

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## DELEGATED DECISION

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>HARRISON ESTATE, LEASOWE</b>
<b>WARD AFFECTED:</b>	<b>LEASOWE AND MORETON EAST</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS SERVICES / ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>HOUSING &amp; COMMUNITY SAFETY - COUNCILLOR GEORGE DAVIES</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to the disposal of the Harrison Estate on Leasowe Road, Wallasey to the respective tenants.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 The Harrison Estate is shown edged red on the attached plan. The land was acquired by the Council as part of a much larger area of land which lies between Leasowe Road and the coast which now comprises a golf course and coastal promenade etc. Most of this area, such as the golf course, was sold some time ago and the current Harrison Estate is now reduced to the area shown on the plan.
- 2.2 The Estate is now divided into eight plots, each of which is held on a tenancy, the majority of which are secure agricultural tenancies. The current total rent for the Estate is £15,000 per annum.
- 2.3 Members have previously been advised (Delegated Decision 13 July 2017) that the site has been identified as part of a larger list of sites which have potential to generate capital receipts and the Assets and Capital Group, at its meeting in April 2017, resolved to pursue a disposal of the property. The original intention was to dispose of the Council's interest, remaining subject to the existing tenancies, by auction. This was considered to be the best way of ensuring an early sale and also demonstrating that the market value has been achieved.
- 2.4 Although the proposed sale would have been subject to the existing tenancy agreements, the tenants were concerned about their security and long term future. As a consequence an ePetition was instigated through the Council's website on the following basis:

*We the undersigned petition the council to reconsider selling Harrison Estate, a stretch of land between Leasowe Road and Green Lane. This land is currently leased by eight tenants, several of which own thriving businesses. The tenants were not informed that WBC were considering selling the land their businesses are on prior to WBC*

*approving the sale. All of the leaseholders would, if offered, be willing to purchase the freehold title from WBC.*

At the time of writing the ePetition had 1173 signatories.

2.5 As a consequence of the petition, discussions have taken place with the tenants and 7 of the 8 tenants have worked together to come forward with a collective offer of £215,995 which they have rounded to £220,000 to include a contribution towards the Council's legal costs. This offer is based on a rate per acre which is understood to have been based on advice from the National Farmers Union in respect of agricultural land values. A sale at this price exceeds the Council's expectations for these plots and a sale to the tenants is a means of securing a sale which otherwise may not have been achievable given the public response to a sale on the open market.

2.6 Members are asked to note that discussions with the remaining tenant are also ongoing.

### **3.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

3.1 There is a concern that not all of the tenants will proceed which would leave a fragmented ownership, although the tenants seem to be working together to address this. Should any not proceed, the Council can revert to the original plan to dispose at auction.

### **4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

4.1 The Council could retain the property and the income that goes with it, however the Assets and Capital Group has resolved to pursue a disposal.

### **5.0 CONSULTATION**

5.1 Officers have been consulted through the Assets and Capital Group. Discussions have taken place directly with tenants and their legal representative.

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

6.1 This proposal has no implications for voluntary, community and faith groups.

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

7.1 Should the 7 tenants proceed, the sales will result in a capital receipt of £215,995 plus a contribution towards the Council's costs. The Council would forego the annual income for those plots which is currently £8,767 pa..

7.2 There are no IT or staffing implications arising from this report.

### **8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

8.2 The sale price is considered to meet market value which satisfies s123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

8.3 The sale will include an overage provision to ensure that the Council receives a proportion of any uplift in value should the site benefit from an increase in value resulting from any future re-classification of its Planning status.

## **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 for the Council arising directly from this report.

## **11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 The site is designated as Green Belt in the Council's Unitary Development Plan, where inappropriate development would not be approved except in very special circumstances. .

11.2 The site is also shown partially within Flood Zone 2 on the Environment Agency's Flood map.

## **12.0 RECOMMENDATION**

12.1 That officers be authorised to progress the sale to the tenants as described. Should any of the tenants not proceed in a timely manner, officers be authorised to revert to the previous decision to sell by auction.

## **13.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

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.

**REPORT AUTHOR:** Steven McMorran  
Asset Management  
telephone: (0151 666 3891)  
email: [stevemcmorran@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:stevemcmorran@wirral.gov.uk)

## **APPENDICES**

Location plan

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

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

Disposal of Harrison Estate, Leasowe – Delegated Decision	13/7/2017
---	-----------