



**AGENDA ITEM: 5(a)**

**CABINET: 13<sup>th</sup> January 2015**

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**Report of: Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration**

**Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mrs J. Houlgrave**

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**SUBJECT – 192 TO 198 ENNERDALE, TANHOUSE, SKELMERSDALE (FORMER HOUSING OFFICE)**

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Wards affected: Tanhouse

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To agree an approach for the future use of 192 to 198 Ennerdale, Tanhouse, Skelmersdale.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration, be authorised to demolish 192 -198 Ennerdale, make good the site and retain the site for a possible redevelopment project obtaining all necessary approvals and consents.

2.2 That Assistant Director of Community Services make arrangements for relocating the CCTV relay equipment.

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**3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The subject property is of non-traditional construction (Wimpey No Fines) was originally built as four purpose built flats. The property is shown hatched on the attached plan (Appendix A).

- 3.2 The premises became vacant in the late 1990's and in approximately 2004 converted to a housing office as part of the Council's strategy for providing neighbourhood offices.
- 3.3 Apart from a short term let and training exercise the property has remained vacant since the Housing Department moved out in 2011.
- 3.4 A report was presented to Cabinet on 11 November 2014 and it was resolved:
- That this item be deferred one cycle as cabinet are not minded to convert the office back to housing units, nor let it for community use.
  - That the Assistant Direct Housing and Regeneration be requested to report on:
    - i) Alternative arrangements for the CCTV relay equipment.
    - ii) Disposal of the property for a private sector conversion to flats.
    - iii) Demolition and the retention of the site for a possible future redevelopment project.

#### **4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 A feasibility study undertaken by the Council to convert the premises back to social housing concluded that such a scheme was possible but this option was not acceptable to Cabinet.
- 4.2 A private sector conversion to flats is unlikely to generate a substantial capital receipt as the conversion costs would still be considerable due to the poor condition and the requirement to comply with building regulations, in particular energy efficiency standards.
- 4.3 The viability of a conversion is also compromised by low end values for property in this locality.
- 4.4 The property's present use is for "offices" however, planning permission would not be required to convert the property back to residential use, as it would benefit from permitted development rights.
- 4.5 The premises presently accommodates CCTV relay equipment which covers key areas in Skelmersdale including Council owned assets at Sandy Lane and Digmaor Shopping Centres.
- 4.6 One of the other options considered was to relocate the internal equipment associated with the CCTV relay station into a cupboard in the downstairs area. This relocation would mean that the equipment was not in a private residence, but was in a communal area. This option was priced at £1350 (two days' work). However, leaving equipment in and on a non-council building would inevitably lead to issues in relation to access to any of the equipment. The relay station plays a vital role in transmitting images from two key cameras back to the suite and any delays in fixing the equipment due to access issues, could lead to crimes not being prevented or detected for an unreasonable period. Additionally, there is a far greater risk of the equipment being vandalised in such a communal area. Clearly either of these scenarios is unacceptable.

4.7 Alternatively the premises could be demolished and the site retained for future redevelopment which could possibly accommodate a number of terraced houses or flat development dependent on demand and financial viability and subject to an acceptable scheme in planning terms. In the event of demolition no further expenditure would be required on the premises.

## **5.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

5.1 The sustainability issues will vary depending on the future proposals for the premises.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The cost of demolition and restoration of the site is likely to be in the region of £25,000. There would be no further expenditure on the building and the possibility of a future capital receipt if land could be sold for redevelopment purposes in the future.

6.2 In the event of the premises being sold for commercial conversion purposes the Council would only be likely to gain a small capital receipt and this would be subject to the restrictions on the receipt of sales of housing properties.

6.3 The cost of relocating the CCTV relay equipment to a stand-alone relay column is £13,074

6.4 At present the premises are mothballed having been drained down but are still attracting the costs of insurance, empty business rates and electrical and gas standard charges amounting to approximately £5,000 per annum.

6.5 The demolition costs would be met. From the savings identified from the mid-year review of the HRA capital programme.

6.6 The cost of relocating the CCTV relay equipment can be met from the projected favourable budget variance on the GRA that has been identified in the mid-year review.

## **7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

7.1 If the property is sold the purchaser may not carry out works for a considerable period and therefore the property would become a blight on the area and possibly attract vandalism.

7.2 If the property is demolished there is the loss of a “built asset” but the resulting area could be enhanced and the emergence of a “land asset” with potential development value.

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### **Background Documents**

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

### **Equality Impact Assessment**

The decision does not have any direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Site Plan.

Appendix B – Minute of Landlord Services Committee – 8 January 2015 (to follow)