

West Lodge, Rawdon Crematorium, Knott Lane, Leeds, LS19 6JW

Date: May 2024

Report of: Land and Property

Report to: Chief Officer Asset Management and Regeneration

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief Summary

West Lodge is an entrance lodge that was formerly let under a service occupancy agreement. It has been vacated and declared surplus by Bereavement Services On 16th January 2024. It is proposed to dispose of the Lodge on the open market by way of public auction.

West Lodge is a detached house of approx. 100 sqm in a plot extending to approximately 0.06 hectares/0.16 acres as shown on the attached plan (23327/B).

Recommendations

It is recommended that West Lodge be disposed on the open market by auction, at a reserve price to be approved in accordance with the sub-delegation scheme.

What is this report about?

- 1 This report relates to West Lodge which is proposed to be sold on the open market by way of auction.
- 2 West Lodge is no longer required for a service occupancy and was declared surplus by the Head of Bereavement Services and Workshop on 16 January 2024. It was referred to Exec Board on 7 February 2024 and included in the Capital Receipts Programme and approved for disposal in 2024/25 recorded as decision D57167.
- 3 Access to West Lodge will be over Knott Lane. No access rights will be granted through the crematorium grounds to avoid disturbing the day to day operations. Part of Knott Lane is an adopted highway, but between points A and B it is a bridleway which is not in Council ownership. The Council does not have any legally documented access rights over the bridleway which can be granted on to the buyer of West Lodge but can evidence continued use for over 30 years. Further information is in the accompanying confidential appendix.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 4 The disposal will generate a capital receipt to the Council as well as absolve the Council of any retention and maintenance costs.

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

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

- 5 The disposal will impact the three pillars as the capital receipt realised from the sale and savings on the retention costs will be used by the Council on initiatives relating to the pillars. It is assumed that the new owner will refurbish the property which will directly impact on inclusive growth as this work could create new job opportunities in the local area for people and businesses. The refurbishment would adhere to the Council's guidance on dealing with the Climate Emergency and contribute directly to the Council's ambition of carbon neutrality. It is assumed the property would be refurbished taking into consideration the latest standards of energy efficiency and eco friendliness. That would produce a better standard of living for the owners/occupants as well as reduce our impact on the planet at the same time.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: Horsforth.

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 6 The Ward Members were consulted on 4 April 2024 and informed of the Council's intention to dispose of the site by public auction. No comments were received from any of the Ward Members.
- 7 West Lodge is covered by a greenspace allocation in the Site Allocations Plan with the adjoining cemetery. Although allocated greenspace residential use of the Lodge is permitted. Prior to the sale of greenspace, the intended sale must be advertised two consecutive weeks. Notice was placed in the Yorkshire Evening Post on Saturday 11th and Saturday 18th May 2024. The Council received one enquiry from a member of the public asking to see a plan of the site. The Council has fulfilled its obligation to advertise the intended sale of greenspace.

What are the resource implications?

- 8 The property is surplus to Council requirements and no operational reason has been identified to justify its retention. In these circumstances, its disposal represents prudent and economic asset management, obviating holding costs associated with managing the property and therefore supports the best values objectives of the Council.

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

- 9 There is a risk that the property may not sell. However, this is unlikely given recent auction results which demonstrate strong interest in similar properties of this type and value.

What are the legal implications?

- 10 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.
- 11 The Chief Officer Asset Management and Regeneration, Head of Asset Management, Technical Lead and Executive Manager (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.

- 12 The proposal constitutes a Publishable Administrative Decision and is therefore not subject to call in.
- 13 The Executive Manager (Deputy Head) of Land and Property confirms that the proposed method of disposal set out above is the method most likely to result in the Council achieving the best consideration that can reasonably be obtained under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 (or under the Housing Act 1985).
- 14 The information contained in the Exempt Appendix to this report relates to the financial or business affairs of a particular person, and of the Council. It is therefore considered that this element of the report should be treated as exempt under rule 10.4.(3) of the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

Options, timescales and measuring success.

What other options were considered?

15 Options relating to the proposed disposal are considered below:

- (a) **Option 1: Not to retain the property.** Retention of the property would require a high level of investment to bring it back into use and such a large investment cannot be justified. In addition, the house is no longer required for a service tenant. It is therefore not recommended that the property is retained and repurposed.
- (b) **Option 2: To sell the property on the open market by informal tender on a conditional basis.** This is a possible option, but this method can take many months to conclude, particularly if parties need to secure funding and/or a planning permission and does not offer the same level of certainty that the sale will complete or necessarily realise a higher receipt than at auction.
- (c) **Option 3: To sell the property by public auction.** This is the recommended option, particularly as it provides for a swift sale with the successful bidder required to exchange contracts on the day of the auction and complete the transaction four weeks later. This method generally achieves similar results to offers but obviates the holding costs associated with maintaining and securing premises. Based off the success of past auction disposals recently, it's likely that this method could produce the highest receipt to the Council in a quicker timeframe than conventional offers.

How will success be measured?

16 A sale being completed.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

17 It is proposed that West Lodge will be marketed and sold by auction within the 2024/25 financial year. Responsibility for implementing will rest with the Deputy Head of Land and Property heading the Land & Property team who will manage the disposal.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – site plan 23327/B.
- Confidential appendix and accompanying plan 30513/A.

Background papers

- None