

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## CABINET

24 JANUARY 2013

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b><i>VACANT LAND AND BUILDING REVIEW – RANGERS COTTAGE, THURSTASTON</i></b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b><i>WEST KIRBY &amp; THURSTASTON</i></b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b><i>ACTING DIRECTOR OF LAW HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT</i></b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b><i>COUNCILLOR ADRIAN JONES CORPORATE SERVICES</i></b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b><i>NO</i></b>

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to declare the Rangers Cottage No. 2, Wirral Country Park, Thurstaston a surplus asset and seek authority to dispose of the freehold interest at auction.
- 1.2 The report contains exempt information, set out in Appendix 1, detailing the auction reserve price, the publication of which could affect the sale price achieved, if known by potential purchasers.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 A review has recently been undertaken in respect of the Council's vacant land and buildings to determine whether they are required by the Council or whether they are surplus to requirements. As part of the review it has been established that the Rangers Cottage No. 2, Wirral Country Park, Thurstaston is not required for Council purposes and is considered appropriate for sale.
- 2.2 The Rangers Cottage No. 2 has been identified as part of the review and is considered appropriate for sale. The dwelling and grounds is shown heavily edged on the attached plan and comprises approximately 1,500 sqm. It has been occupied under service tenancies since the establishment of Wirral Country Park and was vacated when the former Senior Ranger recently left the service.
- 2.3 An adjacent plot of land, formerly used as a wildlife sanctuary, is to be retained. This land has been shown by hatching on the plan and rights of access in favour of the Council will be included in the transfer. Some wildlife pens straddle the boundary of the Rangers Cottage No. 2 and will be removed prior to auction in order to make the property more attractive to potential purchasers. The cost of removal will be deducted from the receipt and is estimated to be in the region of £2,200 and should represent no more than 2% of the price realised.

2.4 The purchaser will have to make their own arrangements for the supply of utilities and will be expected to erect a suitable fence along the boundary with the retained plot of land.

2.5 It is proposed that the property be offered for sale at auction on 18 April 2013 with Sutton Kersh auctioneers. The auctioneer has recommended that the property be offered for sale with a reserve price as set out in the exempt Appendix 1.

### **3.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

3.1 There is a risk that the property will not sell at auction, however, the Council will only be charged a fee if the sale is successful.

3.2 Whilst there are no known repair and maintenance liabilities at present, the sale will remove the risk for any future liability.

### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 As the property is not required by the Council, a sale by auction is considered to be the most appropriate manner of disposing of it. Consequently no other options have been considered.

### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

5.1 The Director of Law HR and Asset Management has consulted with other relevant Council departments and the Asset Review Board. In addition, the auctioneer will undertake a promotional exercise to advertise the availability of the property at its auction, which will include promotion through its website, auction catalogue and for sale board.

### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

6.1 The property is not considered to be suitable for transfer or disposal to voluntary, community or faith groups, although such groups would be able to bid at the auction.

### **7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

7.1 Should the property sell at auction, it will generate a receipt in excess of the reserve price detailed in the exempt appendix.

7.2 Sale will also remove any potential maintenance liability, such as the clearing of the site resulting from fly tipping, for which there is currently no budget available. In addition the purchaser will pay to the Council 2% of the gavel fee, with a minimum of £1,000, towards the Council's fees. If the property does not sell, no costs will be charged to the Council.

7.3 The cost of clearing the grounds prior to sale is estimated to be in the region of £2,200 and should represent no more than 2% of the price realised. The only quantifiable running costs at present are:

- i. Electricity Standing Charges – approx £90 at current rates
- ii. Council Tax Liability - £1307.72 per annum

## 8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The disposal will require the preparation of appropriate legal documentation.

## 9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

No because there is no relevance to equality.

## 10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no carbon reduction implications arising directly from this report.

## 11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The property is located in the Green Belt and has an established residential use as a dwelling house. Any future proposals would need to be assessed against local and national Green Belt planning policy.

## 12.0 RECOMMENDATION/S

12.1 That the asset be declared surplus and authority be given to its disposal by auction on the basis described.

## 13.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

13.1 To make the best use of the council's property assets by declaring the property surplus and to seek authority to a disposal by auction.

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## APPENDICES

Location plan.

Appendix 1 – Exempt information

## REFERENCE MATERIAL

No reference material has been used in the preparation of this report.

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date