



Report to Cabinet

Decision Date:	11 th July 2023
Reference number:	n/a
Title:	Property Acquisition: Plot 1, Gateway, Aylesbury
Relevant councillor(s):	Councillor John Chilver; Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources, Property & Assets. Local Cllrs – Cllrs Anders Christensen, Gurinder Wadhwa and Tuffail Hussain.
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Ward affected:	Aylesbury North-West
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Authorise the Service Director for Property & Assets in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources, the S151 Officer and Service Director of Legal and Democratic Services to conclude negotiations, agree contracts, appoint consultants and undertake due diligence, arrange finance, exchange and complete on the acquisition of Plot 1 as set out in this report and the confidential annex.2. Cabinet approve the commitment of Capital budget for this acquisition as a priority investment opportunity, to be funded from known headroom within the Capital Programme.

Reason for decision:

The proposed transaction provides the Council with:

- control of all the car park land in front of its HQ.
- Use of the site in the short term as a car park whilst the Council reviews its plans for its overall landholding in this part of Aylesbury.

1. Executive summary

The report recommends acquisition of the freehold interest of Plot 1 of Phase 3 Gateway land, Aylesbury (“Plot 1”) subject to survey, legal due diligence and the simultaneous sale of Plot 2 of Phase 3 Gateway land, Aylesbury (“Plot 2”) to a third party.



Whilst the property transaction does not generate revenue, it does ensure that Buckinghamshire Council (“BC”) retain sufficient free car parking spaces in front of its HQ building; it also completes land ownership of a 5.2-acre site that offers medium term “employment led” development potential.

2. Content of report

- 2.1 BC own its HQ building and part of the existing car park to the front along with the overflow car park land, as outlined in plan above.
- 2.2 The proposed acquisition is Plot 1, again as outlined in the plan above.

Whilst the property transaction does not generate revenue, it does ensure sufficient free car parking spaces are provided for use by staff and visitors; it also completes land acquisition of a 5.2-acre site that offers medium term “employment led” development potential.

- 2.3 The acquisition will enable a strategic and proactive approach to delivering a more comprehensive scheme than simply on existing BC owned land.
- 2.4 The acquisition terms are confidential and are set out in the confidential annex.

3. Other options considered

- 3.1 Do nothing. The current freeholder has indicated that it will either market the site or self-develop. Under either scenario, BC could lose both the free parking to the front of its HQ and control on how the entire area is redeveloped. If this was to occur, BC would have to consider promoting and developing a replacement multi storey car park on the overflow land at a considerable capital cost.

4. Legal and financial implications

- 4.1 The Delegated Scheme for Officers provides the Service Director with the power to approve the acquisition or disposal of land and building where the consideration is no greater than £500K.
- 4.2 The capital requirement to complete the purchase (as set out in the confidential appendix) is not currently budgeted for in the Capital Programme. This size of investment could be funded from known headroom on completed projects within the MTFP that will no longer require their remaining budget, and which are due to come forward to Cabinet in July to be recommended for removal from the Capital Programme. This decision would require Members to commit to using this newly available Capital headroom ahead of and outside of the MTFP process, outside the agreed prioritisation process for capital investment.
- 4.3 The alternative is that this acquisition could be funded from borrowing, which would result in an ongoing revenue impact to cover the loan repayments of £21,000 pa. As the site is not expecting to generate ongoing revenue income, revenue savings would need be identified through the MTFP process to cover this.
- 4.4 The better value for money option would be to use available capital budgets and not to borrow.
- 4.5 Ongoing revenue implications – rates and maintenance – are being reviewed, and we will seek to manage these within existing Property budgets.
- 4.6 Future regeneration of the site will require additional Capital and Revenue investment, which is not currently budgeted for within the MTFP.

5. Corporate implications

5.1 Corporate plan priority:

- a) Property – provides added value potential for future regeneration of an existing asset and ensures free parking for staff and visitors to BC's HQ remains immediately available.
- b) HR – not applicable to this report.
- c) Climate change – not applicable to this report.
- d) Sustainability – not applicable to this report.
- e) Equality – not applicable to this report
- f) Data – not applicable at the present time
- g) Value for money – whilst the transaction is at a premium to market value, the operational benefits to BC to acquiring Plot 1 justify such a payment along with the latent potential of the entire site as a medium term regeneration opportunity.

6. Consultation with local Councillors & Community Boards

6.1 Local Councillors have been invited to comment but, to date, no responses have been received.

6.2 Officers will follow up prior to Cabinet meeting on 11th July 2023.

7. Communication, engagement & further consultation

7.1 Consultation will not be carried out prior to Cabinet approval.

8. Next steps and review

8.1 Finalise documentation to enter and complete contracts, subject to approvals.

9. Background papers

9.1 Not applicable.

10. Your questions and views

10.1 If you have any questions about the matters contained in this report, please get in touch with the author of this report. If you have any views that you would like the cabinet member to consider, please inform the democratic services team. This can be done by email democracy@buckinghamshire.gov.uk.