

APPENDICES

NORTH DUDLEY AREA COMMITTEE

DATE: 16th SEPTEMBER 2004

APPLICATION TO LEASE LAND

LOCATION: TURNER STREET, LOWER GORNAL
(As shown on the plan attached)

BACKGROUND

A report regarding this matter was deferred from the last meeting of this Committee for further information.

An application has been received by the Driving Standards Agency, to lease a Council owned car park at Turner Street, Lower Gornal, that is controlled by the Directorate of Housing and has been identified as having no beneficial use to the Directorate. The land is currently laid out as a residents car park and is adjacent to Housing controlled senior citizens bungalows. However it is not used by the Council tenants and there have been many problems with anti social behaviour on the land.

The Driving Standards Agency have their driving test centre located on Lake Street, which is adjacent to Turner Street, but have no parking area available in the area. This means that users of the test centre have to park on Lake Street or Turner Street and this causes major traffic congestion and safety problems.

The Driving Standards Agency are currently reviewing their provision of test centres within the Black Country and have therefore requested that they lease the car park area for use by the test centre. If they are successful they will resurface the car park, install a barrier and will be responsible for its future maintenance.

COMMENTS

The relevant Council Directorates have been consulted regarding the application and no objections have been received.

The disposal is supported by the Community Safety team as there have been complaints by residents that the land is used by youths for anti-social behaviour and they have been working closely with the Police and the Housing Estates Management Officer to try and manage the situation.

The Directorate of Housing have contacted their tenants in the area who state they will not use this car park for fear of vandalism. The site is therefore not required for use by the Directorate of Housing and they would welcome the granting of this application.

The Directorate of the Urban Environment states that they have no objections to the land's disposal as it has no designations for planning purposes within the adopted or the emerging Unitary Development Plan.

There are mature trees within the boundary of the site and consultation with the Council's Tree Preservation Officer should be undertaken to ensure that any trees worth preserving are protected within the site. In terms of open space, sports, leisure and recreation planning issues, the land would have no formal recreational value.

Green Care consider that it would be preferable for the maintenance of the trees and shrubs to be passed to the lessee. This will avoid any future possible conflicts arising from damage to vehicles parked on the car park and access issues for the Councils maintenance operatives.

The Directorate of Law and Property state that the site could be suitable for residential development, subject to planning consent being granted or could be of use to other businesses in the area for car parking purposes however, the Lease of the land to the Driving Standards agency would assist in retaining the Test Centre within the area.

PROPOSAL

That the Area Committee advise the Lead Member for Housing to approve the granting of a lease of the site for car parking purposes, to include the shrubbery and grassed areas, to the Driving Standards Agency on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Letter(s) from the applicant.
2. E-mails and memos from the Council Directorates.

Contact Officer: Gill Hudson, Property Manager, Ext. 5311