



CABINET: 7 November 2017

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**Report of: Director of Housing and Inclusion**

**Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor J. Forshaw**

**Contact for further information: Mrs T Berry (Extn. 5227)**  
**(E-mail: [tracy.berry@westlancs.gov.uk](mailto:tracy.berry@westlancs.gov.uk))**

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**SUBJECT: GARAGE STRATEGY 2016-20 - UPDATE**

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Wards affected: Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To update Cabinet on the 2016/17 Garage Strategy Action Plan as detailed at Appendix A of the strategy document.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That progress to date be noted.

2.2 That consideration to further funding and capital work activity for the garage stock be included in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget process for future years.

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## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 At its meeting on the 13th September 2016, Cabinet resolved:

‘That the Garage Strategy 2016-2020 attached at Appendix A to the report be approved’.

3.2 As part of the strategy there was a requirement to provide an update on the action plan in the strategy document.

3.3 Funding was subsequently approved in the HRA for 2016/17 and 2017/18 of £113,000 and £117,000. Further funding of £124,000 was then approved for 2018/19 by Council at its meeting in February 2017.

- 3.4 The action plan identified 3 key areas of activity:
- A. Assessment and work in Tanhouse, Digmaor and surface and un-surfaced garage sites
  - B. Implement agreed changes after community consultation in January-March 2017
  - C. Review all peppercorn rented garages and sites by November 2017

#### **4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 Community consultation for garage stock in Tanhouse was completed in March 2017. This included involvement of ward councillors and residents.
- 4.2 Work has now been successfully completed on 194 garages in Ennerdale, Enstone and Egerton in Tanhouse and has significantly improved the visual aspect of the estates. Feedback from residents in these estates has been very positive and they are appreciative of the investment that has taken place. Work continues with improvements and further investment to the garage stock on Elmridge. Appendix B demonstrates a typical "before and after" picture of a block garages on the Egerton estate which shows the enhancements and improvements to the aesthetic appearance of the area.
- 4.3 The further investment in the garages on the estate has increased the demand to rent them. Subsequently a further 25 garages have now been let which will generate an additional annual revenue income of around £7,000 per annum.
- 4.4 Work has been completed to identify garages currently being charged at a peppercorn rent and these issues have now been addressed so that all garage rent is set at consistent market levels.
- 4.5 A new policy for the storage of goods following eviction or abandonment is being developed as part of this project. This will include a new charging structure for the removal, storage and disposal of goods and belongings. Further work is taking place on a potential partnership with Street Scene to recycle unwanted items and clearance of goods from garages.
- 4.6 Although some garage stock on the Digmaor estate was identified in the strategy as requiring further work, it has since been established that this is not the area in most need. A number of void garages are on the Beechtrees estate and are being addressed as part of the Capital Estates Revival project. There is also adequate parking provisions in the area and therefore demand is not high. However, Old Skelmersdale has been identified as an area where investment to improve the garages is likely to encourage additional lettings and therefore focus will now turn to this area next. The strategy is flexible in its approach to ensure that each area is addressed in a way that suits the needs of the area rather than a "one size fits all" solution.
- 4.7 The future work in relation to garages will be incorporated within the annual capital and revenue estimates proposals to ensure continued focus on maintaining and improving garage stock as part of the normal property services activity.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 As there was a underspend of the £113,000 2016/17 budget, to enable further detailed research and consultation to take place before any work was commissioned, the remaining budget was carried forward to the 2017/18 budget.
- 5.2 A sum of £117,000 is included in the 2017/18 HRA estimates plus the carried forward funding giving a total budget of £229,000. The estimated spend on works to date is approximately £117,400 on items such as replacement doors, redecoration and rendering and repairs. There is an agreed work plan detailing further improvements to take place during the rest of the 2017/18.
- 5.3 It is expected that the continuing impact of the action plan will demonstrate improved income returns from the overall garage stock and rationalise the stock base to ensure a positive return on these assets.
- 5.4 To ensure the investment continues, a budget for on-going improvements will form part of the annual capital investment plan.
- 5.5 This will continue to be an area where a balance will need to be considered in the context of the degree of investment needed for garages and the potential to increase garage rental levels without impacting on demand.

## **6.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

- 6.1 Improvements to our garage stock will support the overall attractiveness of our estates and sustain income levels for the HRA.

## **7.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 7.1 There is a risk of continued financial loss to the HRA Business Plan if we do not positively continue with the strategic works required.

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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**

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. The Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of the original Cabinet report on 13 September 2016.

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Garage Strategy 2016-2020

Appendix B – Before and after photographs – Ennerdale