



Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21 March 2024

Report of Councillor Phil Dilks, Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

Garage Sites and Project Report

This report provides an update to the Committee on South Kesteven District Council's garage site and building stock and sets out next steps to take forward the garage sites identified for development.

Report Author

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Recommendations

It is recommended that members of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the progress being made in respect of the review of garage sites within the Housing Revenue Account.

Decision Information

Does the report contain any
exempt or confidential
information not for publication?

No

What are the relevant corporate
priorities?

High Performing Council

Which wards are impacted?

All

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance

- 1.1 The HRA has a revenue budget to complete the feasibility work associated with bringing forwards a pipeline of new build housing. Each scheme will need to have a business case and financial appraisal produced to be included HRA Capital Programme as part of the annual budget setting process.

Completed by:

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 This report is for noting. Should the Council opt to dispose of any sites it will be necessary to adhere to its HRA Acquisitions and Disposal Policy.

Completed by: Graham Watts, Assistant Director (Governance and Public Protection) and Monitoring Officer

Risk and Mitigation

- 1.3 Some of the garage sites have asbestos roofs which will need to be appropriately managed by any contractor as part of the demolition process. This will be a part of the contractors Health and Safety plan and will be monitored by the Council.

Climate Change

- 1.4 The contents of this report do not have a direct impact on the Council's carbon emissions or the carbon emissions of the wider district. More detailed information on carbon impact of individual projects is outlined within the relevant project documentation.

2. Background to the Report

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with an update regarding the garage sites that could be used to provide homes as part of the new build housing pipeline.

2.2 Approximately 455 individual garage units across 60 site locations in the South Kesteven District have been assessed as at February 2024 with regard to their suitability for development.

2.3 The approved Corporate Plan 2024-2027 clearly sets out how South Kesteven District Council intends to meet the mission *“to ensure that all residents can access housing which is safe, good quality, sustainable and suitable for their needs and future generations.”*

2.4 The Corporate Plan, Priority 4 identifies *‘Housing’* as a key priority with high quality housing essential for all, and the council is committed to working with partners to provide this by:

- Facilitating a range of appropriate and sustainable housing and community facilities for future generations and the emerging needs of all our communities.
- Delivering exemplary and high-quality services for housing and homelessness.
- Increasing the supply of sustainable and high-quality Council-provided housing.
- Working with developers and private landlords to ensure sustainable, affordable, and high-quality housing is facilitated.

2.5 The Council owned garages situated across South Kesteven vary from standalone blocks of garages on large plots, to small, isolated buildings on small sections of land. Two examples can be seen below:



The Close, Colsterworth (20 Garages)



Edinburgh Road, Stamford (3 Garages)

2.6 The variety of garage buildings present a number of challenges to the authority in terms of repair, maintenance and management and opportunities for possible site redevelopment or land sale.

- 2.7 The garages assessed up to February 2024 are in a "fair" condition and will need a substantial amount of work to maintain and improve them in order to make sure they remain safe and functional assets. This is due to the buildings having received little investment in recent years.
- 2.8 A number of interventions have been actioned by the council in recent months to better utilise the garage stock, including conducting high level feasibility and option appraisals with an intent to deliver housing for the district.
- 2.9 In all areas of the district, officers are focusing on examining opportunities within the identified garage sites with a view to packaging these into several 'lots' for future development. Most garage sites can accommodate a maximum of four units per site with some able to accommodate more. The concepts will seek to utilize off site construction methods (such as modular) and the existing brickwork perimeter (where possible) of the garage unit to provide housing on restricted sites.
- 2.10 From the garage sites that have been assessed up to February 2024, the following have been identified to undergo further investigation and feasibility for development:

Gorse Rise, Grantham	Queensway, Grantham
Byron Avenue, Grantham	Munton Fields, Grantham
Commercial Road, Grantham	Cringle Way, Great Ponton
High Street, Colsterworth	Green Lane, Dry Doddington
The Close, Colsterworth	Newark Lane, Carlton Scroop
Claypole Road, Stubton	Essex Road, Stamford
Greyfriars, Grantham	Burnside Avenue, Stamford
Kesteven Road, Stamford	Mountbatten Avenue, Stamford
Kings Road, Stamford	Windsor Close, Stamford

*Those garage sites in **bold** text are currently in feasibility and/or going through the pre-application process with the Local Planning Authority and included in the Build and Acquisitions update report.*

- 2.11 Other Sites - A garage condition survey was started by South Kesteven District Council in 2018 with a list of garages being identified for repairs, maintenance, and development. The survey was halted; however, it is clear that a significant amount of investment will be required for the long-term maintenance and management of the garage assets. This data will need to be combined with garage demand across the district and balanced against the income and other demands to identify the most viable solutions moving forward.
- 2.12 The current assessment has identified the sites outlined in 2.10 where it is considered development is a viable option, with further study being undertaken to

confirm this. This has been determined based on the locality of the sites, current condition of the garage assets, repeated issues with ASB, fly tipping and management of the blocks. These units account for 254 garages/plots across the district.

2.13 Other garage sites, in addition to those in 2.10, are also being scoped for re-use. Potential reuse solutions could include additional car parking spaces or community amenities etc. In some instances, it may be appropriate to propose land disposal due to the size, locality, and restricted access to the sites. The housing, repairs and corporate teams will need to ensure information is shared where appropriate to ensure the appropriate level of due diligence is undertaken. Ward members, tenants and public consultation will be undertaken which will provide the Council on a recommended way forward for the garage sites not going to be developed.

3. Key Considerations

It is recommended that Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive this report for information and comment.

4. Reasons for the Recommendations

This is a regular report where Members are invited to scrutinise and comment on performance.