

## DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	FINANCE AND DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE	24 JUNE 2019	5
<b>PURCHASE OF LAND ADJACENT TO SQUIRES GATE STATION</b>			

### PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

### SUMMARY

The Council has been asked to assist with the creation of an accessible route to Squires Gate Station platform which has long been desired. It has been agreed that the cost of constructing such access will be met by Persimmon Homes; however they do not own all the land required to facilitate such access. Fylde Council have agreed Heads of Terms to purchase a small parcel of land to enable the proposed access to be completed and propose to grant a long lease to Network Rail to ensure that future maintenance is not funded by the residents of Fylde.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee are recommended:

1. To approve the purchase of approximately 35.6 square metres of land adjacent to Squires Gate Station for the sum of £3,000 plus payment of the vendor's legal costs up to £2,400 i.e. to a total cost of no more than £5,400;
2. To approve an addition to the Council's Capital Programme for 2019/20 in the sum of £5,400 to be met from the Capital Investment Reserve for the purchase of the land adjacent to Squires Gate Station as described above;
3. To approve expenditure in the maximum sum of £5,400 for the purchase of the land adjacent to Squires Gate Station as described above;
4. To approve the granting of a long ground lease of this land, once purchased, to Network Rail to include the transference of responsibility for management and maintenance of the land.

### SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

This matter has not been considered previously.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES	
Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services ( <b>Value for Money</b> )	✓
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council ( <b>Clean and Green</b> )	✓
Working with all partners ( <b>Vibrant Economy</b> )	✓
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live ( <b>A Great Place to Live</b> )	✓
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit ( <b>A Great Place to Visit</b> )	✓

## REPORT

1. Access to Squires Gate Station platform is currently from Squires Gate via a steep set of steps and as such is inaccessible to those with mobility issues. It has long been a desire of Ward Councillors and the South Fylde Community Rail Partnership, on which Fylde Council is represented by the Council's Technical Support Manager, that some form of accessible access be created.
2. Planning consent was granted to Persimmon Homes in 2017 for the construction of 353 dwellings on the former Pontins site on Clifton Drive North. The design included an access footpath from New Road towards, but not up to, Squires Gate Station platform. As part of the consent, Persimmon agreed to fund improvements to Squires Gate Station under an S278 agreement with Lancashire County Council.
3. There is a small section of land between the Persimmon site and Squires Gate Station platform. Fylde Borough Council has taken the lead to discover the owner and negotiate the purchase of the land in question. In addition, Fylde Council Officers have obtained agreement between Persimmon and Lancashire County Council that the S278 funding would be discharged on the provision that Persimmon installed the access to the station platform at their expense presuming the section of land can be obtained.
4. There is no funding available for the purchase of this land and the proposed accessible route has wide support in the community. It is felt that the Council's intervention would demonstrate excellent community service.
5. The "owner" of the land has advised that they would need to produce a statutory declaration to claim title to the land, which would then enable the transfer to take place. The "owner" will not commence this process until the Council have agreed the purchase in principle for £3,000 and given an undertaking regarding payment of the "owner's" legal costs capped at £2,400 (£2,000 plus VAT).
6. It is proposed that funding of the purchase of the land would be added to the approved capital programme. Draw down of this funding would enable the purchase of the land to be initiated. Creation of the access would be scheduled into Persimmon's work programme, likely to be delivered early 2020. It is proposed that a long term lease will be agreed with Network Rail to assume liability and responsibility of maintenance.
7. Without the Council's involvement, the proposed accessible route to Squires Gate Station is extremely unlikely to proceed.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	This report requests approval to an addition to the Capital Programme for 2019/20 in the sum of £5,400 for the purchase of land adjacent to Squires Gate Railway Station for the purposes as set out within the report. It is proposed that this is to be met from the Capital Investment Reserve.
Legal	Purchase of land asset and grant of long lease to Network Rail
Community Safety	Enabling an accessible route to Squires Gate Station to be created, thereby improving safe access for people with disabilities
Human Rights and Equalities	Improving accessibility for people with disabilities
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	A small area of waste land will be regenerated where the access route passes over.
Health & Safety and Risk Management	Improving the health and safety of people with disabilities

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
None		

Attached documents

Land adjacent to Squires Gate Station – location plan