

Runnymede Borough Council Garage Strategy

Approved; November 2022

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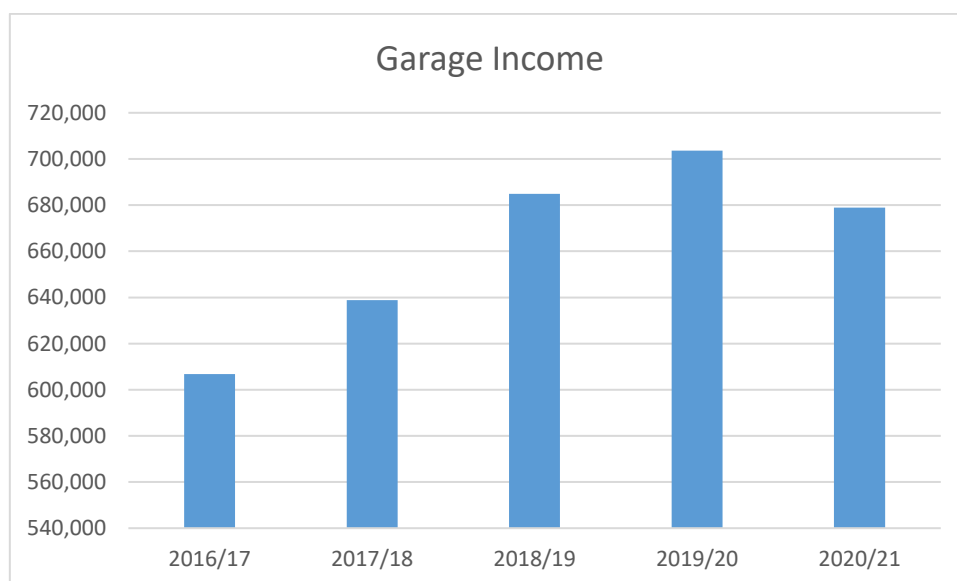
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Purpose of the Strategy

Garages form a significant part of the Council’s asset base. Garages are located across the borough: -

	Sum:
Addlestone North Garages	34
Addlestone South Garages	324
Chertsey Garages	281
Egham Hythe Garages	99
Egham Town Garages	125
Englefield Green Garages	156
New Haw Garages	95
Tied Garages	88
Virginia Water Garages	12
Sum:	1214

Garages are anticipated to generate £679,070 in income in 2021/22. This compares to previous years – see graph (garage rents in 2022/23 will be £13.75 + VAT where applicable)



A number of garages are empty (248) and also a proportion are in need of investment to preserve their useful life.

There are concerns regarding the size of many of our garages. “The garages were designed for cars, which are smaller than the average car today. Garages were originally offered for vehicle storage, whereas now the majority are used for storing other items. Car usage has changed considerable over the last few decades with many families having two cars and also people requiring parking for company vehicles and vans. The current provision of garages is not always the best solution to resolve parking issues.”

The above is a quote from Broxtowe Borough Council's Garage Strategy – reflecting an issue with garage provision across the local authority sector.

9% of the Council's garages are rented by someone living outside of the borough. Most of these tenants live on the edge of the borough – but some live as far a field as Abergavenny, Cambridge, Rochester, Southampton, Taunton and Yeovil. This poses the question whether a garage in these circumstances can be being used for a vehicle?

Aims of the Strategy

This strategy is focused on delivering three clear aims. Metrics for measuring success will be identified later in the strategy.

1. To understand the condition of our garage stock – focusing initially on the sites with high 'void' numbers – enabling decisions to be made regarding the viability of each site.
2. To maintaining the revenue stream generated by the sites
3. To chart a gradual move away from garage provision – to a product with a longer-term future.

Strategic Context

Links to the Corporate Plan

Improving our Economy

Investing in our garage sites, improving the assets themselves or redeveloping them for an alternative use will generate additional economic activity. If this is kept locally this will lead to additional jobs and expenditure within Runnymede.

Enhancing our Environment

Improving our assets and redeveloping the sites where investment is not viable will enhance the built environment within the borough.

Ensuring that any new building is done to high energy performance standards is essential to ensure the Council delivers on its environmental commitments.

This strategy has emerged following considerable engagement with existing residents, Council tenants, applicants for garages within Runnymede, residents of the borough, Local Councillors and wider stakeholders.

Links to other Housing Strategies

Housing Strategy

The Housing Strategy identifies four strategic aims for the Housing Service.

1. Enable access to affordable housing for local people
2. Increase the provision of affordable housing including low cost home ownership
3. Ensure good quality affordable housing is available to local people in both social and private sector
4. Promote the delivery of specialist housing to meet the identified needs of local people

The production of a Garage Strategy will on a number of sites support the strategic aim of enabling ‘access to affordable housing for local people’ and increasing ‘the provision of affordable housing including low cost home ownership’.

Housing Revenue Account Business Plan

The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan identifies the following key themes and ambitions:

- Optimising Income and Efficiencies
- Good Quality Housing
- New Council owned homes
- Review and modernise provision for older tenants
- Well managed neighbourhoods

The development of a Garage Strategy supports the delivery of the following two aims:

1. Optimising Income and Efficiencies – by ensuring the existing stock is delivering the greatest revenue return to the authority
2. New Council owned homes – as some sites will be identified for residential development

Housing Asset Management Plan 2021-2026

The Housing Asset Management Plan 2021-2026 states the following on garages: -

A garage strategy will be delivered to support the Asset Management Plan in 2021/22 identifying areas for investment in the garage stock and opportunities for repurposing sites.

Our route to delivery

Understand the condition of our garage stock – focusing initially on the sites with high ‘void’ numbers – enabling decisions to be made regarding the viability of each site.

14 sites have been identified where over 20% of the garages are ‘void’.

	Occupied	Void	Sum:	% void
BARONS WAY	12	4	16	25%
BROOMFIELD ROAD	20	8	28	29%
COOPERS CLOSE	7	4	11	36%
FERNLANDS CLOSE	12	11	23	48%
FIELD VIEW	18	8	26	31%
FRANKLANDS DRIVE	14	7	21	33%
FRITHWALD ROAD	12	4	16	25%
GALSWORTHY ROAD	58	16	74	22%
HERIOT ROAD	34	10	44	23%
HOLLY CLOSE	23	6	29	21%
LANE CLOSE	17	5	22	23%

LITTLE GREEN LANE	15	5	20	25%
SOUTH GROVE	11	3	14	21%
ST ANNS CLOSE	35	10	45	22%
Sum:	966	248	1214	20%

Once the condition of these sites has been established the viability of each site will be considered. A viability tool kit will be established which will consider: -

1. Build type – more traditional build types are anticipated to have a longer life expectancy and will be easier to maintain.
2. Investment required per garage
3. Demand for garages on the site – if demand is strong (i.e. there is demand for over 30% of the garages on the site) this will indicate the chances of achieving the payback period.
4. Payback period – if the payback period exceeds 5 years an alternative use will be considered for the site

Proposals on future use of sites identified as unviable will be put to Runnymede Borough Council's Housing and Corporate Management Committees in November 2022.

Maintain the revenue stream generated by the garage sites

It is essential that the income stream provided by the Council's garages are maintained. A reduction in income will have a significant impact on services and may lead to cuts in customer facing services.

We will review the condition of each site and consider from a range of options proposals for the future use of the site where the site is considered unviable; these include, but are not limited to: -

- Mixed tenure residential development – although due to the location of the sites this may not be available in many circumstances
- Re-provision as storage units
- Provision as parking areas
- Purchase of parcels of land by surrounding homeowners
- Commercial provision

Mixed tenure residential development

The provision of mixed tenure residential developments enables additional affordable housing to be provided – delivering on a key strategic aim of the Housing Service. Housing for private sale or rent provides an income making up for the lost income from a reduction in the number of rented garages.

The following sites have already been identified for development: -

1. Beechwood, Ashwood and Holly Close
2. Garfield Road
3. Ledger Drive
4. Parkside/Braeside
5. Ripley Avenue

Other sites may be brought forward once viability assessments have been completed for the initial 14 sites.

Chart a gradual move away from garage provision – to a product with a longer-term future.

If sites are considered unviable and are not suitable for residential development alternative uses will be considered.

This could include commercial development or potentially storage provision. A viability assessment would be required for each site to consider their future use.

Metric for measuring success

Level of voids
Demand
Income

Delivery Action Plan

The delivery action plan aims to ensure delivery of the objectives above. Dates for delivery if not published as part of the original strategy will be updated as soon as possible. Updates will be given to members as part of the annual review of the strategy.

Aim: <i>Understand the condition of our garage stock – focusing initially on the sites with high ‘void’ numbers – enabling decisions to be made regarding the viability of each site.</i>	
Action	Delivery target date
Develop a viability tool kit to assess the viability of garage sites	March 2022
Complete a stock condition survey of initially 14 sites	September 2022
Tender out a package of work to improve the condition of the first tranche of the sites identified for retention	??
Complete a stock condition survey of the remaining 68 sites	??

Aim: <i>Maintain the revenue stream generated by the garage sites</i>	
Action	Delivery target date
Redevelop the initial 5 sites identified for development.	December 2028
Identify sites from the initial 14 sites with high void levels for redevelopment	November 2022

Aim: <i>Chart a gradual move away from garage provision – to a product with a longer-term future.</i>	
Action	Delivery target date
Advertise and promote the existing garage sites – via the tenant’s newsletter + other routes	March 2022 + September 2022

	And regularly within future newsletters and wider Council communications
Put alternative proposals on the future of the remaining 14 initial sites where redevelopment is not possible to the Housing and Corporate Management Committees	November 2022
Complete viability assessments of the remaining 68 sites	??
Put proposals on the unviable sites to the Housing Committee	??