 **Consultation and engagement**

- 4.1.1 Ward members have been consulted on 27<sup>th</sup> Feb 2018 and are supportive of the plans to demolish the garages.
- 4.1.2 An initial consultation with residents about the demolition of the garages was carried out on 27<sup>th</sup> Feb 2018. Residents are supportive of the plans
- 4.1.3 The proposal has been discussed at Housing Leeds Delegated Decision Panel on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018.
- 4.1.4 The Chief Officer of Property and Contracts and Chief Officer of Housing Management are both in support of the recommendation to carry out demolition.
- 4.1.5 The Housing Office were consulted on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2017 and fully support the plans to demolish the garages. The proposal has been discussed at Housing Leeds Delegated Decision Panel on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2018. 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 supporting new housing growth on the site.
- 4.1.6 Consideration of the site for development of new housing has been reviewed by the Council's Housing Growth Team who have confirmed they have an interest in the site and will develop proposals for this.
- 4.1.7 **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 developed for housing it will contribute towards the Best Council Plan by meeting the target for more new homes.
  - 4.2.2 **Resources and value for money**
    - 4.2.1 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.
    - 4.2.2 Demolition of the garages will remove the maintenance responsibility for the garages.
    - 4.2.3 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 2018/19. The estimated cost for demolition (including removal of all structures, rubbish, and asbestos and the erecting of any boundary fencing required) is approximately £26,103.91.

4.2.4 The garages are currently earning rental income on two garages but 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.

### **4.3 Legal Implications, access to information and call In**

4.3.1 The report does not contain any exempt or confidential information

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

### **4.4 Risk management**

4.4.1 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 Dolphin Road are in a poor state of repair and unpopular with demand decreasing over the last five years. All but two of the nineteen garages are currently void.

5.2 Demolition of the garages and clearance of the site will remove a blight from the local area and provide opportunity for new housing growth on the site.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 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 G1-19 Dolphin Road, Middleton. The Director is also asked to declare the site surplus to departmental requirements and allow City Development to take the site forward for housing growth purposes.

## **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.