

FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

24 February 2012

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor: Robbie Payne (Finance and Procurement Portfolio Holder)

Also Present:

Councillor: Jonathan Brash

Officers: Graham Frankland, Assistant Director (Resources)
Mike Blair, Highways, Traffic and Transportation Manager
Kate Watchorn, Commercial Solicitor
James Cuthbert, Estates and Valuation Surveyor
Vicky Bosley, Democratic Services Officer

53. Disposal of Eamont Gardens Garage Site *(Assistant Director (Resources))*

Type of decision

Key Decision. Test (i) and (ii) applies. RN13/09

Purpose of report

To seek approval from the Portfolio Holder to proceed with the disposal of Eamont Gardens garage site.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Assistant Director (Resources) reported that consent had been given in January 2011 for the disposal of the freehold of the garage site at Eamont Gardens and following the approval the Estates Section proceeded to market the site by informal tender and carried out consultation with the garage tenants and local Councillors. Results of the survey showed that garage tenants had not been against the loss of the garages due to their poor condition. The decision to consider disposal came as a result of concerns raised by Housing Hartlepool, regarding the condition of the garages and from

a Ward Councillor on behalf of St. Matthew's Community Centre. As a result of this the Portfolio Holder had considered a number of options for the site which included repairing the garages, demolition of the garages and the potential for the sale of the site. Appendix 1 attached to the report contained the initial report to the Portfolio Holder in August 2010 which initiated the actions in respect of the site. Options for the site and consultation feedback including that from the garage tenants were considered at a number of subsequent Portfolio meetings. As a result of the initial marketing only one tender had been received for the subject property and it was felt that the figure did not represent market value for the property and the interested party was approached to submit their best and final offer which again was too low. Subsequent to the closing date of the tender another party had made an offer for the subject property which was taken to the Finance and Procurement Portfolio on 17th November 2011. After representations from the Contract Scrutiny Committee it had been decided that the property should be retendered, this process was carried out and the closing date for this tender was 9th December, 2011. Further consultation with the St. Matthew's Community Centre and residents was requested and the main concerns received were; security, loss of parking, vehicle access and planning issues.

The main concern appeared to be around the freedom to use the site for informal parking, although the garage site was not a car park. An option suggested by the Centre was the site could become a car park. The Assistant Director (Resources) reported that the Parking Services Manager had looked into the costs of a future pay and display car park and confirmed that the relevant merits of a car park and best value for the Council, in the current financial situation needed to be considered.

The Highways, Traffic and Transportation Manager reported that the outlay for a pay and display car park would be substantial and was unsure of where the clientele would come from in this location.

The Ward Member appreciated the points raised, however, pointed out that a feasibility study had not been carried out and that a shopping parade was heavily used, which led to illegal car parking throughout the day. If the garage site was sold, this would have a detrimental effect on the community. The Ward Member suggested that proposals from St. Matthew's Community Centre be looked at and a feasibility study be carried out before a decision was made. The Ward Member asked if the land needed to be sold when it had a community attachment and confirmed that St. Matthew's Community Centre would work with the Council for the benefit of the Centre and the residents.

The Portfolio Holder passed thanks onto the Estates and Valuation Surveyor for obtaining bids in the current climate. He confirmed he was still minded to sell but proposed a community asset transfer of the land and a six month period in order for the local community to raise monies to cover the cost of demolishing the garages and to achieve a safe and secure condition of the site. In return the Portfolio Holder would consider allowing the local community to use the land to park. The Portfolio Holder requested an update

by 31st August 2012.

The Ward Member confirmed in the region of £20,000 would be required in order to achieve this and he would assist the local community in sourcing funding outside of the Council, where possible.

Decision

That the disposal of Eamont Gardens garage site was postponed to allow the following to take place:

- (i) To establish if the local community are able to source funding to meet the costs of demolishing the garages on the site and making it safe and secure at an estimated cost of £20,000.
- (ii) That the Portfolio Holder receive an update on this matter by 31 August 2012.

The meeting concluded at 10.30am

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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