

# Community Right to Bid Nomination for the Rangers Hut, Meanwood Park, Meanwood, Leeds, LS6

Date: 30 August 2023

Report of: Asset Management Service

Report to: Head of Asset Management

Will the decision be open for call in?  Yes  No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?  Yes  No

## Brief Summary

- In accordance with the Localism Act 2011 and the Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012, this report considers the nomination to include the Rangers Hut, Meanwood Park, Meanwood, Leeds, LS6.
- The Council received a nomination from Meanwood Valley Partnership. They are an unincorporated community group. They are eligible to nominate the property, but not trigger the moratorium period, bid for the property or legally purchase the property. The nomination was received on 9 July 2023.

## Recommendations

- a) The Head of Asset Management is recommended to include the site in the List of Assets of Community Value on the basis that the criteria in Section 88(1)(b) of the Act have been met, and therefore the site is “land of community value”.

## What is this report about?

- 1 The purpose of this report is for the Head of Asset Management to consider whether The Rangers Hut, Meanwood Park, Meanwood, Leeds, LS6 should be included in the List of Assets of Community Value or whether it should be included on the List of Land Nominated by Unsuccessful Community Nominations in accordance with Part 5 Chapter 3 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 1.2 Part 5 Chapter 3 of the Localism Act 2011 and the Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012 contain the rules relating to the “Community Right to Bid”. The purpose of this right is to give communities a right to identify a property or land that is believed to further their social interests or social wellbeing and gives them a fair chance to make a bid to purchase the property or land on the open market if the owner decides to sell. From the date the landowner informs the Council of their intention to sell “community interest groups” as defined in the Regulations have a period of six weeks to request in writing for the group to be treated as a potential bidder in relation to the land. If they do make such a request, the

owner is prevented from disposing of the property for a period of six months (from the date they originally informed the Council of their intention to sell) unless it is to a community interest group. The landowner is free to dispose of the property at the end of the six month period to whomsoever they see fit.

- 1.3 Section 90 states if a local authority receives a “community nomination”, the authority must consider the nomination. The authority must accept the nomination if the land nominated is in the authority’s area and is of community value.
- 1.4 The site is located within the Weetwood ward (please see the red line boundary plan at appendix 1). Ward Members have been made aware of the nomination. No responses have been received.
- 1.5 The freehold interest in the land is owned by Leeds City Council and the owning department is Communities, Housing and Environment. Officers from Communities, Housing and Environment have been advised of the nomination and provided information regarding its recent and current use.
- 1.6 The subject site is located adjacent to the local nature reserve and is part of Meanwood and Weetwood Conservation areas.
- 1.7 The nominator has advised that the Rangers Hut is used frequently by community groups such as Friends of Meanwood Park (FOMP) which is a sub committee of the Meanwood Valley Partnership. The FOMP currently store tools and equipment at the property. Meanwood Valley Partnership have also held recent events at the Rangers Hut such as Christmas wreath making and children’s events as part of the Meanwood Festival. They also hold environmental events and meetings on site.
- 1.8 The Rangers Hut is also used as a base for Communities, Housing and Environment staff who play a vital role in maintaining the park and protecting the valley as assets for use by the community. Meanwood Valley Volunteers use the hut as a meeting point for their tasks along parts of the Valley - the area around the hut is used for storage of compost and soil for Incredible Edible Meanwood.
- 1.9 Leeds City Council’s Countryside Ranger has confirmed that the property is used by the Countryside Ranger team for delivering public events and activities with groups and for meetings with volunteer and community partnership groups. The Rangers Hut is also used for storing materials when carrying out work and tasks with volunteer and corporate groups in the area in Meanwood Park and on Meanwood Valley Trail. It is also used for lunch breaks with volunteer groups working in the area, due to inclement weather.
- 1.10 The subject site is an important asset used frequently by the community and contributes to the social interest and wellbeing of all its users. It is also realistic to think that its current use can and will continue for the next five years and more.
- 1.11 For property or land to be included in the List of Assets of Community Value, the nominator must be able to demonstrate and satisfy all the listing criteria as laid down in the legislation. Section 88 states that buildings or land with a current use is considered to be of community value, if, in the opinion of the authority, there is:
  - a) an actual current use of the building or other land that is not an ancillary use which furthers the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community.
  - b) It is realistic to think that there can continue to be non-ancillary use of the building or other land which will further (whether or not in the same way) the social wellbeing or social interests of the local community.

- 1.12 It is clear from the information provided that the Rangers Hut, Meanwood Park has had a current and recent use by the local community. Therefore the site does further the social interests of the local community as set out in paragraph 88(1) of the Localism Act 2011.
- 1.13 It is important to note that if the criteria in Section 88 are met, then the Council must include the site in the List of Assets of Community Value.

### **What impact will this proposal have?**

- 2 Details of ward member consultation as follows.

### **How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?**

- Health and Wellbeing       Inclusive Growth       Zero Carbon

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### **What consultation and engagement has taken place?**

**Wards affected:**

- Have ward members been consulted?       Yes       No

- 4 The Executive Member for Resources has been informed of the nomination.  
Weetwood ward members have been informed of the nomination. No comments have been received.

### **What are the resource implications?**

- 5 The Localism Act contains a right to appeal for private landowners, including the right to appeal to the First-Tier Tribunal if the landowner is still dissatisfied following a listing review by the Council. If the First-Tier Tribunal found in the landowners favour on appeal, there could also be an award of costs against the Council.

The Act also gives the owner a right to compensation if they incur costs or loss of value directly from complying with the legislation. Any compensation would be payable by the Council.

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

- 6 There are no specific risks which are relevant to this decision.

### **What are the legal implications?**

- 7 The City Solicitor confirms that the conclusions and recommendations in this report represent a reasonable and proper application of the statutory criteria for determining whether the nominated property is an asset of community value.

The Head of Asset Management has authority to take the decisions requested in this report under Executive functions 2(o) (specific to the Director of City Development) of the Director of City Development's sub delegation scheme.

The proposal constitutes a significant operational decision and is therefore not subject to call in.

## **Options, timescales and measuring success**

### **What other options were considered?**

- 8 This is a procedural matter and the only options are to list or not list the property as an Asset of Community Value. The considerations set out in this paper provide justification for the recommendation being made.

### **How will success be measured?**

- 9 This will be measured by the Rangers Hut, Meanwood Park continuing to operate in the same format serving the community as it has previously been doing.

### **What is the timetable for implementation?**

- 10 Upon approval of this report, the property will be added to the list of Assets of Community Value.

## **Appendices**

- 11 Plan.

## **Background papers**

- 12 None