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**Report to: Clackmannanshire Council**

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**Date: 10 December 2020**

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**Subject: Westhaugh Travelling Persons Site**

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**Report by: Strategic Director (Place)**

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## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1. This report follows on from consideration in the HRA budget report on 27<sup>th</sup> February (2020), for the financial and legal transfer of the Travelling Persons Site (Westhaugh), from the General Fund (GF) to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This followed Council approval for the transfer on the 21<sup>st</sup> February 2019, with Council and committee to determine the financial value of such a transfer.
- 1.2. This report is to conclude the financial transfer and enable the ministerial approval to be requested.

## **2.0 Recommendations**

It is recommended that Council agree:

- 2.1 To an immediate transfer of Westhaugh at nil value (£0) from the GF to the HRA.

### **2.2 Background**

- 2.1. The Scottish Housing Regulator (SHR) has the responsibility for the regulation of landlord and homeless functions of local authorities. This responsibility extends to the Travellers on council run sites, such as Westhaugh.
- 2.2. The Housing charter requires that 'sites are well maintained and managed'. In addition the Scottish Government has set out minimum standards for travelling sites to reach and maintain.
- 2.3. Although the Westhaugh site meets the minimum standards, it is fair to say the site has reached the end of its useful life and requires either significant investment for refurbishment and /or replacement. Moreover, it should be noted that although the site is meeting requirements in relation to fire safety, any significant alterations to the site will require much further work to meet current fire safety regulations, including spacing and separation standards.

### **3.0 Transfer**

- 3.1. To bring the management of the site in line with the wider tenant base the residents of the site have expressed a desire for the management of the site to be moved to the HRA. In addition, the Clackmannanshire Tenants and Residents Federation has indicated that they are happy with this proposal, in order to ensure fairness and equitableness in the delivery of housing to this protected group.
- 3.2. As the site requires significant investment to give the site a second life, and as the Council in its strategic housing role (GF) will still have responsibility for the overall assistance to travelling persons, transferring the current site at nil consideration ensures that the required investment from the HRA can all go on direct improvements on the site, for existing and future tenants.
- 3.3. Members may wish to note that, Fife Council recently concluded the transfer of three travelling persons site at (£) nil value for similar reasons.
- 3.4. If this fiscal transfer is agreed the Council will require ministerial approval for the transfer.

### **3.5 Site Improvement Works**

- 3.6. A virtual engagement session was held with residents at the end of October to discuss site improvements. This follows the allocation of £70k grant by the Scottish Government (from a total fund of £2m) to be used in conjunction for site specific improvements. This could include, but is not limited to, works such as divisional fencing, community broadband/Wi-Fi, CCTV, shared community facility and / or new replacement play park equipment.
- 3.7. The residents have requested that work is progressed to address boundary and divisional fencing and pitch security gates. A further video call will be held with residents during December updating them on this aspect of funding.
- 3.8. In terms of the future improvements to the site, this will be done utilising the PLACE standard tool and follow the practice example of participatory budgeting.
- 3.9. The service will be working towards providing a full project plan and scope of works to the March Place Committee that will include key measurable outputs and outcomes, which the committee can then follow and track progress against. This will include whether any additional land at Westhaugh might be needed to be brought in-scope to augment the current site, to meet the councils as well as the resident's aspirations and ensure full compliance with site spacing standard from the fire service.
- 3.10. This will also allow time for further certainty to be received with regards to any future government grant funding that might be awarded to Clackmannanshire Council for the improvements to the site or any additional provision.

#### 4.0 Resource Implications

- 4.1. The full financial implications of the recommendations are set out in the report. This includes a reference to full life cycle costs where appropriate.
- 4.2. HRA outline Capital Funding was agreed in February 2020 - £415,000.
- 4.3. Finance have been consulted and have agreed the financial implications as set out in the report. Yes
- 4.4. *Staffing*
- 4.5. The future management arrangements of the Travelling Persons Site will be detailed in the housing service organisational redesign.

#### 5.0 Exempt Reports

- 5.1. Is this report exempt? Yes  (please detail the reasons for exemption below) No

#### 6.0 Declarations

The recommendations contained within this report support or implement our Corporate Priorities and Council Policies.

- (1) **Our Priorities** (Please click on the check box )

Clackmannanshire will be attractive to businesses and people and ensure fair opportunities for all

Our families, children and young people will have the best possible start in life

Women and girls will be confident and aspirational, and achieve their full potential

Our communities will be resilient and empowered so that they can thrive and flourish

- (2) **Council Policies** (Please detail)

#### 7.0 Equalities Impact

- 7.1. Have you undertaken the required equalities impact assessment to ensure that no groups are adversely affected by the recommendations?  
Yes  No

## 8.0 Legality

- 8.1. It has been confirmed that in adopting the recommendations contained in this report, the Council is acting within its legal powers. Yes

## 9.0 Appendices

- 9.1. Please list any appendices attached to this report. If there are no appendices, please state "none".

None

## 10.0 Background Papers

- 10.1. Have you used other documents to compile your report? (All documents must be kept available by the author for public inspection for four years from the date of meeting at which the report is considered).

Yes

No

Housing Revenue Account Budget 2020-21 and Capital Programme 2020-21  
Housing Revenue Budget 19/20 HRA Capital Programme 19/20 and Mid Market Rent Considerations

### Author(s)

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### Approved by

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