

COMMUNITY & HOUSING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 11 th December 2024
Report Subject	Garage Site Review Update (Car Parking improvements, Garage Demolition and New Build assessment)
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing and Communities)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2001 the National Assembly of Wales approved the National Housing Strategy for Wales 'Better Homes for People in Wales'. The strategy set out Welsh Assembly Governments long-term vision for housing in Wales.

Central to that vision was the expectation that all households in Wales have the opportunity to live in good quality homes. To achieve this, the physical standard and condition of existing housing must be maintained and improved to the Welsh Housing Quality Standard.

This report focuses on the works which have been completed and continue to be delivered through the Council's environmental programme in relation to the garage demolition programme and provision of car parking. The report also details the scoring matrix used by officers for prioritising scheme requests.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To note the process for scoring and prioritising car parking improvement requests and council garage demolition.
2	To note the outcome of the development team review of garage sites and plot sites where demolition works have been completed.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	THE WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARD & ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS
1.01	<p>In the context of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards, the following Council housing owned areas are assessed, considered, and reviewed in order to remain compliant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Roads and footpaths.• Soft and hard landscaping with planting.• Street lighting (adequate).• Adequate and safe play space.• Adequate and practical and maintainable communal areas.• Dwellings clearly identifiable with definable boundaries.• Utility services practically located and well identified.• Adequate and practically located parking clearly visible.
1.02	<p>When undertaking an evaluation of environmental works in a specific area there needs to be an objective base and criteria with which to make decisions.</p> <p>The document included at appendix 1 is the matrix used by officers when assessing schemes, this criterion has been successfully applied for a number of years.</p> <p>The officer will assess the feasibility of any proposed schemes, usually recommending several options that could meet the needs of its council owned homes whilst considering congestion risks along with access / egress provisions for emergency and service vehicles.</p> <p>Any proposals are scored through the matrix which assesses and evaluates a schemes feasibility, costs and priority.</p> <p>At times, there may be an urgent need to escalate works or schemes, such as health and safety reasons or budget requirements.</p> <p>Please refer to Appendix 1 – Car Parking Scoring Criteria Matrix.</p>
1.03	<p>Following scoring through the matrix schemes that are feasible and high priority are progressed through to the capital programme for inclusion. All schemes are subject to budget availability and resources.</p> <p>Please refer to Appendix 2 – Car Parking Programme Matrix.</p>
1.04	<p>When undertaking an evaluation of garage sites and plot sites, officers follow a similar process as per the environmental works programme.</p> <p>Again, there needs to be an objective base and criteria with which to make decisions and the garage site scoring matrix has been applied successfully for a number of years.</p> <p>Please refer to Appendix 3 – Garage Site Criteria Matrix.</p>

1.05	<p>Again, as per the environmental works programme the garage sites are prioritised as per the matrix.</p> <p>Please refer to Appendix 4 – Garage Site Programme Matrix.</p>
1.06	<p>Before the team progress with any demolition works, remediation works or car parking schemes to any garage sites, the team assess if the areas can be built upon. This is whilst ensuring the car parking for existing council owned homes is not under desirable levels, or if traffic congestion or access for emergency vehicles / council refuse services is not compromised in any way.</p> <p>If officers from the capital works team believe it could be considered for development, all areas and sites are passed over to the development team for further review and investigation.</p>
1.07	<p>If the areas and / or garage sites are not suitable, they are referred to the capital works team for consideration of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car parking improvement works. • Green / wilding areas. • Disposal / sale.
1.08	<p>An update on the progress of garage sites which have been passed to the development team is provided at appendix 5.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Staff - There are concerns relating to staff retention. Given that the construction industry is an ever-changing sector, staff may seek opportunities elsewhere i.e., new build, private sector etc.</p> <p>The Housing Assets teams have updated team structures to incorporate a degree of resilience, succession planning and robustness to the delivery model and departments risk register.</p> <p>Capital - Sites are constrained by scale and financial viability in order to access capital funding. We are exploring access to the Welsh Government Land and Buildings Development Fund (previously the Land Release Fund) on a number of schemes. If approved, this will allow access to funding to fund abnormal costs such as demolition, clearance of contamination etc.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>As per paragraph 2.01, the Council has commenced with a full review of the Councils resources, budget requirements and procurement challenges.</p>

	The Housing Assets service are in the process of procuring various frameworks of contractors and suppliers to mitigate risks in terms of contractor resource and material supply and to also provide assurance with regards to associated costs, which impact upon our budgets etc.
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4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	As and when scheme requests are raised, consultation will commence with Members and contract holders.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Car Parking Scoring Criteria Matrix
5.02	Appendix 2 – Car Parking Programme Matrix
5.03	Appendix 3 – Garage Site Criteria Matrix
5.04	Appendix 4 – Garage Site Programme Matrix
5.05	Appendix 5 – Development Team update on garage sites

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	N/A

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Sean O'Donnell, Service Manager - Housing Assets Telephone: 01352 701642 E-mail: Sean.O'Donnell@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Capital Programme: The Council's financial plan covering capital schemes and expenditure proposals for the current year and a number of future years. It also includes estimates of the capital resources available to finance the programme. The Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS): is a national standard of quality for homes. This is set by the Welsh Government. It means that all tenants in Wales should have the opportunity to live in good quality homes which meet the requirements of that household.

Financial Year: the period of 12 months commencing on 1 April.

Budget: a statement expressing the Council's policies and service levels in financial terms for a particular financial year. In its broadest sense it includes both the revenue budget and capital programme and any authorised amendments to them.