

**Report of the Acting Chief, Asset Management Officer**

**Report to Environmental Sub Group**

**Date:**

**Subject: Derelict/Eyesore sites**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" 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. This report sets out progress with a project which aims to improvement derelict and nuisance properties across the city.
2. The project aims to deliver a more coordinated approach to dealing with problem properties and will be overseen by a cross service project team. The approach to dealing with properties in private ownership is set out in Appendix 1. Dealing with Council properties is more straightforward with priority given to ensuring that they are safe and secure whilst also considering future opportunities.
3. The project is to be supported by rolling budget of £500k from the capital programme. This will be spread over 3 financial years commencing in April 2012, to support work with owners to prepare site appraisals and planning briefs, and progress enforcement action.
4. In order to scope out the project, the Area Leadership Teams identified over 40 properties across the city in town and district centres and neighbourhoods. The list has subsequently grown with the addition of a number of historic buildings. The list of properties for the environmental sub group area can be found in Appendix 2.
5. Action is being prioritised so that a first tranche of sites will be tackled in year one; ranging from 'speedy resolution possible' sites to tricky sites where the problems are complex and where action needs to be started now, but may take longer to finalise. As such not all of the properties will be dealt with fully in the first year but significant progress will be made.

6. The Environmental Sub Group is asked to comment on the properties included within their area, and suggest any additional properties for consideration.

## **Recommendations**

The Environmental Sub Group is asked to:

1. note and support the approach outlined in this report;
2. consider the properties identified in their area so far to ensure that it includes the worst offenders.

### **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1. To seek the Environmental Sub Groups endorsement to the strategy proposed and advise on properties included.

### **2. Background information**

- 2.1. Across the City, there is a large number derelict and nuisance sites. They impact upon the attractiveness and potential of town and district centres, and provide a poor image of neighbourhoods. Action to deal with sites has historically taken place in isolation, which is inefficient. This project aims to improve coordination across the Council and its partners to more effectively deal with problem properties.

### **3. Main issues**

- 3.1. A steering group was established in August 2011, chaired by the Acting Chief Asset Management Officer. The group includes representatives from the Area Leadership Teams, Asset Management, Planning Services, Regeneration Programmes and Environmental Services . The group was tasked with establishing an approach for dealing with derelict and nuisance properties across the city.
- 3.2. To inform the scoping of the project, the Area Leadership Teams helped to identify over 40 problem properties in a mixture of public and private ownership. This project includes properties in town and district centres where this project can support continued improvements to enhance their overall sustainability, and nuisance properties in neighbourhoods which are detrimental to the well-being and quality of life of local residents. In addition a number of historic properties are included where work needs to be progressed in order to secure their long term future.
- 3.3. The list will be reviewed regularly. If members feel additional properties should be included on the list, these will be considered when the list is next reviewed.
- 3.4. To ensure the project is manageable and that resources are utilised in the most effective way, delivery will be phased. Action will be prioritised to ensure that a range of properties and problems are tackled to generate 'quick wins' and make progress with more complex issues. Initially, c30 properties will be prioritised.
- 3.5. The way in which sites in private and Council ownership are dealt with differs. For Council owned sites, priority is given to safeguarding the health & safety of the public and dealing with any immediate issues relating to anti-social behaviour. The future use of properties is also considered. Where properties are privately owned, the Council has a range of options and powers at its disposal. A carrot and stick approach is proposed whereby enforcement powers are used alongside approaches to work more collaboratively with property owners. This is outlined diagrammatically at appendix 1.

### **4. Corporate Considerations**

#### **4.1. Consultation and Engagement**

The opportunity to tackle nuisance and derelict properties has been discussed by Area Leaders and Area Committee Chairs. Councillor Gruen and Cllr Lewis will take joint responsibility for the project.

#### **4.2. Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

An Equality Impact Assessment screening has been completed.

#### **4.3. Council Policies and City Priorities**

This project contributes to the delivery of a number of the City Priority themes including Housing and Regeneration, Sustainable Economy and Culture, and Safer and Stronger Communities.

### **5. Resources and Value for Money**

5.1. A rolling budget of £500,000 over the next three years is included within the Capital Programme. This will be used to support enforcement action and the preparation of site appraisals and planning briefs. Existing staffing resources will be used. If appraisals of sites in private ownership show there to be a benefit to the Council in acquiring a property, additional resources may be required to further investigate and progress acquisition.

### **6. Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

6.1. Legal services will support legal proceedings and are represented on the steering group. Capacity within the service may be an issue due to resources being lost.

### **7. Risk Management**

7.1. Possible medium to high-level risks related to the implementation and potential outcomes associated with this project are as follows:

- Ensuring that action taking represents value for money;
- Failure to identify and appropriately prioritise properties.

### **8. Conclusions**

8.1. There are a large number of disused, derelict and nuisance sites across the city, in both Council and private ownership for which different approaches must be adopted.

8.2. A strategy has been prepared which will improve co-ordination across the Council as a means of progressing actions.

8.3. Input is being sought from local politicians to ensure that the list of sites is comprehensive.

### **9. Recommendation**

The Environmental Sub Group is asked to:

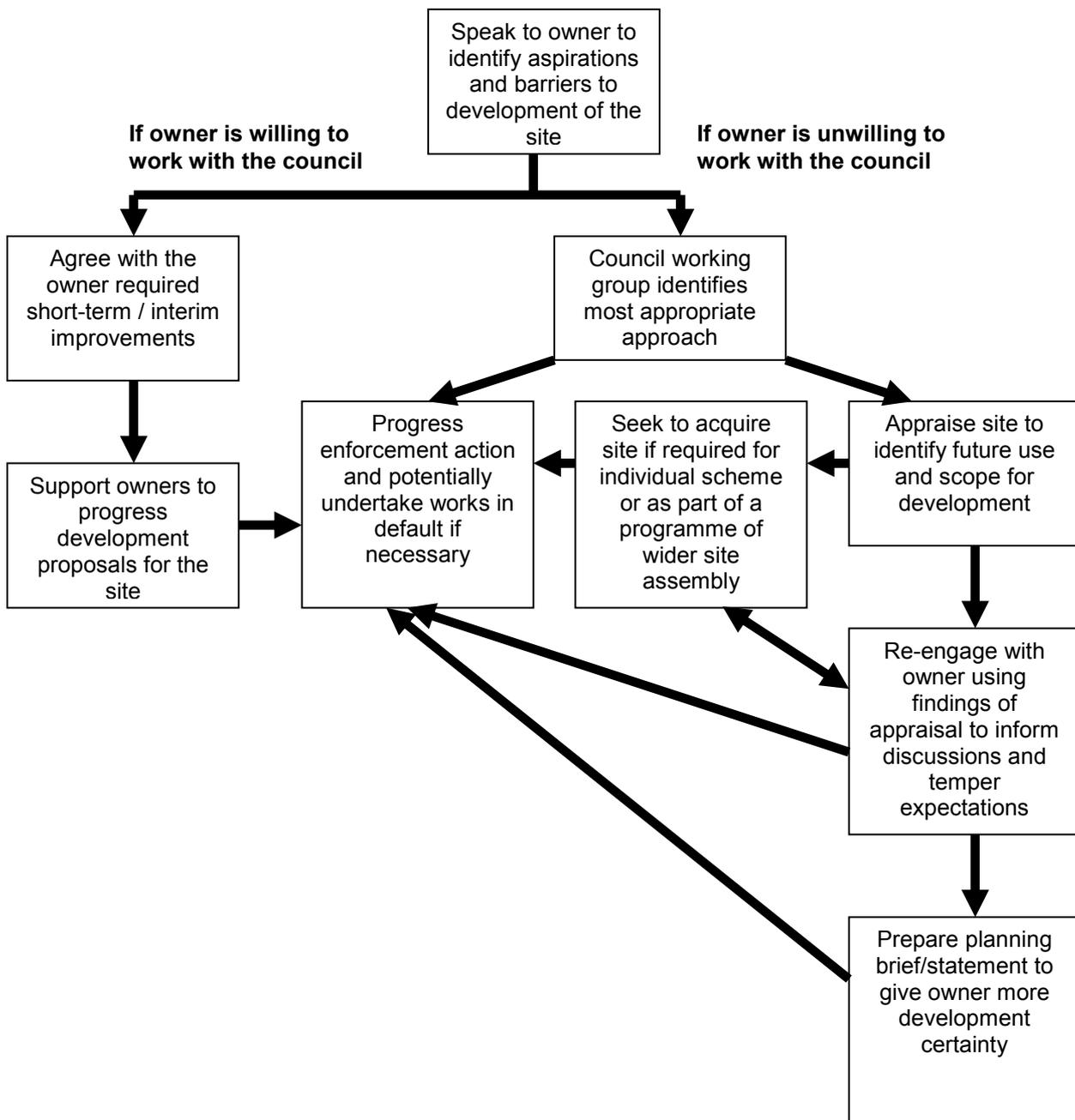
9.1 note and support the approach outlined in this report;

9.2 consider the properties identified in their area so far to ensure that it includes the worst offenders.

### **10. Background documents**

Equality Impact Assessment Screening Form

**Sites in private ownership**



## **APPENDIX 2**

<b>Site Name &amp; Address</b>	<b>Locality Area</b>	<b>Ownership Details</b>
Former Royal Park School, Queens Road, Hyde Park, Leeds LS6 1NY	Inner North West Leeds	LEEDS CITY COUNCIL Civic Hall, Leeds LS1 1UR
Former Ace of Spades Club, 175-177 Woodhouse Street, Leeds LS6 2NY	Inner North West Leeds	KISSUN PARMAR, RAJESH PARMAR and PRAVIN CHANDRA PARMAR of 17/19, Cookridge Lane, Leeds LS16 7LQ
Abbey Mills, Abbey Road, Kirkstall, Leeds	Inner North West Leeds	LEEDS CITY COUNCIL Civic Hall, Leeds LS1 1UR
Meanwood Mansion, Meanwood, Leeds	Inner North West Leeds	tbc