

**Land at Westminster Crescent, Halton, Leeds**

Date: 4 November 2021

Report of: Land and Property

Report to: Director of City Development

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

**What is this report about?**

**Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions**

- This report is seeking approval to dispose of the subject sites outlined in bold on the attached plan [19755/B] by way of a one-to-one transaction. The subject sites at Westminster Crescent in Halton Moor, close to the junction with Coronation Parade, measure approximately 0.29 ha (0.73 ac).
- The sites have limited development potential when considered in isolation. Attempts were made to include the sites in the Brownfield Land Programme, but they were withdrawn as they didn't work in isolation. However, when combined with the purchaser's existing site opposite which they have successfully obtained planning permission to redevelop [17/02607/FU], the proposed purchaser (named in the confidential appendix) will be able to double the number of affordable homes being constructed along Westminster Crescent. The purchaser has also obtained planning permission to redevelop the Council's sites, which will become phase two of their development [20/07743/FU].
- The disposal of the sites will help provide affordable homes, generate a capital receipt, and save money by removing the Council's maintenance responsibility. The proposal will generate better outcomes by supporting communities and promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth as set out in the Best Council Plan.

**Recommendations**

- It is recommended that approval is given to dispose of the subject sites at Westminster Crescent on the terms set out in the confidential appendix by way of a one-to-one disposal.

**Why is the proposal being put forward?**

- 1 The sites are owned by the Council and were previously occupied by residential properties but have been vacant and laid to grass since the properties were demolished some time ago.
- 2 The Council's two sites are opposite and adjacent to land owned by the proposed purchaser, as shown cross hatched on the attached plan. As stated above, the proposed purchaser has successfully obtained planning permission to develop both their site for 12 affordable houses, which will form phase one, and the Council's sites for a further 12 affordable homes, which will form phase two.
- 3 After unsuccessful attempts to develop the sites through the Brownfield Land Programme, Environments and Housing have confirmed they are happy to dispose of the subject sites by way of a one-to-one disposal and so were declared surplus by way of a report on 2 September 2021.

## What impact will this proposal have?

### Wards Affected: Temple Newsam

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 4 This transaction will facilitate the delivery of affordable housing in the area and generate a capital receipt to support the Best Council Plan.

## What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 5 Ward Members were consulted by e-mail on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2021. No comments were received.

## What are the resource implications?

- 6 The sale of the sites will generate a capital receipt and contribute to the Council's capital receipt programme, as well as alleviating future maintenance responsibility.

## What are the legal implications?

- 7 Under Part 3, Section 3E (g) of the Council's Constitution (Officer Delegation Scheme (Executive Functions)) the Director of City Development has authority to discharge any function of the Executive in relation to Asset Management.
- 8 The Chief Officer Asset Management and Regeneration, Head of Asset Management and Deputy Head of Land and Property have authority to take decisions in relation to Asset Management as delegated in the Director of City Development's sub delegation scheme.
- 9 The proposal constitutes a Significant Operational Decision and is not subject to call in.
- 10 Under section 32 of the Housing Act 1985, the Council may dispose of housing land subject to the consent of the Secretary of State. The proposed disposal is permitted under paragraphs A3.1.1 and A3.2 of the General Consent for the disposal of land held of the purposes of Part II of the Housing Act 1985 (2013).
- 11 The Deputy Head of Land and Property confirms that the proposed transaction set out above is the method most likely to result in the Council achieving best consideration.

## What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 12 The Council's risk of doing a one-to-one disposal with the proposed purchaser is limited. The proposed purchaser has already secured planning permission on the subject sites and the sites have been declared surplus by Environments and Housing. Proposed Heads of Terms have been provisionally agreed and the party is keen to complete in order to commence work on site. If the disposal does not complete, which is unlikely, the maintenance costs will remain with the Council.

## Does this proposal support the council's 3 Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth

Health and Wellbeing

Climate Emergency

- 13 The disposal will result in a capital receipt to the Council that will contribute to the Best Council Plan by supporting communities and promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth by providing affordable housing and jobs during the development period for the local community.
- 14 The proposed purchaser will be bound by the planning authority to construct the new houses in line with current energy efficiency standards which will produce lower carbon emissions.

## Options, timescales and measuring success

### a) What other options were considered?

- 15 **Option one: Not to sell the sites.** This is not recommended as there is no operational reason to justify their retention and the maintenance costs would remain with the Council.
- 16 **Option two: To sell the sites on the open market by way of offers.** This is a possible option, but this method can take many months to conclude, particularly if the parties need to secure funding

and/or planning permission, which in this case has already been obtained. This method of disposal is also unlikely to realise a higher price than that which is proposed due to the purchaser being proposed already owning the adjacent site.

17 **Option three: To sell the site by public auction.** This is a possible option however this method of disposal is also unlikely to realise a higher price than that which is proposed due to the proposed purchaser owning the adjacent site.

**b) How will success be measured?**

18 Success will be measured by the completion of the legal documents between the Council and the proposed purchaser and completion of the payment to the Council.

**c) What is the timetable for implementation?**

19 The transaction is expected to complete this financial year, before April 2022.

**Appendices**

20 One confidential appendix.

**Background papers**

21 None.