

**Subject: Land at former Peter Black site, Mortimer Street, Trowbridge.**

**Purpose of Report**

1. To inform Members of the progress of investigations regarding remedying the poor condition of the above site.

**Background**

2. Members will be aware of this large, disused industrial site in the centre of Trowbridge.
3. In October 2009, outline planning permission was granted under reference 08/00255/OUT for the demolition of the existing buildings and redevelopment of the site for a mix of uses including a food store, cafes, bars and restaurants, a hotel, residential apartments and associated access, car parking, landscaping and the ecological enhancement of the River Biss. Whilst this permission has not yet expired, there has been no submission of reserved matters applications to date, the company who own the site (Parkridge (Cradle Bridge) Ltd) is in liquidation, the site remains unoccupied and its condition is deteriorating due to vandalism and lack of maintenance of buildings and peripheral landscape planting.
4. At the July Area Board meeting, Members agreed to request officers on the enforcement team to investigate and seek to remedy the poor condition of the site using the powers available under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and to report back with progress on their investigations to this meeting.
5. In 2005 the Government published a good practice guide on the use of the Section 215. This recognises the effectiveness of Section 215 powers at both informal and formal level, in terms of tackling unsightly land and also as an aid to regeneration. In terms of the general approach to using the power, the good practice guide envisages that prior to commencing any formal action, an informal approach will first have been made to the landowner to seek to improve the poor condition of their land and buildings voluntarily.
6. The good practice guide recognises that the timescale between the start of an investigation and compliance can appear protracted due to negotiations with owners, however often dialogue with the threat of formal action to follow is able to resolve matters without the need for such action. Where the informal approach is not successful or

becomes unduly protracted, formal action is then more likely to be justified.

### **The current situation**

7. Subsequent to the Board meeting in July, officers have undertaken a full survey of the site, established where the poor condition of the site is causing harm to local amenity and prepared a schedule of works to remedy the harm. This has now been communicated to the official receiver for the landowner and their response is awaited. In summary the recommended works are as follows:
  - Carry out maintenance to all outgrown boundary landscaping of the site.
  - Repair and secure all gates and fencing on the boundary of the site.
  - Remove all weeds, rubbish, rubble and detritus from within the site.
  - Remove or paint out all graffiti from the buildings within the site.
  - Board up and suitably paint all windows in the office building fronting Mortimer Street.
  - In addition to the bullet point above, board up and suitably paint all broken windows and ground floor windows of all other buildings within the site.
  
8. It is anticipated that Officers will be able to update Members at the meeting, concerning the progress of the investigation.

### **Recommendation**

**A further report will be made at the meeting.**

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Report Author:  
Stephen Hawkins, Team Leader (Enforcement).  
Date of report 20<sup>th</sup> August 2012

### **Background Papers**

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

None.

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