

Report to	Cabinet
Date of meeting	22 nd September 2020
Lead Member / Officer	Councillor Julian Thompson Hill Lead Member for Finance, Performance & Strategic Assets
Report authors	Mair Jones, Principal Valuation and Estates Surveyor Mark Dixon, Housing Development Manager
Title	Disposal of land adjacent to Ysgol Pendref, Denbigh

1. What is the report about?

1.1 The report is about selling the Council's freehold interest in a field which was formerly part of the Council's Agricultural Estate and which is adjacent to Ysgol Pendref, Denbigh to enable the construction of new homes. The field extends to 2.82 ha (6.97 acres).

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1 Because the market value of the land with vacant possession is estimated to be greater than £1,000,000, the decision has to be made by Cabinet to comply with the Council's constitution.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1 The recommendation is that Cabinet approves the disposal of land adjacent to Ysgol Pendref, Denbigh outlined in red on the plan in Appendix A which is surplus to Council requirements on the open market for residential development and delegates authority to the Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets to approve the final sale; and

3.2 That Cabinet members confirm that they have read, understood and taken account of the Well-being Impact Assessment in Appendix B as part of the consideration.

4. Report details

4.1 The field to which this report relates had formerly been part of the Council's Agricultural Estate but came back in hand - subject to short term tenancy provisions, with a view to it either being developed or sold at a later stage. The land is currently used for grazing and is let under a short term arrangement.

4.2 The field was allocated for residential development in the current Local Development Plan under policy BSC1 (Building Sustainable Communities - Growth Strategy for Denbighshire). A Site Development Brief was adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance by the Council's Planning committee on 15th March 2017.

4.3 This field together with another smaller one adjacent to Tan y Sgubor were appropriated to the Council's Housing Revenue Account. Contractors will be starting work on building 22 houses for social rent to be retained by the Council on the Tan y Sgubor site this autumn. Because of the number of new homes which can be accommodated on the larger field and the desirability of being able to offer a choice of different housing types and tenures to meet identified needs in the Denbigh area, it would be more appropriate for the larger field to be sold to enable its development to be progressed by a party external to the Council but with the expectation that 20% of the homes provided would be built as affordable units and offered for sale to the Council in the first instance at a price determined in accordance with the adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance for affordable homes.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

5.1 The Council's Corporate Plan includes a priority to ensure that everyone is supported to live in homes that meet their needs. The Housing Strategy approved by the County Council at its meeting on 1st December 2015 includes an action to review both Council and Housing Revenue Account landholdings to determine their suitability and availability for affordable housing development and establish a clear programme for delivery. This decision will contribute towards the delivery of the Corporate Plan and Housing Strategy by enabling a developer to build new homes including a proportion which are affordable to address the need for this type of accommodation in this location.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1 There will be costs associated with the disposal incurred by the Council's own valuers and solicitors, and external agents appointed to deal with the sale. These will be met from the capital receipt generated by the sale.

6.2 The impact of the subsequent development upon the environment will be assessed through the Planning process.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1 The main conclusions of the assessment are that the proposal will have a positive impact on all of the well-being goals through the provision of new homes suitable for people who acquire protected characteristics which are situated in a location which will enable them to access services on foot or by cycling and which will minimize the risk of fuel poverty amongst residents as a consequence of their energy efficiency; it will have a positive impact on the economy by contributing towards the vitality of shops and services in Denbigh town centre and through supply chain opportunities and the acquisition of new skills as a consequence of the creation of apprenticeships; it will increase community cohesiveness by improving the attractiveness of a previously undeveloped area and providing access to community leisure facilities for residents; and it will have a positive impact upon biodiversity through habitat improvements; and it will promote the use of the Welsh language through the use of bilingual signage and Welsh street names.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1 The Site Development Brief was the subject of consultation with the public and specialist consultees and the proposal has been presented to the ward members and the Denbigh Member Area Group. The land was considered by the Council's Modernising Education team as a possible candidate site for the construction of a new school but was rejected.

8.2. The Asset Management Group supported the disposal of this land at its July meeting and recommended that Cabinet should approve the disposal.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1 The proposal to support this disposal of land is in line with the Council's Priorities and Policies and is therefore supported. The additional funding generated which will help reduce

the borrowing requirement of the Capital Plan is particularly welcome during a time when Council finances are stretched.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1 The risk of not obtaining the best price for the land and the highest proportion of affordable homes on the development will be mitigated by the appointment of specialist agents to handle the sale.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1 Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 gives the Council the power to dispose of land.