

Report To:	CABINET
Date:	29TH JANUARY 2024
Heading:	DISPOSAL OF UNVIABLE GARAGE AND PLOT SITES
Executive Lead Member:	CLLR ANDY MEAKIN
Ward/s:	ANNESLEY & KIRKBY WOODHOUSE, CARSIC, GREENWOOD & SUMMIT, HUCKNALL WEST
Key Decision:	YES
Subject to Call-In:	YES

Purpose of Report

To advise Members about the process that has been followed to review the viability and future use potential of Council owned garage and plot sites and to recommend disposal for those sites considered unviable and not suitable for the purpose of affordable housing development.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. To note the process officers have followed to review the viability and future use of Council owned Housing Revenue Account garage and plot sites.**
- 2. To grant delegated authority to the Executive Director of Transformation, in conjunction with the Executive Director of Governance, to dispose of sites assessed as being economically unviable in current use and unsuitable for the purpose of affordable housing development. Disposal will be in accordance with the Council's Disposals Policy and will be on the basis of achieving best value wherever possible.**
- 3. To delegate authority to the Service Manager – Commercial Development to finalise the detail of the transaction(s) with the Assistant Director - Legal**

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

The Council has a large number of garage and plot sites under the ownership of the Housing Revenue Account. Some sites are in good condition, have a high level of demand and generate a steady income stream, others are in disrepair with little or no demand from local residents. Where demand is low, and the site requires significant investment, it is not economically viable for the Council to retain the site as it is and consideration needs to be given to its future use. A small number of sites will be suitable for affordable housing development but where this is not possible consideration needs to be given to disposing of the site, to remove the ongoing maintenance and potentially generate a capital receipt for the Council's Housing Revenue Account.

Changing use will also help tackle issues of anti-social behaviour that have become evident on some of the sites.

Alternative Options Considered

Continue to use all sites for plot/garage purposes. This is not appropriate as a number of sites require significant investment with little likelihood of expenditure being recovered through rental income and low demand at these locations.

Detailed Information

The Council owns garage and plots sites across the District. Plots sites are those whereby a resident rents a section of land, large enough to park their vehicle and they erect their own garage.

Sites vary in respect of their size; some are large enough to accommodate 20+ garages whereas others contain as few as 2 garages. Likewise, demand varies enormously, a small number of garage sites have full occupancy along with a small waiting list, whereas on some other sites there is a 100% vacancy rate. A small number of sites have been fenced off and secured due to the garages being in a dilapidated state, beyond economical repair. Vacancy rates on plot sites are particularly high, in part because of the requirement of the plot holder to erect a garage at their own expense.

As part of the review the following was considered for each site:

- Current and likely future levels of demand
- Rental income levels
- Current and future maintenance and repair obligations
- Investment needed in the site as a whole.
- Payback period, i.e., how long will it take to recover what has been spent from the rental income
- Alternative parking in the local area
- Levels of Anti-Social Behaviour and other management issues
- Restrictions or caveats in the site deeds
- Potential to utilise the site for affordable housing development
- Title reports for the sites have been checked to ensure there are no issues regarding a potential sale.

The review concluded that some sites should be retained in their current form and a handful are suitable for affordable housing development. The remaining sites are not considered economically viable in their current form or are suitable for development. For these sites the recommendation is that they are considered for disposal.

Officers have prioritised the first few sites for disposal and subject to approval of this report will commence the process as soon as possible.

Ashgate, Sutton in Ashfield

An ex-plot site within the Carsic estate, this is a large but narrow site which at best would be large enough to accommodate two properties. Unfortunately, the sheer length of the site, which is currently tarmac and concrete, alongside the narrow entrance and existing substation make it unviable for ADC to develop.

Forest Street, Annesley

This is another plot site, with 6 existing self-built garages currently in situ. The garages are all in a state of disrepair.

Lancaster Drive, Hucknall

Another plot site, this area is unfortunately used by existing properties as access to the rear of their homes. Currently it appears that residents in the area are using it as unofficial parking. Any sale will be subject to established access rights, with a new owner being responsible for managing or terminating any unofficial parking.

Meadow Close, Kirkby in Ashfield

A garage site containing a row of 6 garages at the entrance to the street.

All sites are currently not used as garage sites.

Implications

Corporate Plan: The Corporate Plan sets out the desire to meet financial shortfalls, and disposal of these sites will bring capital receipts for the Housing Revenue

Legal:

The Legal Team will provide advice and assistance in relation to the disposals set out above if approved by Cabinet. [RLD 20/12/2023]

Finance: [PH 18/12/2023].

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	N/A
General Fund – Capital Programme	N/A
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	Savings on expenditure needed to maintain these sites
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	Potential HRA Capital Receipts on sales

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
Do not sell	None

Human Resources:

Not applicable

Environmental/Sustainability:

It is expected that any development on the site will be subject to environmental and sustainability requirements during the planning process.

Equalities:

Not applicable

Other Implications:

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Urgency

Not applicable

Reason(s) for Exemption –

Not applicable

Background Papers

Report Author and Contact Officer

Andrew Kirkland
Housing Development Lead Officer
andrewkirkland@ashfield.gov.uk

Matthew Kirk
Service Manager – Commercial Development
matthew.kirk@ashfield.gov.uk

Sponsoring Executive Director

Paul Parkinson
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - Operations
paul.parkinson@ashfield.gov.uk