

Divisions Affected – Kirtlington and Kidlington North

DELEGATED DECISIONS BY CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE

08 March 2024

SALE OF GLEBE HOUSE AND THE MOORS, KIDLINGTON

Report by Executive Director for Resources

RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member is RECOMMENDED to:

- a) Approve, as a key decision, the freehold sale of land comprising the former elderly persons home at Glebe House, Kidlington and the development site at The Moors, Kidlington in consideration of Oxfordshire County Councils (OCC) receiving a capital receipt.
- b) Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property, to consider Officer recommendations and agree the final purchaser(s) and sale price(s).

Executive Summary

1. Glebe House is a former elderly person's home that has been vacant since 2020. The property was let to the Oxfordshire Care Partnership (OCP) 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 unoccupied since 2020 when the residents moved to a new facility at Moorside Place Extra Care Housing (ECH) in Kidlington. Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) took back possession in 2021.
2. The property has been considered for several uses within OCC and other external partners, since 2020, but with no viable business case forthcoming.
3. The property has been formally declared as surplus to operational requirements.
4. The Moors is a group of three smaller properties. The largest is Mays Yard, purchased in 2013 to secure access into the new Moorside ECH to the north. The other two areas, being the Stables and Bungalow lie on the previous main access

way shared with Homewell House and providing access to the OCC Children's Home at Moorlands, again to the north.

5. Outline planning permission was achieved on the Mays Yard site in 2022 for six residential units.
6. Both the stables and bungalow have been vacant for some time and are in poor condition.
7. The properties have been formally declared as surplus to any internal operational requirement and have been discussed in detail with Local Authority partners and other connected parties.

Background – Glebe House

8. OCC own the freehold of the site at Glebe House as shown on the plan below edged red. The site extends to 1.18 acres (0.48 hectares), with the single storey building, built in the 1970s, extending to 15,630 sq. ft (1,452 sq. m).



9. The property was historically used as an elderly persons care home and let to the Oxfordshire Care Partnership. Glebe House is one of the original homes transferred to OCP in 2001. The home should have been closed and removed from the block contract under the Project Agreement when the Moorside Place Extra Care Housing scheme in Kidlington was built in 2015 however, it remained open as demand still existed in the locality.

10. From 2015 to 2020, demand for Glebe House reduced and occupancy levels reduced to less than 55% making the home commercially unviable for OCP. As a consequence, the Partnership requested that the home be closed, and the lease was surrendered in April 2021.
11. Since 2020 the Estates team have been exploring the potential use of the property within OCC service lines, but due to the outdated layout of the property this has always provided a financial unviable. The potential use of the site with several Housing Authorities and Registered Providers, as well as the Parish Council, District Council and charity groups has also been considered.
12. OCC Services were given a final opportunity to submit interest in March 2023, with no further interest coming forward by the deadline in April 2023. The property has now been declared surplus to the operational requirements of the Council.
13. The availability of the property was brought to the attention of Cherwell District Council (CDC) and the local Parish Council before the property was launched onto the market. The marketing was delayed in order that CDC could further consider the site. Details were provided and CDC inspected the site in the autumn/winter 2023. CDC then confirmed that they had no interest in the site.

Background – The Moors

14. OCC own the freehold of the three distinct parcels of land at The Moors.
15. The larger Mays Yard comprises a significant area of hard standing, currently used for parking, with some garages on the western boundary and period, single storey brick buildings on the eastern boundary, used by a car repair business. The site is bisected by a relatively new vehicular access to Moorside Place ECH scheme. The property was purchased in 2013 to allow for a better access to the ECH site that was previously accessed via the shared access to the west with Homewell House.
16. The site extends to 0.82 acres (0.33 hectares) and held under title ON232429.
17. The site benefits from outline planning permission under reference 21/00255/OUT, granted on 26 May 2022. The permission is for “outline planning application for residential development comprising 6 new dwellings and the demolition of the former smithy building and garages. A condition of the planning permission is that a start must be made within three years of the date of permission (May 2025).
18. The stables comprise a single detached building to the northwest of Mays Yard. Access is from the shared driveway with Homewell House to the west of Mays Yard. The building is mostly single storey with five rooms and an attic above. It is believed the building was the former stables for Homewell House and may therefore be curtilage Listed. The building has been vacant since it was previously used for storage, workshops and a gym/games room by the nearby Children’s Home.
19. The building is in a dilapidated state but would appear suitable for conversion to an alternative use subject to the necessary consents. The building extends to 1,243 sq. ft (11,535 sq. m).

20. The bungalow comprises a single residential unit, formally a caretaker's bungalow, accessed from the same access road as The Stables, that eventually leads to an OCC children's home. The bungalow has a reception room, kitchen, two bedrooms and a bathroom and extends to 868 sq. ft (80.6 sq. m). The bungalow is in a very poor condition and is currently boarded up and suffers from break-ins and vandalism. There is a small garden, garage and store.
21. OCC Services were given an opportunity to submit interest in all parts of the property in September 2023, with no further interest coming forward by the deadline in October 2023. The property has now been declared surplus to the operational requirements of the Council.
22. As part of the same exercise in talking to CDC about the availability of Glebe House above, we also discussed The Moors, but again they expressed no interest in the site.

Risk Management

23. 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

24. 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

25. There are no staff implications.

Equality & Inclusion Implications

26. There are no equality and inclusion implications.

Financial Implications

27. The Capital & Investment Strategy for 2023/24 agreed by the Council in February 2023 sets out that the principle that capital receipts should be treated as a corporate resource and used across the capital programme flexibly.
28. The eventual sale would provide a capital receipt which has been recorded in the Capital Programme and will be further updated upon sale with actual sale receipts

on disposal. No revenue savings are envisaged from the sale other than minor vacant building costs for the Glebe.

29. The sale price is being supported by a period of open marketing with a substantial number of viewings that have been carried out.

30. Next steps will be an update to Property Capital Board and Strategic Capital Board of the offers received for the properties.

Comments checked by:

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Legal Implications

31. 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

32. There are no sustainability implications.

**Report by Lorna Baxter
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