

Report of Chief Officer of Property and Contracts

Report to Director of Resources and Housing

Date: 6th March 2018

Subject: Request to demolish 3 permanent council garages (G17, G18 and adjacent unnumbered structure) Drury Avenue, Horsforth LS18 4BR

Are specific electoral wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of ward(s): Horsforth	<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 are 19 Council owned permanent garages arranged in 3 blocks situated off an access road at the end of Drury Avenue, Horsforth LS18 4BR.
2. One block of 3 garages (G17, G18 and adjacent unnumbered structure) which have been empty for some time are in particularly poor condition at this site and are a blight on the area.
3. The remaining 16 garages are in varying conditions of reasonable repair but the majority are still occupied and at the moment these will be retained and continue to be rented out.
4. The area does not offer any development potential as the site has several vehicle and pedestrian accesses being taken across the land to surrounding residential dwellings and there is also an established Public Right of Way running through the site.
5. A delegated decision is required to approve the suspension of lettings; remove from charge; demolish the 3 garages and associated structures and clear the site of any flytipping.
6. Ward Members have been consulted and are supportive of the proposed demolition of the garages and leaving the area fit for general parking purposes.

Recommendations

7. The Director of Resources and Housing is requested to approve the suspension of lettings, removal from charge and full demolition of the 3 garages (G17, G18 and adjacent unnumbered structure) at Drury Avenue, Horsforth LS18 4BR.

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 and demolish one block (3 permanent council garages) at Drury Avenue, Horsforth LS18 4BR. (location shown in Appendix 1).

2 Background information

- 2.1 The site comprises of 19 permanent council garages located off an access road at the end of Drury Avenue, Horsforth. They are arranged in 3 blocks across the site. There is one block of 11 garages constructed of brick; a block of 5 concrete sectional garages and a block of 3 concrete sectional garages. The latter is the subject of this report.
- 2.2 There are currently 7 garages occupied across the site and 12 are void including the 3 garages requested for demolition (G17, G18 and adjacent unnumbered structure).
- 2.3 The 3 garages which are the subject of this report are deemed to be beyond economical repair and are the three worst buildings on the site in terms of their condition and appearance.
- 2.4 These 3 garages are a blight on the remaining garage area and their removal would potentially improve area. Two of the garages are currently secured with steel sheets following attempts to vandalise and are a blight on the area.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 The removal of these 3 garages will improve the image of the garage site as these are the first garages you see on approach to the location.
- 3.2 Further consideration is to be given to the longer term sustainability of the remaining garages, particularly the block of 5 concrete sectional garages. However the immediate demolition of these 3 garages is the main priority. Demolition of this 'problem' block may have a stabilising effect on the remaining blocks and this will be monitored in the coming months. Marketing of the remaining garages is being undertaken to encourage better use of the site and reduce the number of voids.
- 3.3 The whole site has been considered by the Council's Housing Growth Team for potential to develop the site. However due to there being several pedestrian and vehicle accesses being taken off the garage site to surrounding residential properties this makes the site unviable for new housing development.

3.4 The Council has received an enquiry from a resident adjacent to the subject site who was interested in purchasing the land to extend their garden. However following consultation in the area the Council has taken the view that the requirement for parking provision is the greatest need due to the level of car ownership and lack of off street parking provision.

3.5 Once the garages are demolished the area will be left as general parking for residents and a fence erected to secure the boundary to adjacent property.

4 Corporate considerations

4.1 Consultation and engagement

4.1.1 Consultation with residents and Ward Members has been carried out and there have been no objections received in regard to the proposed demolition.

4.1.2 Concerns have been expressed by the local community about the negative impact the appearance these buildings have on the area.

4.1.3 Consideration of the site has been discussed with Housing Growth Team and the site deemed unviable for future development at this stage.

4.1.4 Consideration was given to a request from a local resident to purchase the subject site but following consultation it has been decided to retain the area for general parking use.

4.1.5 The Chief Officer for Housing Management and Chief Officer for Property and Contracts have been consulted at Housing Leeds Delegated Decision Panel on 6th March 2018 and are supportive of the recommendation to demolish the 3 garages discussed in this report.

4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration

4.2.1 The 3 garages are not occupied and have been empty for a long period therefore their demolition and removal has no impact on any existing tenants. There are other garages on the site that are currently empty and can be marketed to the local community area thus continuing a garage rental service in this location. The proposed demolition will reduce the potential for anti social behaviour which will have a positive impact on the local community and remove a blight which improves perception of the local area. An equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening assessment has been completed at Appendix 2.

4.3 Council policies and best council plan

4.3.1 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 also may help to reduce the number of recorded nuisance damage related incidents which is one of the 20 key indicators of performance.

4.4 Resources and value for money

- 4.4.1 The demolition and clearance of the garages will be carried out by the Council's internal service provider (Leeds Building Services). The demolition costs are estimated to be £15,516.06 which includes for removal of the structures any asbestos and rubbish remaining in the garages and leaving space fit for general parking. Total costs will be met by the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme 2018/19.
- 4.4.2 Demolition will alleviate the council of future maintenance and security costs. Current rental income on a Council garage is £9.31 per week. Demolition of the 3 garages given the existing rate of rent will result in an annual rental income loss of £1,452.36. However these garages have already been vacant for several years.

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.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The 3 garages (G17, G18 and the unnumbered garage) at Drury Avenue 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 a source for potential further anti-social behaviour and there has been some vandalism to the structure already as well as attracting fly tipping.
- 5.2 There is some demand for garages in this location and a perceived high level of car ownership across the area. The removal of these 3 garages will remove the blight from the area and will potentially have a positive effect on the other garages by improving the visual aspect as you approach the site off Drury Avenue. The remaining garages will be closely monitored in terms of their lettings and the site marketed to see if additional interest can be levied to gain maximum rental income.
- 5.3 Demolition of the 3 garages G17, G18 and adjacent unnumbered structure is requested to address the negative impact these garages have on the site and the concerns from the local community.
- 5.4 The area will be left for general parking helping to relieve parking issues on the narrow residential street.

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 the 3 garages (G17, G18 and adjacent unnumbered structure) at Drury Avenue, Horsforth LS18 4BR

7.0 Background Documents

7.1 Appendix 1 – site plan to show location of garages proposed for demolition.

7.2 Appendix 2 - Equality, Diversity, Cohesion and Integration Screening Assessment

7.3 Appendix 3 – Delegated Decision Notification