



AGENDA ITEM: 5(g)

CABINET: 12th November 2013

Report of: Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration

Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor A. Owens

Contact for further information: Rachel Kneale (Extn. 2611)

Email: rachel.kneale@westlancs.gov.uk

Georgina Isherwood (Extn.5123)

Email: georgina.isherwood@westlancs.gov.uk

SUBJECT: STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PROJECT

Wards affected: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To update Members on the progress of the Strategic Asset Management Project; to advise on the outcomes of the Scott ward; and to seek authority to dispose of assets.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the contents of the report, including the work undertaken by officers to date, and the progress on the assets previously identified for disposal be noted.
- 2.2 That the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration be authorised to take the actions recommended in Appendix A in relation to the 58 sites in the Scott ward.
- 2.3 That the sites set out in Appendix D are no longer required for their current uses as set out in that Appendix and that they be appropriated as required for regeneration purposes for the reasons set out in paragraph 5.1 of this report.
- 2.4 That the details in paragraph 4.2 relating to the proposed new allotment site off Clucas Gardens be noted.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 The Strategic Asset Management Project commenced in September 2010 and to date asset reviews have been completed for the following wards:

Burscough West	Ashurst
Knowsley	Parbold
Wrightington	Digmoor
Birch Green	Scarisbrick
North Meols	Aughton & Downholland
Newburgh	Derby
Skelmersdale North	

3.2 Some of the assets have development potential and, where appropriate, planning applications have been submitted to secure their enhanced value. To ensure there is no delay in marketing sites with an enhanced value anticipated to exceed the current delegation level of £20,000, authorisation for disposal has been sought as each ward is referred to Cabinet.

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

4.1 The Scott Ward required the assessment of 58 sites. The results are set out in Appendix A. There are a number of sites with potential for alternative uses, including residential development. In total 4 sites have been identified for disposal; 2 identified for future disposal and the remaining 52 sites for retention. Site SC5.1b, land to the rear of 24-28 Clucas Gardens (Appendix C), is to be retained and utilised as allotments for local residents. At Appendix B, site plans are available for the 4 sites identified for disposal.

4.2 The proposed allotment site at Clucas Gardens could be included with the existing allotments. At present the allotments are managed directly by the Council, whereas the long term goal is for the site to be self managed when a properly constituted allotment society is established and a lease granted. It is envisaged that the allotment society will take responsibility for any costs associated with bringing this land into cultivation. It is not anticipated that this site will be a statutory allotment site.

4.3 Planning Applications were submitted in June 2013 for 2 sites in the Birch Green and Ashurst Wards, both having previously received authority to be disposed. However, at the September 2013 Planning Committee Meeting, the application at Flordon in Birch Green was refused by Members, and Officers recommended that the application at Marlborough Court in Ashurst be withdrawn following a request by Members for further information.

4.4 Since the September 2013 Cabinet Meeting, work has been continuing on the marketing of sites previously approved for disposal which also have secured planning permission. Sites at Trevor Road in Burscough and Hoole Lane in Banks have both received offers, with the Hoole Lane site proceeding towards completion.

5.0 APPROPRIATION

- 5.1 The Council acquires and holds property for various statutory purposes in order to perform its functions. The process of changing the purpose for which it is held is described as appropriation. The general power to appropriate is set out in Section 122 Local Government Act 1972, which empowers the Council to appropriate land for any purposes for which it is authorised if it is no longer required of the purpose for which it is held immediately before the appropriation.
- 5.2 The current uses of some of the sites considered under the SAMP process do not provide the best use of the land/buildings. Many of these sites could be better utilised for alternative purposes, as defined in the SAMP process. These include those sites set out in Appendix D. It will be necessary to appropriate all of these sites from their current use as set out in Appendix D to regeneration purposes.

6.0 PROPOSALS

- 6.1 Appendix A sets out recommendations for the 58 sites in the Scott ward.
- 6.2 Officers will not spend time working on the assets identified within the ward to progress to pre-application and planning application stages until the start of 2014.
- 6.3 Officers will continue to consider the Wards previously identified in the Ward Mapping Delivery Plan.

7.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPACTS

- 7.1 The outcomes of the Strategic Asset Management Project and the nature of any schemes that come out of this project will ultimately ensure a number of key objectives of the Community Strategy are met, including affordable housing, assisting young and older people, the economy and jobs and better environment, plus cross cutting themes such as reducing deprivation in our communities.

8.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Securing the enhanced valuation of assets to be disposed will continue to require resources e.g. planning application fees, surveys etc. It was reported at the last Cabinet that as a long term measure there will be a need to pump prime the project by the retention of a small percentage of future capital receipts or a budget being made available from revenue resources. Further details on this will be reported back to Cabinet in due course.
- 8.2 At the start of August 2013 the full time Graduate Planner Post was vacated. This position worked primarily on the SAMP. This has left just 1 full time and 1 part time officer to work on the project. With work now underway on the Employment area remodelling, further slippage than reported at September's

meeting will occur in the delivery of the Ward Mapping Plan. Work is currently underway to replace this member of staff on a full time basis and Members will be kept updated on this matter.

9.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

9.1 As previously reported, the project has demonstrated that many of the assets held by the Council have the potential for development or for utilising in a different way. If this potential is realised, their value will be significantly enhanced either financially and / or as benefit to the community. There will be opportunities in some cases to generate capital receipts from a disposal. If the assets are not considered in a timely fashion, taking into consideration other development such as Skelmersdale Town Centre project, this could represent a significant loss of capital receipts for the Council or the reduction in value if a successful adverse possession claim is made by a third party.

10.0 CONCLUSIONS

10.1 It is important to continue to roll out the Strategic Asset Management Project across the Borough to enable all assets to be identified and assessed, but equally officers need to spend time working on assets categorised as 1 for pre-applications and planning applications, together with other work. The project will ultimately ensure the asset register is fully up to date and the ownership of all the assets is challenged to determine those that are suitable for further development are identified and progressed.

Background Documents

West Lancashire Strategic Asset Management Plan, which is available at:
www.westlancs.gov.uk/living_in_west_lancs/regeneration_projects/action_plans.aspx

Equality Impact Assessment

The previous Equality Impact Assessment undertaken for the Cabinet report prepared for the September 2010 meeting will suffice for this report as the content of the project remains the same.

Appendices

Appendix A - Scott ward asset recommendations
Appendix B – Location plans of Category 1 sites
Appendix C – Location Plan of Clucas Gardens Allotment site
Appendix D – Land to be appropriated