

**WILTSHIRE COUNCIL**

**CABINET CAPITAL ASSETS COMMITTEE**

**26 JULY 2011**

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**Subject: CORSHAM MANSION HOUSE AND LIBRARY**

**Cabinet member: STUART WHEELER**

**Key Decision: No**

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**Executive Summary**

The Council is proposing to construct an Operational Campus in Corsham, following which the Mansion House and Library will become surplus to requirements.

A local company, Hadston, wishes to acquire the property for community purposes and is prepared to pay open market value reflecting alternative commercial uses.

Members are invited to consider whether the community benefits proposed warrant an 'off-market' sale

**Proposal(s)**

To sell the Mansion House and Library at Pickwick Road Corsham to Hadston, or its nominated charitable trust, for community purposes at a price that reflects open market value for alternative uses, subject to officers being satisfied that the proposals are fully funded.

**Reason for Proposal**

To provide community benefits whilst ensuring that the Council receives market value for the property.

**Mark Stone**

**Programme Director – Transformation, ICT and Information Management**

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#### **Purpose of Report**

1. To seek authority for the sale of the Mansion House Youth Centre and Library in Pickwick Road Corsham to Hadston or a charitable trust nominated by the company.

#### **Background**

2. At the 15 February 2011 Cabinet meeting, councillors approved a programme of work to deliver community campuses across the county. Corsham is in the first phase of the programme. The working proposal for the Corsham community campus proposes the collocation of services and, including those currently provided at the youth centre and library.
3. Once the Corsham Community Campus is operational the Mansion House, which is currently used as a youth centre, together with the library building which is located in the grounds of the property will be surplus to requirements, and therefore sold on the open market.
4. The Mansion House is a Listed building and is considered to be suitable for conversion to residential or as an hotel. A site plan can be found in Appendix 1.
5. The Council has been approached by Hadston, the owners of Hartham Park in Corsham, who are interested in acquiring the property for community purposes.

#### **Main Considerations for the Council**

6. The proposal by Hadston is to retain both the Mansion House and the library buildings and use them for educational accommodation, a local information centre, community booking office, and a student led 'digital library which would enable community broadcasting using advanced information technology. Further details can be found in Appendix 2.
7. The company would set up a charitable trust to run the proposed facility.

8. Hadston is keen to undertake much needed repairs to the property in the Autumn, whilst ensuring that the Council can remain in occupation.
9. The structure of the transaction would be such that the Council would occupy the building rent free, with no obligation to put it in a better condition than currently exists. In practice the company would undertake repairs that it considers necessary to preserve the fabric of the building.
10. The price for the property is to be assessed but would reflect the market value of the alternative uses to which it could be otherwise command. This indexed payment would be received once the Council had vacated the property.
11. The company would be limited to using the property for community purposes for 10 years, and if it was to be used for any other purpose thereafter not reflected in the purchase price, then the Council would receive the full additional value. This 'overage' would fall away after 30 years.
12. Members are invited to consider whether the community benefits of Hadston's proposals warrant an 'off-market' sale at open market value.

### **Environmental and climate change considerations**

13. No environmental or climate change considerations are considered to arise from the proposal.

### **Equalities Impact of the Proposal**

14. There are no equalities issues arising out of the proposal.

### **Risk Assessment**

15. There is a risk that Hadston, or the charitable trust does not have sufficient funds for the project. Officers will undertake financial checks of those organisations to ensure that the proposal is fully funded.
16. In the event that the Operational Campus is not provided, then the transaction will become null and void at no cost to the Council.

### **Financial Implications**

17. The Council will receive a capital receipt at the earliest practical date after it has moved into the new facility, thereby giving certainty whilst removing the cost to maintenance and security to an empty building.
18. Maintenance costs will be reduced between completion of the Agreement and vacating the building.

## **Legal Implications**

19. As the Council will be paid the open market value for the property it is considered that the obligation to get the best price possible is satisfied.

## **Options Considered**

20. The Council could reject the request from Hadston to acquire the building.
21. The community benefits that the company is proposing are unlikely to be achieved, the Council would have a continuing maintenance liability for this Listed building, and the level of capital receipt on the future sale would be uncertain

## **Conclusions**

22. That the Council should dispose of the Mansion House and Library at Pickwick Road Corsham to Hadston or its nominated charitable trust.

## **Proposal**

**To sell the Mansion House and Library at Pickwick Road Corsham to Hadston, or its nominated charitable trust, for community purposes at a price that reflects open market value for alternative uses, subject to officers being satisfied that the proposals are fully funded.**

## **Reason for Proposal**

23. To provide community benefits whilst ensuring that the Council receives market value for the property.

## **Mark Stone**

## **Programme Director – Transformation, ICT and Information Management**

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Report Author:

Mark Hunnybun  
Strategic Projects and Development Manager

8<sup>th</sup> June 2011

## **Background Papers**

None

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1: Site plan  
Appendix 2: Community use proposals from Hadston