

**Report of the South East Area Leader**

**Report to Outer East Area Committee**

**Date: 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2012**

**Subject: Derelict & Nuisance Sites**

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Garforth & Swillington Kippax & Methley Cross Gates & Whinmoor Temple Newsam		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" 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?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:		

**Summary of main issues**

1. The report provides some background to the derelict and nuisance property programme established in 2011.
2. The report provides Area Committee with details of actions undertaken and pending in the South East area

**Recommendations**

3. Area Committee is requested to note progress and raise any questions.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To provide Area Committee with background to the derelict and nuisance property programme.
- 1.2 To provide information on actions undertaken and pending along with successes of the project in the South East area in the projects first year.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 This programme was established in 2011 to improve coordination across the Council in dealing with the worst derelict and eyesore properties across the city which are causing a nuisance and blight on communities.
- 2.2 A programme steering group and working group have been established to address the issue which includes representatives from various parts of the Council. In February 2011, Executive Board agreed to support the programme with a rolling budget of £500,000 over 3 year period from the capital programme..

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 In 2011 a programme steering group and working group were established to address derelict and nuisance properties across the city with Leeds City Council supporting the work with a £500,000 budget.
- 3.2 Area Support Teams were invited to submit their 'Top 10' problem sites. The sites were identified from a number of sources including Ward Member complaints, sites raised at 'tasking' meetings or community forums and sites identified by enforcement officers. Area Committee Chairs and Area Committee Environmental Sub Group also identified properties and in a Yorkshire Evening Post article, members of the public were invited to suggest properties.
- 3.3 Those identified as being the most problematic in South East Leeds included council owned buildings/sites, privately owned buildings/sites and sites where the council has the freehold but the building is privately owned.
- 3.4 The buildings/sites identified in South East Leeds were the following:
  - The Hermitage (Kippax)
  - The Cottingley Arms (Cottingley)
  - South Leeds Sports Centre (Beeston)
  - The Malvern Public House (Beeston)
  - The Middleton Arms (Middleton)
  - Ex Doctors Surgery at Low Grange View (Belle Isle)
  - The Whinmoor Public House (Stanks)

- Barley Hill Fields housing development (Garforth)
- Park Lees Adult Education Centre (Beeston)
- The Squinting Cat Public (Swarcliffe)
- East Leeds Sports Centre (Halton Moor)
- The Spotted Cow Public House (Holbeck)
- The Halton Moor Public House (Halton Moor)
- Stank Hall Barn (Beeston)

3.5 A total of 74 properties have been identified across the city. A first tranche of 34 properties were prioritised in year 1 of the programme, although some of these will take longer to resolve. As a result of the successes outlined below there is now capacity within the programme to prioritise a further tranche of properties. Tranche 2 is in the process of being formed. A further update report will be presented to the Environmental Sub Group shortly.

3.6 The primary role of the derelict and nuisance property programme is to tackle the nuisance and eyesore issues which affect properties and impact upon local residents and businesses. Once the main issues have been tackled the property will be monitored and contact will be maintained with owners to find a long term redevelopment/ reuse solution. Only once a sustainable solution is identified will a property be considered to be completed.

3.7 **Completed Properties** - The former Cottingley Arms is the only property in the area which has been completed following demolition of the building and implementation of a landscaping scheme.

3.8 **Improved Properties** - Properties where the nuisance and eyesore issues have been resolved and are now subject to identifying a longer term solution are:

**Park Lees Adult Education Centre** - Property has been demolished and site secured. LCC Property Services will be marketing the site in 2013.

**The former Middleton Arms** - The building has been demolished and Aldi have secured planning permission for a new store. Revised planning application submitted to reconfigure the car parking. Redevelopment of the site is anticipated to commence once this application has been determined.

**The Whinmoor Public House** - The lease was transferred to a new leaseholder who has recently re-opened part of this building as a public house. Full re-opening of building as a public house is targeted for December 2012.

**Barley Hill Fields** - This housing development had lain empty and half finished since 2008 after the developer went into administration. It attracted vandalism and nuisance with one house being burnt out in 2009. The development was

purchased from the administrator by Chartered Homes Ltd and development recommenced in June 2012 with a target date for completion in Summer 2013.

### **3.9 Ongoing work to secure improvements – Work is progressing on the following properties as a means of securing their improvement:**

**The Hermitage** - Works in default will be undertaken by LCC under S215 of the Town and Country Planning act with costs to be recharged to owner. Works will make building safe and wind/water tight. Start date expected in the new year.

**South Leeds Sports Centre** - Building is identified by LCC for demolition but the demolition budget is stretched at present. The site is identified for a school and nursery. Anticipated completion date September 2014.

**The Malvern Public House** - The building is to be converted to a convenience store subject to resolving legal issues with the leaseholders bank. Work was anticipated to take place on site in October 2012 but is now delayed whilst agreement is reached between the leaseholders and their bank.

**Former Dr's Surgery, 2 Low Grange View** - This building has been empty for many years. Contact has been made with the owner threatening enforcement action. This led to a planning application being submitted which has now been withdrawn as the proposal was unacceptable. Attempts are being made to discuss this matter with the owner, although enforcement action is to be continued to strengthen the Council's position.

**The Former Squinting Cat Public House** - This public house has been empty for approx 2 years and was attracting vandals/nuisance etc. It was regularly raised at tasking meetings in 2011 as a nuisance site. The freehold is with LCC although the property is leased out. The Council is currently in discussions with the leaseholder and another interested party who have expressed an interest in bringing forward a development on the site, with a view to facilitating redevelopment of the site.

**East Leeds Sports Centre** - Various options have been investigated including sale of the site and the site being transferred for community use. The School Cluster and its partners are looking into the potential for re-opening the building for their use. A section of the building is still used by Youth Service.

**The Former Spotted Cow Public House** - Derelict public house been empty for years and in poor condition. A number of letters sent to owners regarding the condition of the building and as no response was received a Section 79 Building Act Notice was served via Royal Mail recorded delivery as the owners are based in southern England. However, this was not received by the owner who failed to collect the notice from the post office. Further attempts are now being made to serve the notice.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

4.1.1 The properties identified were agreed at the South East Area Chairs meeting prior to the submission being made. The sites were also discussed and supported by the respective Environmental sub-groups for South East. There have subsequently been press releases and items on local news programmes that have brought this project to the attention of the public.

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

4.2.2 Internal and statutory partners are committed to equality and cohesion and all projects they are involved with will have considered these issues.

## **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

4.1.1 The projects outlined in this report contribute to targets and priorities set out in the following council policies:

- Vision for Leeds
- Safer & Stronger Communities Plan

## **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 There is a budget of £500,000 to support this project. However, in many instances any resources used from that budget will be recouped by the council from the owner. Value for money forms part of the Design Cost Report (DCR) and programme monitoring when requesting funds from this budget.

## **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 There are no key or major decisions being made that would be eligible for call in.

4.5.2 All notices served are subject to legal advice prior to the action being taken.

## **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 A full risk assessment has been carried out for this project.

## **5 Conclusions**

5.1 The report provides Area Committee with an update on the progress of the derelict and nuisance sites project.

5.2 The report focuses on the sites in South East Leeds.

## **6 Recommendations**

6.1 Area Committee is requested to note the progress made in South East Leeds in addressing the issue of derelict and nuisance sites and raise any questions or queries.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

### **7.1 Executive Board Report – 17 July 2012**

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.