

Report of Head of Resources

LAND AND PROPERTY DISPOSALS

1 Purpose of report

This report provides members with information about council-owned land which is not making any positive contribution to the council's property portfolio, so could be disposed of to gain a capital receipt. In addition, such sales will provide opportunities for new housing in the borough as well as the improvement of older properties which require repair and renovation.

2 Executive summary

This paper identifies land and property which could be disposed of by the council without significantly affecting its overall investment, but providing the opportunity to increase the council's capital receipts.

3 Appendices

Appendices A to D outline the areas of land referred to in this report.

4 Proposed action:

4.1 The committee is invited to RESOLVE to dispose of the following land or property at best consideration in order to gain a capital receipt for the council:

- a. Factory site, Arthur Street, Wellingborough**
- b. Land adjacent to Croyland Park**
- c. Land adjacent to Penrith Drive**
- d. London Road cemetery chapels**

5 Background

5.1 The council has stated its intention to maximise the benefit of property assets.

5.2 This can be done in two ways:

- (a) Sell assets and invest the income so that the interest can contribute to revenue budgets;
- (b) Sell assets and reinvest in higher-yield property which will also contribute to revenue budgets.

5.3 Because the council owns plots of land and dilapidated buildings of various sizes

an exercise has begun on reviewing the potential for appropriate disposals.

- 5.4 A report was submitted to Resources Committee in July 2013, at which approval was given to dispose of six sites. Following the meeting work was undertaken to obtain planning consent and ensure due diligence in respect of environmental issues etc. Some sites did not progress as follows:
- (a) Land adjacent to Oakway School (known as Diamond Learning Centre at the time): interest by the school was withdrawn but they are now wishing to revisit a potential purchase;
 - (b) Land to rear of 22 to 28 Grasmere Green: interest by Wellingborough Homes was withdrawn.
 - (c) Land at Holme Close: concerns were raised during the planning process
- 5.5 In May 2015 an auction was held, and a plot at Hardwick was sold for £234,000 and a plot at Wollaston for £60,000 Land at Fulmar Lane remained unsold, but the council is in discussion with Wellingborough Homes who have expressed an interest in purchasing.
- 5.6 In May 2012 the council approved the sale of three car parks in the former Castle ward for potential residential development. These sales have not yet progressed because planning applications have been deferred whilst further investigations are being undertaken into parking provision/requirements. Once the parking provisions and requirements have been determined the sale of these sites will be progressed if they are not needed for future parking provision.
- 5.7 This is a further report on the review of property, with recommendations for sale.
- 5.8 In due course the council will be asked to consider an asset management policy which will enable officers to have clear direction in terms of property asset acquisition and disposal.

6 Discussion

- 6.1 Set out below are details of various land/property which members are asked to consider for disposal.
- 6.2 **Factory site, Arthur Street (plan at appendix A)**
- (a) This factory has been empty for some years. Its condition is not such that it is now viable as a factory, and there has been no interest.
 - (b) Planning permission has now therefore been obtained for twelve residential units (WP/14/00808/FUL).
 - (c) It is proposed that this property be offered for sale.
- 6.3 **Land adjacent to Croyland Park – swimming pool site (plan at appendix B)**
- (a) Since the swimming pool was demolished in May 2008 this area has been left as a grassed site adjacent to Croyland Park.
 - (b) This has been identified as part of the five year supply of housing in the borough.
 - (c) It is proposed that an outline planning application be submitted, before putting the site to the market.
- 6.4 **Land adjacent to Penrith Drive (plan at appendix C)**
- (a) This land has been identified as part of the five year supply of housing by

the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, and was previously allocated for housing in the Local Plan.

- (b) It is proposed that an outline planning application be submitted, before putting the site to the market.

6.5 London Road chapels (plan at appendix D)

- (a) The two listed chapels were built in the mid 19th century, one designated as a mortuary chapel for the Church of England and one for nonconformists.
- (b) The chapels have been used for storage by the council for some time, but are now being emptied as the council consolidates and reduces its storage requirements.
- (c) A condition survey was carried out in 2012 and concerns were raised about roofs, stonework, windows, doors, and internal repair, including beetle attack. At that time it was estimated that the first phase of repair to deal with issues which required immediate attention would cost in the region of £40,000.
- (d) There will be a number of considerations to be resolved in relation to the two buildings, mainly in relation to wildlife conservation (one of the chapels is home to a colony of bats), but also the fact that one of the chapels is consecrated.
- (e) The council no longer has a specific requirement for the chapels and officers recommend selling them in order to bring them back into some form of use and to preserve their fabric.
- (f) Officers recommend that outline permission be obtained for a sympathetic development of the chapels into residential or business accommodation, followed by their sale.

7 Legal powers

Local Government Acts 1972 and 2003

8 Financial and value for money implications

The sale of the land and property described in this report will provide the council with capital receipts. It will also reduce some maintenance costs which are currently incurred.

The council's land and property is routinely valued; once planning permission has been sought (as appropriate) the land could be valued and offered to the open market, resulting in a capital receipt.

In accordance with the council's policy on investment, at least 25% of the income received from the sales will enable the council to re-invest in other capital projects which can produce a revenue return for the council.

9 Risk analysis

Retention of this land presents no specific risks, other than the potential for properties to fall into disrepair and become a health and safety hazard or breach

listed building requirements.

From a financial point of view this presents a risk, as does the need to provide ongoing maintenance, compliance, and valuation.

10 Implications for resources

The recommendations outlined above will take time to deliver because of the limited resources within the property service, and because of conflicting priorities. They can, however, be planned and achieved.

11 Implications for stronger and safer communities

Pieces of empty land potentially offer the opportunity for rubbish dumping or anti-social behaviour. Their sale has the potential to improve the environment whilst also offering opportunities for new houses, where relevant.

12 Implications for equalities

There are no implications for equalities. All disposals would be dealt with via the council's usual agency (Underwoods), with the aim of attaining best consideration.

13 Author and contact officer

Bridget Lawrence, Head of Resources

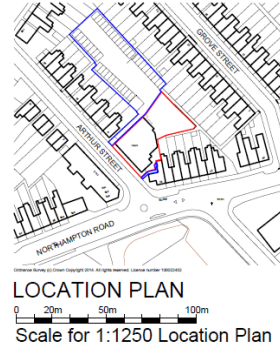
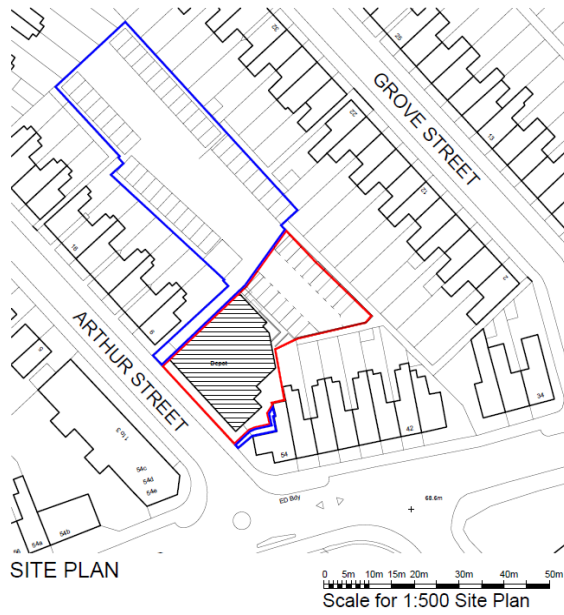
14 Consultees

Chief Executive
Head of Finance
Head of Planning and Local Development
Principal Property and Facilities Manager
Principal Planning Policy and Regeneration Manager

15 Background papers

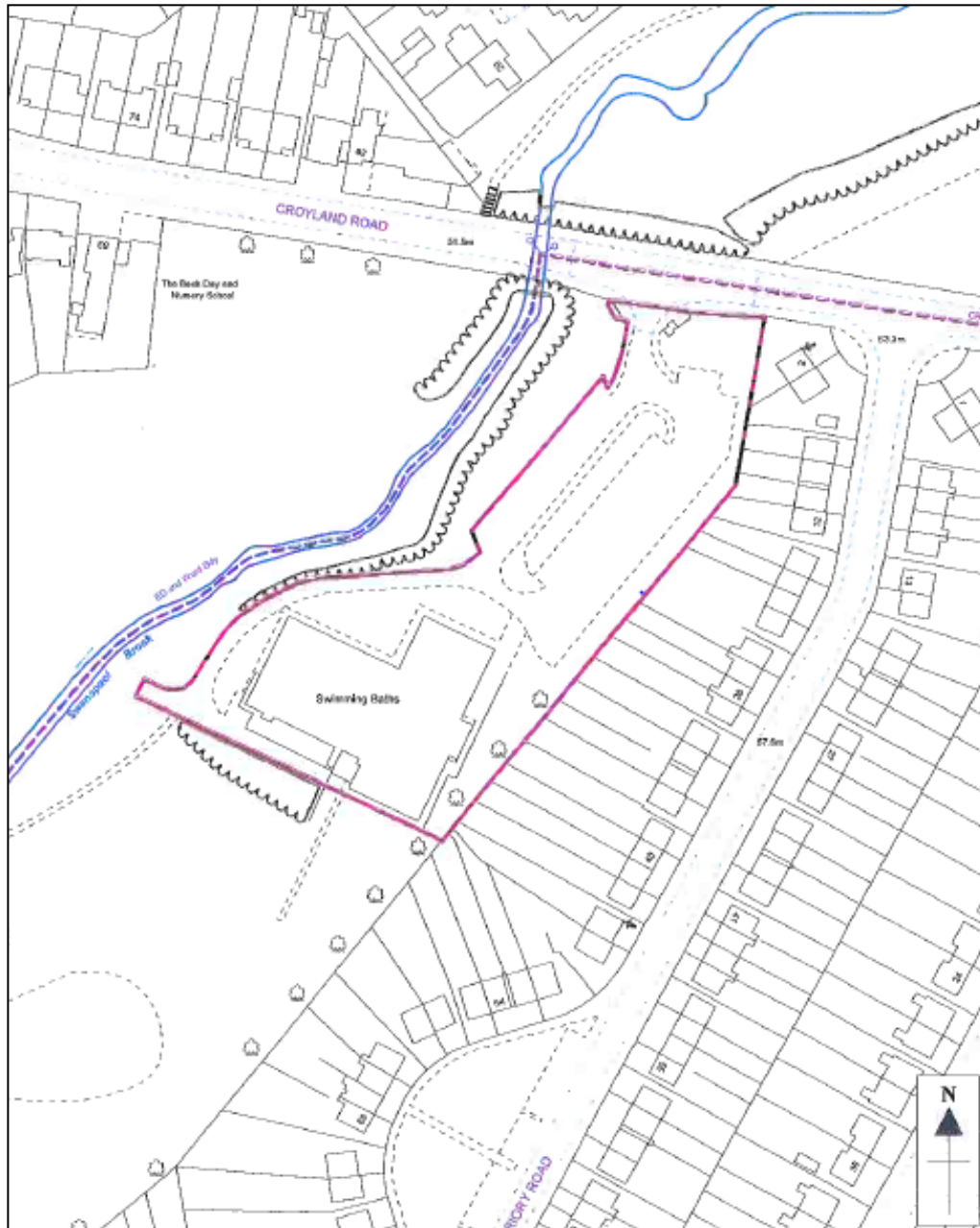
The background papers to this report contain various emails and written documents relating to the history of the council's ownership of the land. In some cases, lapsed planning permissions are also available.

Appendix A: Arthur Street



<p>Meridian DESIGN</p> <p>CREATIVE ARCHITECTS</p> <p>157-159, Grove Street, Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, NN8 4JU tel: 01603 708800 www.meridiandesign.co.uk</p>	<p>project Residential Conversion of 2 - 4 Arthur Street Wellingborough Northamptonshire NN8 4JU</p> <p>date november 2014 scale 1:500 and 1:1250 at A3 drawing 1517 LOC cad file 1517 SITE.dwg dwg title SITE AND LOCATION PLANS</p>
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Appendix B: Croyland Road, Wellingborough



Appendix C: Penrith Drive, Wellingborough



Appendix D: Cemetery Chapels, London Road, Wellingborough

