

Title: Garage Sites held within HRA Estate

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Portfolio Holder: Councillor Jessica Melrose

Wards of the District directly affected: All areas

<b>Approvals required</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder</b>	15.01.2026	Jessica Melrose
<b>Finance</b>	15.01.2026	Paul Haslam
<b>Chief Executive</b>	13.01.2026	Chris Elliott
<b>Deputy Chief Executive</b>	15.01.2026	Darren Knight
<b>Strategic Director</b>	15.01.2026	David Elkington
<b>Head of Service(s)</b>	13.01.2026	Kristian Melgaard
<b>Section 151 Officer</b>	15.01.2026	Andrew Rollins
<b>Monitoring Officer</b>	15.01.2026	Graham Leach
<b>Contrary to Policy / Budget framework?</b>	Yes	
<b>Does this report contain exempt info/Confidential? If so, which paragraph(s)?</b>	No	
<b>Does this report relate to a key decision (referred to in the Cabinet Forward Plan)?</b>	No	
<b>Accessibility Checked?</b>	Yes	

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 Warwick District Council (WDC) owns approximately 1,861 garages across its housing estate. The garages are rented out to council housing tenants and other local residents. The current agreement used only allows for garages to be used for the storage of a vehicle with wheels.
- 1.2 The majority of the garages are located around WDC owned blocks of flats, and residential housing developments, with a few others in specific individual locations. The garages have helped to manage car parking congestion.
- 1.3 Despite this not being agreed in the current terms and conditions or garage agreement, it is acknowledged that some of the garages are used to store items. This allows residents to store items which could otherwise clutter their own homes or be left in the communal areas of buildings.
- 1.4 A Garage Condition Report in 2019 estimated £203,920 to be spent on the garages over five years to ensure they were lettable, with a projection over the subsequent 25 years of £8,711,625 in repairs and maintenance.
- 1.5 As of January 2026, 848 (46%) of WDC garages are currently let and there is a waiting list for every site, but with varying degrees of interest. The current number of live applications is 226. The number of vacant garages is 1013 (54%).

## **2. Condition of Garages**

- 2.1 A Garages Condition report was completed in 2019, which looked at sites as a whole and not individual garages. Recommendations from the report were to either refurbish, demolish and use the site for parking, or demolish and use the site for housing development
- 2.2 A programme of works for refurbishment, or demolition, was not established. The Housing Development team did consider some of the potential sites for house building, but these were not progressed due to financial restraints. was not established.
- 2.3 The result of this is that it has led to various garage sites with a significant number of garages in poor states of repair. These vary from minor repairs (e.g. doors and locks) to major structural works (e.g. replacement roofs) – many of the garages were built with and still have asbestos roofs, which increases costs of refurbishment or demolition substantially.
- 2.4 The current approach to managing repairs is to prioritise any health and safety works for completion.
- 2.5 The majority of garages are quite small and struggle to fit a family or large car, meaning that these are potentially not fit for purpose. The garages are not watertight and cannot be maintained to be so.

- 2.6 The Building & Estates team began a programme of monthly inspections in August 2025, which has resulted in the whole garage estate being inspected so reports to ground works (such as potholes) being reported alongside issues with garages.

### **3. Current Situation**

- 3.1 The Allocations team have experienced resource pressures; with the focus of the team time directed toward the allocation of council housing stock. As a result, garage lettings have not been prioritised. This has indirectly led to garages remaining unlet, increasing void periods, and reducing potential income.
- 3.2 The reduced focus on garage management also affects key- handling processes, with no current details of when keys have been received, or where those keys are, meaning access to any unlet garage requires the lock to be cut and replaced.
- 3.3 Historically, when a garage tenancy ended, the unit was passed to the Assets team for survey and any required repair works. Once repairs were completed, the garage was returned to the Allocations team for re- letting. This process ensured that garages were routinely inspected, repaired, and brought back into circulation. In the current operating environment, this process has changed significantly. Only minor repairs are being completed, such as replacement doors or small remedial works. Garages requiring major repairs are being boarded up and left unlet, resulting in long- term voids and a growing backlog of unusable stock. Garages that have received minor repairs and are in a lettable condition are still not being re- let, due to resource pressures within the Allocations team and the prioritisation of housing allocations over garage management.
- 3.4 This combination of reduced repair activity and limited allocations capacity has resulted in a substantial number of garages remaining empty, despite some potentially being ready for immediate re-let. The situation contributes to lost income, increased deterioration of unused assets, and reduced availability for customers seeking garage space.
- 3.5 A further challenge is the absence of a clear, up- to- date record of which garages have received minor repairs and are now in a lettable condition and where the keys are held.
- 3.6 WDC are still accepting applications for garages but not following up promptly, leading to unsatisfied customers and open to challenge and complaint.
- 3.7 In many cases garages are not being used to store vehicles, which is a breach of our terms and conditions, however this is under review and amendments have been made to the agreement so that the garages can be used for storage for items as well as vehicles.
- 3.8 Without consistent repair or re- letting activity of the garages, many garage sites are becoming increasingly run down. This deterioration is creating several significant risks. For example, health and safety concerns such as

unsafe structures, unsecured doors, debris, and poor lighting increase the likelihood of accidents or injuries in these locations. Increased anti-social behaviour; empty or boarded-up garages attract fly-tipping, vandalism, drug use, and other nuisance behaviour, negatively affecting nearby residents. Reduced community confidence; neglected sites give the impression of abandonment, contributing to wider environmental decline. Escalating repair costs; the longer garages remain unused and unmanaged, the more extensive and expensive future repairs become.

- 3.9 Garages are not always clearly numbered making it hard to identify which garage is linked to which garage on the internal system.

#### **4. Proposals**

- 4.1 To carry out a piece of work regarding applicants on the waiting list and status of garages, then develop a programme of work on void garages (where the work is not structural) to begin letting garages again starting with those areas on the greatest demand. The work will also provide clarification for responsibility for letting garages.
- 4.2 To carry out a piecemeal condition survey of all the garages, to be undertaken by WDC's stock condition surveyors whilst carrying out stock condition surveys of homes. It is expected that this work will take 12 months to complete.
- 4.3 Once the condition survey has been completed to then develop a programme and budget to carry out work to bring the garage estate up to date and in good order.
- 4.4 This work will have several strands, and will include the repurposing of some sites, the demolition of some garages to create parking areas, which would result in a loss of potential income from garage rents, however would alleviate some issues around parking in certain areas – particularly where there is a density of people living and fewer parking spaces. Options to rent out parking spaces will also be considered.
- 4.5 This work is not in any current work programmes so would need to be developed and run as a new project. This would run over five years, aligned and form part of the broader Asset Management Strategy which is being developed. This programme would not include any redevelopment of sites into housing.
- 4.6 It is proposed that this work will be overseen by the Buildings & Estates Manager, but additional staffing resources will need to be identified to provide support, working across landlord/estates and asset teams, along with an increased capital budget once the survey work is complete.

#### **Background papers:**

None

#### **Supporting Documents:**

None