

REPORT TITLE	LAND REAR OF PENSBY PARK RESOURCE CENTRE - SALE TO A REGISTERED PROVIDER
REPORT OF	CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF DELIVERY SERVICES AND ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks approval to the sale of the land to the rear of Pensby Park Resource Centre.

The sale will support the Wirral Plan and its delivery through the generation of capital receipts.

This matter affects the Pensby and Thingwall Ward and is not a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION

That the land to the rear of Pensby Resource centre be declared surplus to requirements and the Corporate Director of Delivery Services/Assistant Chief Executive be authorised to agree a sale of the site to One Vision Housing for £850,000 plus £1,250 towards the Council's fees.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To enable a registered provider to develop the site for housing purposes and to generate a capital receipt from the sale of the land.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The site could be offered for sale on the open market which could generate a higher capital receipt but would not achieve the scheme described.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Pensby Park Resource Centre is used as Council offices and also includes the Pensby and Thingwall Children's Centre. The property was originally built as Pensby Park Primary School which ceased to operate as a school in 2009. The current uses of the building do not include the former school playing fields to the rear, although part of the outdoor space of the Children's Centre is required to provide access. The site is shown edged red on the attached plan and extends to approximately 1 ha.
- 3.2 The site has been identified as suitable for a social housing development and One Vision Housing, part of the Sovini Group, has been selected as the preferred Registered Provider to undertake the scheme. One Vision Housing has worked with the Council's Housing and Investment team and has agreed upon a scheme of 35 residential units comprising 15 for affordable rent, 12 for affordable rent to buy and 8 for shared ownership.
- 3.3 For this scheme One Vision Housing has calculated a residual land value of £850,000 for the cleared site. Their calculation has been independently assessed and is considered to be a reasonable assessment. However, if sold on the open market, the land could potentially achieve a higher figure for open market housing which has been estimated to be in the region of £1,000,000. Members will be aware that under s123 of the Local Government Act 1972, except with the consent of the Secretary of State, the Council shall not dispose of land for a consideration less than the best reasonably obtainable. The Secretary of State has issued a General Consent which applies where:
 - a) the Council consider the purpose of disposal is likely to contribute to the achievement of any one or more of the following in respect of any part of its area of any persons resident in its area (i) promotion or improvement of economic well-being; (ii) promotion or improvement of social well-being; (iii) promotion or improvement of environmental well-being and in addition
 - b) the difference between the best price as assessed in line with the guidance in the consent and the price to be paid is not in excess of two million pounds.

Council officers consider that, in order to deliver the scheme as described, the terms of the disposal meet the terms of the Consent.

- 3.4 As a former school playing field, in accordance with section 77 of the School Standards Framework Act 1998 and schedule 1 of the Academies Act 2010, the consent of the Education and Skills Funding Agency is required for a disposal. Such consent was granted on 2nd February 2018.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The sale will generate a capital receipt of £850,000 plus £1,250 towards the Council's costs.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Consent under section 77 of the School Standards Framework Act 1998 and schedule 1 of the Academies Act 2010 has been granted.
- 5.2 The sale requires the Council to use the General Consent powers, as described in the report, to sell at less than market value.
- 5.3 The scheme has been assessed and is considered to comply with State Aid regulations.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no IT or staffing implications arising from this report.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 There is a risk that the scheme will not be delivered although controls are put in the legal documentation which aim to mitigate this.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Discussions so far have been directly with One Vision Housing.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There is no relevance to equality.

10.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The site is identified as a School Playing Field on the UDP Proposals Map. The National Planning Framework, paragraph 97 indicates that playing fields should not be built on unless clearly surplus to requirements or the loss can be replaced with better or equivalent provision in another suitable location.
- 10.2 The proposals would also be required to demonstrate that there would be no detrimental change to the character of the area and address criteria for considering the protection to be given to existing natural features such as established trees in line with UDP Policies GR5, GR7, and Policy CS30 in the emerging Core Strategy Local Plan.

10.3 The prospective purchaser has submitted a planning application (APP/18/01266) for the scheme. If Sport England objects, the application may need to be referred to the Secretary of State before approval could be granted.

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APPENDICES

Site plan

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date