

TITLE OF REPORT: Surplus Declaration of the former depot and environs, Chase Park, Whickham

REPORT OF: Mike Barker, Strategic Director Corporate Services and Governance

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval to (i) the property within Chase Park being declared surplus to the Council's requirements and (ii) the future proposal for the property after being declared surplus.

Background

2. The property, which is shown hatched black on the attached plan, comprises the former grounds maintenance depot and store, a former Adult Day Care centre and old stable block formerly used as residential caretaker accommodation, is no longer required for service delivery by the Council and consideration has been given to its future use as detailed in the Appendix.

Proposal

3. It is proposed that the property be declared surplus to the Council's requirements and disposed of on the open market.

Recommendations

4. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - (i) Declare the property surplus to the Council's requirements;
 - (ii) Authorise the Service Director, Legal Democratic and Property Services to dispose of the property on the open market.

For the following reason:

To manage resources and rationalise the Council's assets in line with the Corporate Asset Strategy and Management Plan.

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Policy Context

1. The proposed surplus declaration supports the overall vision for Gateshead as set out in Vision 2030 and the Council Plan. In particular, creating conditions for economic growth.
2. The proposed declaration will also accord with the provisions of the update of the Corporate Asset Strategy and Management Plan 2015 – 2020. In particular, the rationalisation of the estate through the disposal of an uneconomic asset.

Background

3. Chase Park, which is shown outlined in black on the attached plan, was acquired and is currently held by the Council for recreational purposes pursuant to the Public Health Acts 1875 – 1925.
4. The subject property, shown hatched black on the attached plan, whilst located within the park has not been used for recreational purposes. It comprises a former grounds maintenance depot and store; a former Adult Day Care centre and a former residential caretaker flat.
5. The buildings are no longer required for service delivery and due to their deteriorating condition no alternative use has been identified. The old stable block, in particular, which was previously used as first floor caretaker accommodation, is unsafe and cannot be used.
6. Although not used for recreational use it was acquired for that purpose and as such, although the Council may dispose of such land under the provisions of Section 123 (2A) of the Local Government Act 1972, prior to doing so it must advertise the intention to dispose for two consecutive weeks in a local paper circulating in the area in which the property is situated and considers any objections which may come forward as a result of the advert.
7. The Council has developed a close relationship with the Friends of Chase Park and supported them in a Heritage Lottery Fund bid to carry out a variety of environmental improvements within the park. Any future development will take into account of character, and be sympathetic to, the heritage of the park.
8. Temporary storage has been provided for use by the Friends of Chase Park which will no longer be available once the property is sold. Discussions will be held with potential developers to include an element of added value, such as the provision of storage or community facilities, as part of the development. The outcome of such negotiations will be the subject of a further report on the disposal of the site.

Consultation

9. In preparing this report consultations have taken place with Leader and Deputy Leader. The Ward Councillors have also been consulted on the proposals for this site.

Alternative Options

10. The option of retaining the land has been discounted due to the condition of the buildings. No alternative use has been identified and if a development opportunity is not sought then the buildings would need to be demolished resulting in a cost implication for the Council.

Implications of Recommended Option

11. Resources:

- a) **Financial Implications** - The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that the future disposal of the property is expected to generate a capital receipt for the Council.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** - There are no implications arising from this recommendation.
- c) **Property Implications** - The future disposal of this property will result in a reduction in the Council's overall property portfolio thus reducing operational costs.

12. **Risk Management Implication** - The future disposal of this property will remove opportunities for anti-social behaviour to vacant property.

13. **Equality and Diversity** – There are no implications arising from this recommendation.

14. **Crime and Disorder Implications** - The future disposal of this property will remove opportunities for crime and disorder.

15. **Health Implications** - There are no implications arising from this recommendation.

16. **Sustainability Implications** - The future disposal of this property will result in modern energy efficient accommodation.

17. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no implications arising from this recommendation.

18. **Area and Ward Implications** – Dunston Hill and Whickham East; Whickham North in the Inner East area.

19. **Background Information** - None.