



**AGENDA ITEM: 5(I)**

**CABINET: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2015**

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

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

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor Moran**

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**SUBJECT: STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT PROJECT**

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Borough Wide Interest

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To update Members on the progress of the Strategic Asset Management Project 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 90 sites in the Moorside Ward together with the windfall site at Laburnum Drive in Skelmersdale South, Appendix B, and take any actions necessary to secure disposal of category 1 sites.

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 the report.

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**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	Scott
Rufford	Aughton Park
Tanhouse	Moorside

- 3.2 Some of the assets have development potential and, where appropriate, planning applications have been submitted to secure their enhanced value. At the 16th September 2014 Cabinet meeting, authority was given to adopt a new ward mapping delivery plan and in accordance with this the appraisal of assets within Burscough East began in July 2014. Also at this meeting authority was given to adopt a new Member consultation process which means that Ward Councillors are consulted on a face to face basis prior to and following their Ward being appraised. The Portfolio Holder is also consulted in the same manner following the completed appraisal of assets within a ward.

#### 4.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 As per the approved Ward Delivery Plan, the Moorside Ward was appraised during the months of April 2015 to June 2015. This Ward has a large number of Council owned assets, requiring the assessment of 90 sites. Officers met with both Ward Councillors prior to and upon completion of all site appraisals. The Ward Councillors raised no objections to the recommendations being put forward as outlined in Appendix A. In total 3 sites have been identified for disposal, and these are identified on the plans attached as Appendix C. Of these sites, 1 has previously been authorised for disposal at the Cabinet meeting in September 2012 with the other having potential for residential development. The category 2 sites, of which there are 7, require further investigatory work in terms of development with adjacent sites or retention until clawback has reduced significantly. Clawback is a payment made to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). It applies to land within Skelmersdale which was transferred into the Council's ownership but with the agreement that should it be sold on the open market, a percentage of the receipt has to be paid to the HCA. At present the majority of clawback stands at 50% with a yearly decrease of 2%. Previous correspondence with the HCA has confirmed that they have maintained their stance and are not willing to reduce the percentage of clawback.
- 4.2 It was reported at the June 2015 Cabinet meeting that Officers had undertaken a very broad sweep of all remaining wards to ascertain if there were any "easy win" windfall sites. From this exercise 3 were identified as category 2's to dispose of in the future but 1 of these sites, land adjacent to 15 Laburnum Drive in Skelmersdale South, is now ready to bring forward for disposal. Investigatory surveys were required in relation to historic mining issues on the site and Officers are now in receipt of a Coal Mining Risk Assessment for the land which does not preclude development of it. The opinion of Ward Councillors has been sought and a site meeting has taken place. Of those which responded, no

overriding objections were received. Authority is now sought from Members to dispose of this site (Appendix B).

- 4.3 Currently work is being undertaken by officers in Housing to look at the future options for the Council's garages across the Borough. This is exploring options to ensure the efficient use of stock and improve the satisfaction for tenants. Within the Moorside ward alone there are a high number of Council-owned garages and this was the same within the Tanhouse, Skelmersdale North, Digmoor and Birch Green Wards. Given that this current work is being undertaken, all of the garages within Moorside have, at this point in time, been categorised as 3's i.e. to retain.
- 4.4 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 of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act") which empowers the Council to appropriate land for any purpose for which it is authorised if it is no longer required for the purpose for which it is held immediately before the appropriation. The current use of the sites considered for disposal 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 by the SAMP process. These include those sites set out in Appendix D. It is necessary to appropriate these sites from their current use to regeneration purposes. The appropriation of land as part of the SAMP has been an integral process since the project began and enables all capital receipts from any sales to be held in the Council's General Revenue Account. The spending of the income from these sales is not restricted to projects or works within a particular Service Area and thus could be utilised for a number of reasons e.g. housing, leisure, regeneration etc.
- 4.5 Since the June 2015 Cabinet meeting, work has been continuing on sites previously approved for disposal. This can be summarised as:
- The sale of the site at Hillock Lane in Scarisbrick has been completed and the sale of land at Garnett Place in Skelmersdale is progressing.
  - Offers have been accepted on the sites at Hoole Lane in Banks, Sephton Drive in Ormskirk and Elmers Green Lane in Ashurst.
  - Planning permission has been granted, subject to the signing of a s106 agreement, for outline residential development on the former Westec House site and full planning permission for a dwelling on the site at Trevor Road in Burscough.
  - The site at Trevor Road in Burscough is currently being marketed.
  - A planning application has been submitted for residential development at Tarlswood in Skelmersdale North. Officers met with one Ward Councillor on site and obtained views via email from the other. Neither raised any objections to the proposal being put forward.
  - Two pre-application enquiries have been submitted to Planning for consideration in relation to potential residential developments.

## **5.0 PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 Officers will continue to work towards mapping wards in accordance with the ward mapping delivery plan agreed at the September 2014 Cabinet meeting.

5.2 Where sites have been identified for disposal and agreed by Cabinet, Officers will continue to progress sites through the pre-application and planning application stages.

5.3 In accordance with the previously agreed Ward Mapping Delivery Plan, the next ward to be considered is Burscough East.

## **6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPACTS**

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

## **7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Securing the enhanced valuation of assets to be disposed will continue to require resources e.g. pre-application submissions, planning application fees, surveys and the professional drawing of plans when required etc. It has been reported previously to 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.

## **8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

8.1 As previously reported, the project has demonstrated that many of the assets held by the Council have the potential for development or for utilising the land in a different way. If this potential is realised, their value will be significantly enhanced either financially or as a benefit to the community. In some cases there will be opportunities to generate capital receipts from their disposal and in other instances benefit to the local community is achieved through the creation of new or improved functional usage of land, such as the creation of allotments. If the assets are not considered in a timely fashion, taking into consideration other important areas of work, 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.

## **9.0 CONCLUSIONS**

9.1 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. The project will ultimately ensure the asset register is fully up to date and the continued ownership of all the assets is challenged to determine those that are suitable for further development are identified and progressed.

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## **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](http://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 - Moorside Recommendations
- Appendix B – Windfall Site
- Appendix C - Location plans of category 1 sites
- Appendix D - Land to be appropriated