

ASSET DISPOSAL

Executive Summary

This report sets out the proposal for the sale of the freehold interest in the Egley Road Barn Site, via the preferred method of sale, Informal Tender.

The site proposed for disposal is known as the Egley Road Barn Site, Egley Road, Woking, GU22 0HN.

The vendor is Woking Borough Council (WBC).

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That

- i) the Council dispose of the freehold interest in the Egley Road Barn Site via an Informal Tender; and
- ii) the site should be marketed and sold on the basis set out within the Part I and II reports.

Reasons for Decision

Reason: This disposal of the Egley Road Barn Site will generate a capital receipt for the Council and will enable the delivery of housing on this site by a third-party developer.

The Executive has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

Background Papers: None.

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The site proposed for disposal is known as the Egley Road Barn Site, Egley Road, Woking, GU22 0HN.
- 1.2 The vendor is Woking Borough Council (WBC).

2.0 Proposed Disposal

- 2.1 This report sets out the rationale behind the proposed sale of the freehold interest in the Egley Road Barn Site.
- 2.2 The site was purchased in October 2019. It is part of a wider Site Allocation GB7: Nursery Land adjacent to Egley Road, Mayford, GU22 0PL). Following the purchase, the site was the subject of a failed planning application (PLAN/2019/1177) which was subsequently dismissed at appeal.
- 2.3 The application sought consent for a mixed-use scheme to deliver houses and a David Lloyd leisure complex.
- 2.4 The key reasons for refusal of the original application PLAN/2019/1177 (and subsequent dismissal of the Appeal, APP/A3655/W/20/3265969) were the loss of the trees in the south, the impact on the openness of this former greenbelt site, and that the proposed David Lloyd leisure complex was not part of the site allocation's proposed mix of uses. The need to create a sense of visual separation between Mayford village and the Woking conurbation was a key planning concern for this site.
- 2.5 The Site to be disposed of is the southern part of a wider site which includes the Hoe Valley School and the Cala Homes site. The Cala Homes site secured consent under PLAN/2022/0694 for 180 residential units (inclusive of 118 dwellings plus a 62-bed care home).
- 2.6 The decision was made by the Council to undertake an outline planning application to address the major uncertainties over the level of housing that can be delivered on the site. The finer details of layout and house design can be left to the purchaser, as each developer will have their own preferences and business model.
- 2.7 Executive approval is requested to commence marketing of the site given that it is anticipated the outline planning application submitted by the Property Services Team to establish the likely quantum of development is anticipated to go before the Planning Committee in the next 12 weeks.
- 2.8 It is proposed that preparations for the disposal process, and the subsequent marketing of the site, are commenced prior to the outline consent application being heard, so that the Council is able to finalise a sale as and when an outline planning consent is granted.
- 2.9 A pre-application submission was submitted by the Property Services Team in January 2024 in respect of an outline planning application for residential development. The proposed outline application is intended to increase the site's asset value by reducing planning risk and establishing the broad quantum/footprint of housing that can be delivered. Following a pre-application meeting, it is anticipated that the Council can realistically expect to secure consent for circa 50 houses.
- 2.10 The outline consent will establish key aspects of the proposed scheme, including the site's red-line boundary, the maximum floor area of residential, the maximum building heights, affordable housing quantum, and several ecological and environmental matters.

- 2.11 It is proposed that the site will be sold unconditionally (subject to any planning consent) to a residential developer, who will then submit a Reserved Matters application to address the detailed design, layout and other reserved matters.
- 2.12 It is anticipated that an overage agreement will be incorporated, to ensure that additional land payments are made if the purchaser subsequently secures consent for a greater amount of residential floorspace than envisaged/permitted by the Outline consent.
- 2.13 It is proposed that the disposal method will be by an Informal Tender. In a sale via an Informal Tender, the site will be widely advertised to the open market and expressions of interest sought by a pre-determined date.
- 2.14 The benefits of this proposed sale are largely commercial and financial, through generating a capital receipt but there is also the social benefit of delivering additional housing, in line with the Local Plan's objective for housing on this site.
- 2.15 The Council has considered if there are any other uses that could feasibly be developed on the site. Given that the Site Allocation GB7 earmarks this site for residential development, it is considered unrealistic that alternative uses would secure planning consent.

3.0 Corporate Strategy

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan (2021/22) has been followed by the *Working for all supplementary priorities (2022-2027)* strategy, and the proposed sales meets a number of this strategy's objectives, including encouraging a "A high performing council" by helping to "Get the Council's finances under control" and "Consider new approaches to increase income".

4.0 Implications

Finance and Risk

- 4.1 No major risks identified.

Equalities and Human Resources

- 4.2 None arising from this report.

Legal

- 4.3 There are no legal implications, other than those outlined in this report.

5.0 Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1 None arising from this report.

REPORT ENDS