

PROPERTY MATTERS

1 Purpose of report

To provide an update to members on the report submitted to the committee on 24 June 2020.

2 Executive summary

The report provides an update in relation to ongoing approved projects identified in Appendix 1 – current projects and seeks in principle approval for the disposal of one property; the former youth club, Orchard Road, Finedon.

3 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Current projects.

Appendix 2 – Former youth club, Orchard Road, Finedon.

4 Proposed action:

The committee is invited to RESOLVE to

- 4.1 note progress with regard to the projects outlined in Appendix 1.**
- 4.2 approve in principle the disposal of the site of the former youth club, Orchard Road, Finedon.**
- 4.3 Instruct officers to bring a further report to this committee regarding options for the disposal of the site described in 4.2 above.**

5 Background

- 5.1 The council has approved an efficiency plan which was developed in conjunction with the medium term financial strategy to consider ways in which the council can either increase revenue income from its assets or reduce the cost of the operation of its assets. This, together with the proposal to set aside capital receipts to bring about those efficiencies was agreed by this committee in 2016.
- 5.2 Whilst there are a number of potential projects which the council could pursue to address the issues outlined above, a prudent approach has been taken to initiate those which can be managed with existing (or moderately enhanced) project resources; further large scale projects are likely to require a development partner for which a procurement exercise will be necessary.

- 5.3 The majority of the proposed projects for which recommendations are outlined in Appendix 1 are either identified in the efficiency report or are outstanding issues which remain to be resolved.
- 5.4 In addition to the efficiency projects, some of the projects involving the development and/or disposal of sites will enhance the council's five year housing land supply position.
- 5.5 Given the planned changes to local government in Northamptonshire, the focus of this report is on the projects members have previously identified as priorities, and projects which can either be completed – or substantially progressed – whilst this authority is in existence.

6 Discussion

- 6.1 At the meeting of the committee on 12 December 2018, a revised list of projects and priorities was agreed. These projects are now being progressed and project documentation is in place to better enable future monitoring. This is also assisting communication with regard to progress and the reporting, by exception, of changes and issues that require a steer or a decision. Officers have set up a project board to support the governance of projects. Reports seeking approval for key changes in priorities or projects will continue to be made to the resources committee.
- 6.2 A summary table including the current, previously agreed, projects appear in Appendix 1. These are updated monthly by the project managers. This does not change the priorities previously agreed by members. However, it does ensure public transparency regarding how council resources are being used to invest in projects to improve Wellingborough.
- 6.3 A more robust project management framework and structure to reporting enhances this transparency and gives members a clear direction of travel on the progression of projects, and the use of resources, throughout the year.
- 6.4 The council owns the freehold of the vacant former youth club at 60 Orchard Road, Finedon. This was leased out for 99 years from 1969 and operated as a youth club. The tenant has proved difficult to locate and the council is in the process of taking back legal possession of the premises. A number of parties have expressed interest in acquiring the premises. Officers will consider options for disposal of this site in view of the interest expressed. The committee is now recommended to approve in principal the disposal of the site. The committee is asked to note that Finedon town council is one of the parties that have expressed an interest in acquiring this property. A plan of the site is in Appendix 2.

7 Legal powers

The council has full power to manage its property assets under the incidental

powers in section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972. Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires councils to obtain 'best consideration' for any interest in land disposed of exceeding a term of 7 years. Furthermore the council has all the powers of an individual under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. Accordingly it has full power to carry out the proposed actions.

8 Financial and value for money implications

- 8.1 Requirements for capital investment are outlined in each project, as are potential capital receipts for any sales proposed. Any new proposals for capital investment are processed by the S151 Officer for presentation to members as part of the capital report.
- 8.2 In terms of capital investment there is no proposal for investment unless a business case has been put forward. Business cases will either demonstrate a cost saving, income generation, an improved facility for the borough, or a combination of the three.
- 8.3 Further investment in commercial property will be undertaken as agreed via the capital programme, to increase potential revenue income streams. An investment strategy for the acquisition of additional commercial investment property has been agreed.
- 8.4 The level of capital investment in these projects is likely to be significant and extend over a number of years. When planning the delivery of the schemes, consideration will need to be given to the position on partial exemption for VAT. A breach of this level could result in significant costs to the council and will therefore be included as a risk in planning the project programme.
- 8.5 The Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) may be used to support investment in some of the buildings mentioned. The Heritage Lottery Fund has agreed that the scheme will now be extended until July 2020. Due to delays to projects caused by the Covid19 emergency this is now likely to be extended further to March 2021. The remaining projects are still progressing, but some were paused in the first stage of lockdown. Good progress is now being made on the majority of the projects.
- 8.6 The sale of 40 Acres of land to the north of Niort Way, Wellingborough for residential development has secured a substantial capital receipt that can be used to resource approved priority projects in the council's capital programme. The sale of the former drill hall and 8a High Street Wellingborough has been completed, contracts have been exchanged on the sale of the site of the former swimming pool at Croyland Road Wellingborough and contracts are due to be exchanged in the near future for the sale of 20 Sheep Street. These disposals are providing further resources for the capital programme.

9 Risk analysis

- 9.1 One of the greatest risks in respect of many of these properties is inaction. A number of the buildings are listed and, even "mothballed"; these are costing

the council money in terms of maintenance and repair, but with no return which, in itself, presents an added reputational risk.

- 9.2 Leaving listed buildings unoccupied is expensive as the council has obligations for their maintenance but – at present – no return on that investment.
- 9.3 Since 2011 the council's staffing resources have remained significantly lower than in years gone by, so it is essential to undertake projects which can be run concurrently using existing (or moderately increased) resource. Any further major projects will either need to follow on or be the subject of an agreement with a developer – for which a procurement exercise will be required.
- 9.4 The delivery of property related projects, and particularly those involving the need for agreement with external parties, involves risks affecting the timing and delivery of outcomes. Project management techniques identify and manage those risks where possible.

10 Implications for resources

- 10.1 Significant officer resources will be required to make these projects a success, but the need to maximise the council's assets may be regarded as an appropriate use of such resources. Recruitment to the Property and Projects team is complete with all post currently filled. Additional specialist resources are being procured on a project by project basis from external consultants. If additional permanent or fixed term resources are required to enhance the team a further report will be brought to the committee.

11 Implications for equalities, and stronger and safer communities

There are no direct implications for equalities, or stronger and safer communities.

12 Author and contact officer

Adrian Piper, Assistant Director (Corporate Landlord)

13 Consultees

Liz Elliott, Managing Director
Shaun Darcy, Director
Eric Symons, Assistant Director
Vicki Jessop, Assistant Director
Karen Denton, Assistant Director
Victoria Phillipson, Principal Property and Projects Manager

14 Background papers

Documentation in relation to viability of potential developments.
Correspondence with interested parties or contractors.

Borough Council of Wellingborough Project Register Property & Projects - Current Projects

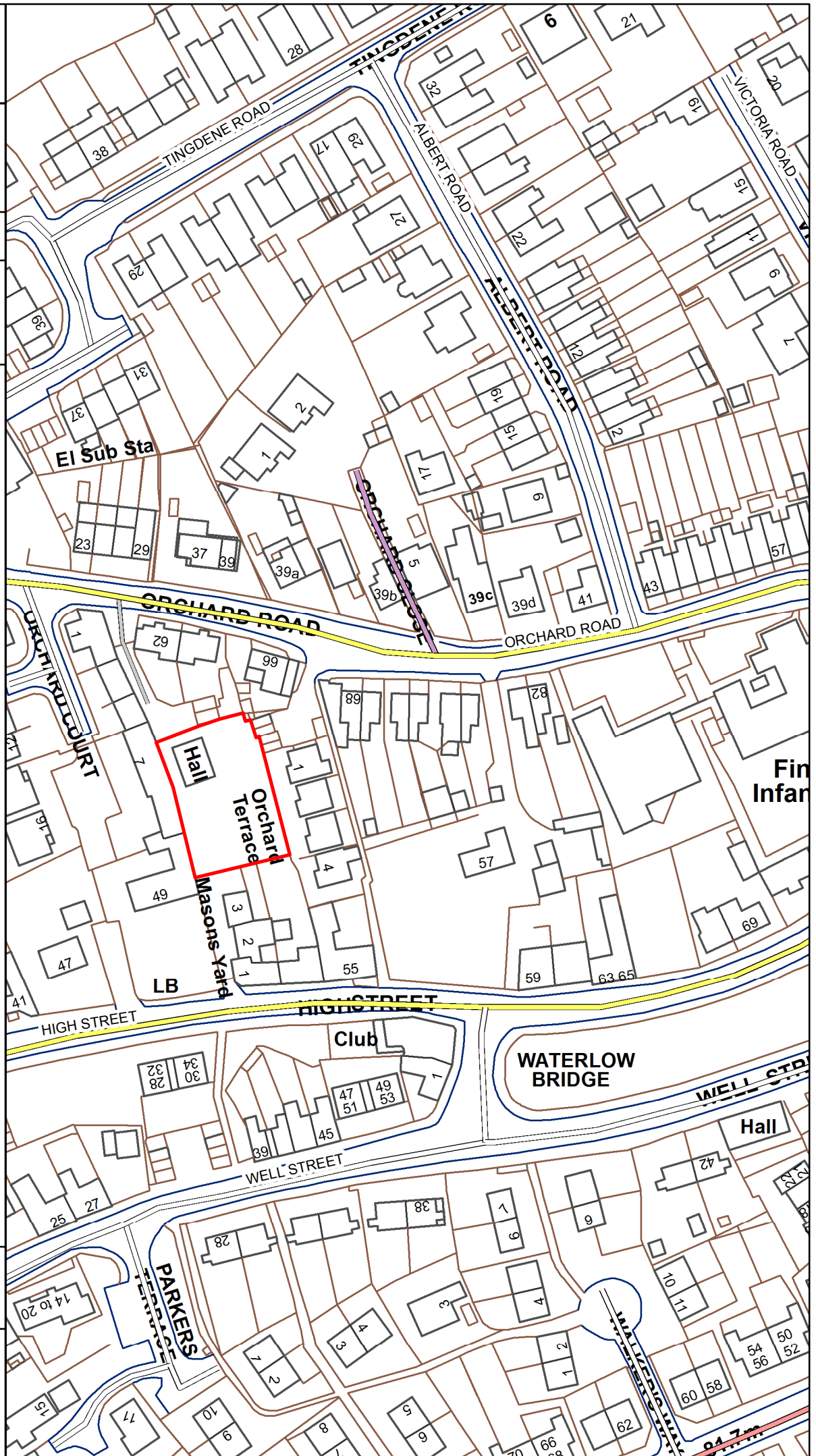
| No. (Capital budget code) | Project Name | Priority | Summary | Project Manager/s | Project start date | Original Project/stage end date | Revised Project/stage end date | Project status (R/A/G) | Latest update September 2020 |
|---------------------------|---|----------|---|---|--------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------|---|
| PP010 | Croyland Road development site (former swimming pool) | Expedite | Disposal of site with planning permission. | Adrian Piper, Assistant Director & Underwoods | Mar-18 | Dec-19 | Oct-20 | G | 09.09.2020 - The contracts for sale subject only to planning consent were exchanged on 2nd September. The purchaser is preparing to submit a planning application. |
| PP012 | Drill Hall and 8A High St- disposal | Expedite | Disposal of site. | Adrian Piper, Assistant Director & Underwoods | Mar-18 | Dec-19 | Oct-20 | G | 27.08.2020 - A resolution to grant planning consent was made at planning committee on 12th August 2020. The sale was exchanged and completed on 27.08.20. When the S106 agreement is completed the redevelopment can commence. |
| PP013 | Tithe Barn Office Block | Expedite | To refurbish the Tithe Barn Office Block. | Lee Clarke, Project Manager Property | Mar-20 | Apr-21 | Jul-21 | A | 20.08.20 - Stakeholder meetings, designs and surveys are being progressed. Little engagement and input from NCC currently. |
| PP015 | Multi-storey car park | Expedite | Work to refurbish car park. | Errol Browne, Programme Manager | Mar-20 | Sep-20 | Feb-21 | G | 17.08.2020 -The project is progressing well to the revised programme which was due to Covid 19. Levels 3 and 4 completed on 13 July 2020 and are fully open to visitors and shoppers to park. Works have started on the toilet refurbishments and lower parking levels. We are on programmed to provide sufficient spaces for Christmas shopping. |
| PP018 | 43/44 High Street | Expedite | Bringing back upper floors into use. | Dewa Hopson, Estates Officer | Mar-18 | Sep-19 | Mar-21 | G | 10.09.2020 - Legal agreement completed, work due to start on site shortly following agreement of planning conditions, building control and supply of services with providers.. |
| PP021 | 20 Sheep Street - disposal | Expedite | Disposal of site with planning permission or for re-use as offices. | Dewa Hopson, Estates Officer | Mar-18 | Dec-19 | Sep-20 | G | 27.08.20 - The contract for sale is agreed and the purchaser is undertaking due diligence. Contracts are expected to be exchanged shortly. |
| PP024 | Retail improvements - shop fronts | Expedite | Providing grants for shop fronts. | Brian Hawkins, Heritage Project Officer | May-19 | Mar-21 | | G | 10.09.2020 - Three grants have been awarded and others are being processed. |
| PP026 | Street Lighting replacement | Expedite | Bulb replacement. | Adam Bracewell, Project Officer | Feb-19 | Mar-20 | Mar-21 | A | 10.09.2020 - Specification and procurement plan have been drafted to confirm estimated costs and timescales. |
| PP027 | Greatwell Homes land rationalisation | Expedite | Agreement to transfer land. | Adrian Piper, Assistant Director and Underwoods | 2017 | Sep-19 | Aug-20 | G | 27.08.2020 - the contract for sale was exchanged and completed on 24.08.20. Greatwell Homes have started local consultation on estate improvements and have sought pre-application planning advice. |
| PP033 | Crematorium Green Infrastructure | Expedite | Design and delivery of pathways and gardens as the Crematorium. | Denise York Project Co-ordinator/Victoria Phillipson, Property and Projects Manager | Sep-19 | Sep-21 | | A | 17.09.2020 - Tender paperwork complete, pathways quotes submitted 11.09.20 and are being reviewed. |
| PP036 | Doddington Road Cemetery | Expedite | Provision of new cemetery plots. | Adam Bracewell, Project Officer | Apr-20 | Aug-20 | Mar-21 | A | 10.09.2020 - Contractors appointed and work due to start on mid October with with footpath work contract to be placed shortly. |
| PP001 J037 | Redhill Farm - Roads & Sewers | High | Get unadopted roads, sewers and cycle ways adopted. | Victoria Phillipson, Property and Projects Manager | 2012 | Jun-19 | Mar-21 | A | 10.09.2020 - Sewers have been adopted by Anglian Water, plans and S38 agreed with NCC and commuted sum paid. Agreement reached with NCC awaiting finalisation of minor works, legal documents and certificate of final adoption. |
| PP002 (J100 & J151) | Wellingborough Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) | High | To provide grant funding to critical/key buildings, shop fronts and other buildings in the Town Centre for restoration and refurbishment. | John Udall, THI Project Manager | 2012 | Oct-19 | Feb-21 | A | 10.09.2020 - The Hind Hotel is progressing well, there are some budget implications for this which are being discussed with the HLF. Some delays to shop front works also due to contractors COVID-19 issues. HLF have agreed to extend the project end date until February 2021. |
| PP007 | High Street Developer Procurement | High | To procure a developer for the High Street/Jacksons Lane site. | Victoria Phillipson, Property and Projects Manager | 2012 | Jul-19 | Dec-20 | A | 10.09.2020 - Planning approved at Committee subject to completion of a S106. Keepmoat have submitted a pre-application request and provided some further financial information to enable discussions progress to allow a report to Council. |
| WN002 (J199, 440) | Swanspool House extension roof | High | Replacement of roof at Swanspool House extension | Adam Bracewell, Project Officer | Apr-19 | Mar-20 | Sep-20 | G | 30.07.2020 - Work complete, snagging currently being undertaken. |
| PP006 (J153 & J143) | Bassett's Park Skate Park and Bassett's Close S106 | Medium | Skate park facilities and other related facilities. | Raj Gill, Project Co-ordinator | 2012 | Mar-20 | May-21 | A | 10.09.2020 - tender documents are being prepared and the tender should go out at the end of Sept 2020 |
| PP008 | Tithe Barn - Public Realm | Medium | Open Space outside the Tithe Barn - Phase 1 | Denise York, Project Co-ordinator | Nov-18 | Nov-19 | Dec-20 | G | 10.09.2020 - Phase 1 works are complete. Phase 2 and 3 being progressed detailed designs and quotes for specific aspects are being developed and water feature is being considered. |
| PP011 | Doddington Road development site | Medium | Disposal and redevelopment | Dewa Hopson, Estates Officer | Mar-18 | Dec-18 | Dec-20 | G | 27.08.2020 - Outline planning consent has been granted for residential development. Underwoods have been instructed to start marketing the site to find a developer. |
| PP019 | BCW owned properties - flats over shops | Medium | Bringing flats back into use. | Dewa Hopson, Estates Officer | May-18 | Dec-19 | Jun-21 | G | 10.09.2020 - Planning application documents prepared and surveys received to allow submission of planning applications. |
| PP020 | Digital High Street | Medium | Identifying and implementing the options for schemes to improve the digital presence in the town centre. | Victoria Phillipson, Property and Projects Manager | Feb-19 | TBC | | G | 10.09.2020 - There is now an SLA in place ENC and additional staff appointed this will therefore be considered further. |
| PP029 | Croyland Gardens | Medium | Improvements to the public realm - connecting green space to the town centre. | Raj Gill, Project Co-ordinator | May-19 | Nov-20 | Jun-21 | G | 10.09.2020 - Approval granted to remove some trees and will be progressed shortly, replacement locations are being considered. Some amendments needed to designs follow WTRWG, Covid-19 and to ensure inclusive play. Specification is being drafted to allow tender to go out end of Sept 2020. |
| PP030 | Office space review | Medium | Consider options for building use for staff. | Lee Clarke, Project Manager Property | Jun-19 | TBC | TBC | G | 10.09.2020 - Information is being collated regarding current need and what space is needed alongside the Tithe Barn Office block refurbishment. |
| PP031 | Park Improvements | Medium | Improve the parks and provide better facilities | Raj Gill, Project Co-ordinator/Caroline Ridge | May-19 | Apr-20 | Jul-20 | G | 09.09.20 - Stage 1 parks have been completed and are now open to the public. street furniture and signs will be installed in Sept 2020. The tender for the second stage for play area improvements is now live and works are expected to be completed by March 2021. |
| PP034 E692 | Castle Theatre Carpark | Medium | Improvements to Castle car park. | Adam Bracewell, Project Officer | 2020 | May-20 | Dec-20 | G | 10.09.2020 - Discussion ongoing regarding the installation of electric charging points. |
| PP035 | Castlefields | Medium | To improve the park. | Caroline Ridge, Project Co-ordinator | 2012 | Jul-20 | Dec-20 | G | 09.09.2020 Minor works are ongoing, Bandstand repairs will be completed shortly. New play area to be installed alongside the other parks in March 2021. |
| PP037 | Operational Property Project | Medium | Delivery of projects to refurbish operational properties. | Adam Bracewell, Project Officer | May-20 | Mar-21 | | G | 09.09.2020 Works progressing as planned. |
| Key | | | | | | | | | |
| R | Project not started/at significant risk of non-delivery | | | | | | | | |
| A | Project on hold/at slight risk of non-delivery or delay | | | | | | | | |
| G | Project in progress and on target | | | | | | | | |



Scale:
1:1,250

Property Services

60 Orchard Road
Finedon



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