|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| To: | Housing Panel |
| Date: | 5th July 2018 |
| Report of: | Head of Housing |
| Title of Report:  | Garage Asset Management Strategy  |

|  |
| --- |
| Summary and recommendations |
| Purpose of report: | To provide members with an update of the activities being carried out under the Garage Asset Management Strategy |
| Key Decision | No |
| Executive Lead Member | Councillor Mike Rowley, Board Member for Housing |
| Corporate Priority | An effective and Efficient Council |
| Report Author | Ann Phillips, Tenancy Management Manager |
| Recommendation(s): |
| 1. | The Housing Panel is asked to note the contents of this report |
|  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| Appendices |
| Appendix 1 | Garages by ward |
| Appendix 2 | Garage data by block |
|  |  |

# Introduction and background

1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Housing Panel with an update on the progress of the Garage Asset Management Strategy Board.
2. The Council’s garage stock is held within the General Fund Budget and passed into the management of the Tenancy Management team in December 2015. There are 1989 garages of which 650 are situated within the Blackbird Leys and Northfield Brook wards. Appendix 1 shows the breakdown of the garages by ward.
3. The condition of the garages varies significantly and historically many of the void garages were boarded up awaiting major repair. The Garage Asset Management Strategic Board was set up in May 2016 to produce and implement a long term plan for the Oxford City Council garage sites.

# Options Appraisal

1. The board has gathered and considered information from various sources and specifically considered in each area:
* The percentage of lettings and any waiting list (demand)
* Stock condition
* Cost of repair to bring up to a letting standard
* Cost of on-going planned maintenance
* Identification of garages that cannot be let due to condition or popularity
* The distribution of garages across the city
* Identification of alternative uses for the land where letting is not an option

**Stock condition, responsive repairs, planned maintenance and improvements**

1. A survey has been carried out of all the garage sites in the city and minor repairs carried out to bring the garage back into use where there is evidence that there is a demand for the garages. Some major repairs have been carried out including four new roofs to garage blocks in Northway, a new roof, doors and frames to a block in Normandy Crescent and repairs to an asbestos roof in the Grates. Six other block roofs have been prioritised in the maintenance plan for 2017/18. This has resulted in 177 garages being brought back into use.

**Lettings and marketing strategy**

1. As repaired garages have returned to the available stock the Tenancy Management team have contacted those applicants on the waiting list to let the garages. The waiting list has been reviewed to remove those no longer requiring a garage and the waiting list currently stands at 288 consisting mainly of those applicants who require the high demand areas.
2. The marketing strategy was implemented and the voids have reduced from 16% to 8.5% since the last report. The Tenancy Management team continues to work through the waiting list to ensure all possible lettings are made and garages returned are repaired and re-let as soon as possible.

**Alternative site uses**

1. There are a number of sites that are being considered for alternative use. These sites are primarily located behind housing and have inherent security issues as they are not overlooked. Appendix 2 lists the sites that the Board are focusing on for redevelopment and the proposed use of the land. A number of the sites have indications of the costs involved.
2. A further site located at Champions Way, Littlemore was previously outside the scope of the project as it was miss-coded as demolished. The site has been surveyed as a potential housing development but is considered unsuitable. Other options for this site will now be considered.

**Finance**

1. A budget provision has been made for 2017/18 of £110,000 for day to day maintenance and repairs of the garages and an additional £77,000 per year for the next three years has been made available from the General Fund budget to carry out improvements to the garage blocks.

**ICT**

1. Garage lettings have been handled manually for many years. A new void pathway in the housing management system has been created to automate the lettings process and to provide rigorous monitoring of performance.

# Financial implications

1. The work carried out by the board has enabled us to bring valuable garages back into use and identify those sites where alternative use is the best option.
2. The Board is in discussion with Finance to establish how the proposed works to the sites can be funded as the properties are held within the General Fund budget. Work carried out to the sites will improve the general environment around the Housing Revenue Account properties and a number of sites may fall within the proposed Blackbird Leys Regeneration area. There is also a strong link between the Great Estates programme and the revitalisation of the garage sites. For these reasons investigation is being made into the joint funding of some sites.

# Legal issues

1. None

# Conclusion

# The vast majority of garages owned by Oxford City Council can be let and will continue to contribute to the General Fund.

1. A number of unpopular garages sites have been identified for development of new housing schemes and parking bays thereby reducing the need to utilise valuable green areas on the estates.
2. Works to garages have been aligned with other works to estates including the provision of off street parking and other schemes falling under the Great Estates programme of works.
3. Work is continuing to identify alternative options where unpopular garage sites are not suitable for redevelopment or the provision of off street parking.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Report author** | Ann Phillips |
| Job title | Tenancy Management Manager |
| Service area or department | Housing & Property |
| Telephone  | 01865 252203 |
| e-mail  | anphillips@oxford.gov.uk |