

## **Divisions Affected – Henley on Thames**

**20 December 2023**

### **FREEHOLD DISPOSAL CHILTERN ENDS FORMER CARE HOME, GREYS ROAD, HENLEY ON THAMES, RG9 1SQ**

#### **Report by Director of Property**

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **The Cabinet is RECOMMENDED to:**

- a)* Approve, as a key decision, the freehold sale of land comprising the former elderly persons home at Chilterns End to a named purchaser in consideration of the Council receiving a capital receipt.
- b)* Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to consider officer recommendations and agree the final purchaser and sale price.

### **Executive Summary**

1. Chilterns End was let to the Oxfordshire Care Partnership under a project agreement dated 20 December 2001, for a term of 60 years, for use as an elderly person's home. The property has been empty since 2016 when the residents moved to a new facility elsewhere in Henley. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) took back occupation in October 2019.
2. The property has been considered for several uses within OCC since late 2019, but with no viable business case forthcoming.
3. The property has been allocated in the Henley on Thames Neighbourhood Plan for a mix of open market and affordable housing.
4. The property has been formally declared surplus and has been marketed for sale for the last two months.

## Detail

5. OCC own the freehold of the site at Chilterns End as shown on the plan below edged red. The site extends to 2.37 acres (0.96 hectares), with the single storey building, built in the 1970s, extending to 18,384 sq ft (1,708 sq m).



6. The property was historically used as an elderly persons care home and let to the Oxfordshire Care Partnership. As demand for the service fell away, the home closed in late 2016. OCC and the Oxfordshire Care Partnership entered negotiations to surrender the lease, which concluded in October 2019 with OCC taking back occupation.
7. At that point the property was placed on the Capital Programme list as a future disposal. At the same time, OCC submitted the site for inclusion in the Henley on Thames Neighbourhood Plan call for sites and the site was successfully allocated for a minimum of 25 residential units.
8. There has been some service interest in the property in the years following the lease surrender, with both the Adults and Childrens service declaring an interest. However, the demand for this sort of accommodation in Henley never materialised and the finances for a business case did not stack up.

9. Services were given a final opportunity to submit interest in July 2023, with no further interest coming forward by the deadline in August 2023. The property has now been formally declared surplus to the operational requirements to the council's needs.
10. OCC has instructed agents to market and sell the property. An officer report detailing our recommendations will be presented for approval to Property Capital Board and Strategic Capital Board

### **Risk Management**

11. The Council must ensure that all capital payments received come from the client account of a firm of solicitors acting for the purchaser, which has taken responsibility for money laundering checks. The Council may wish to conduct independent checks on the source of the funds and must reserve the right to withdraw from the transaction at any stage in the event that these are not completed to its satisfaction.

### **Corporate Policies and Priorities**

12. The sale of the site supports the agreed Property and Asset Strategy agreed in November 2022, by maximising the value of investments to support the long-term financial sustainability of the Council land and supporting the local community by the provision of land for social housing.

### **Staff Implications**

13. There are no staff implications.

### **Equality & Inclusion Implications**

14. There are no equality and inclusion implications.

### **Financial Implications**

15. The Capital & Investment Strategy for 2023/24 agreed by the Council in February 2023 sets out the principle that capital receipts should be treated as a corporate resource and used across the capital programme flexibly.
16. The eventual sale would provide a capital receipt as set out in the disposals programme.. The disposal will need to be compliant with the best value requirements as set out in section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.
17. The funding for the Capital Programme already assumes a capital receipt, any difference between the actual and estimated capital receipt will need to be reflected in the Capital Programme in due course.

Comments checked by:

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## **Legal Implications**

18. The Council has power to dispose of its land assets pursuant to Section 123(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, subject to its duty to ensure it receives best value for them. The Council owns the freehold to the site.

Comments checked by:  
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## **Sustainability Implications**

19. There are no sustainability implications

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