

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

27 March 2018

Subject: **Land at Middlefields, Hungerdown Lane Chippenham**

Cabinet Member: **Cllr Toby Sturgis - Spatial Planning, Development Management and Property**

Key Decision: **Yes**

Executive Summary

At its meeting on 15th September 2015, the Council's Cabinet Capital Assets Committee, approved the sale of around 0.59 hectares (1.45 acres) forming part of the land at Middlefields, Hungerdown lane, Chippenham to The Orders of St John Care Trust (OSJCT).

The sale did not complete and the Trust no longer requires the land.

Proposals

To authorise the Director for Housing and Commercial Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Property to dispose of freehold interest of around 0.59 hectares (1.45 acres) forming part of the land at Middlefields, Hungerdown lane, Chippenham, at Best Value.

Reason for Proposals

To generate a capital receipt in support of the Council's capital programme.

Alistair Cunningham

Corporate Director for Housing and Commercial Development

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Key Decision: **Yes**

Purpose of Report

1. To authorise the Director for Housing and Commercial Development, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development Management and Property, to dispose of freehold interest of around 0.59 hectares (1.45 acres) forming part of the land at Middlefields, Hungerdown lane, Chippenham, at Best Value.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. The disposal of assets raises capital to assist and support the Council's medium term financial plan (MTFP) which subsequently supports the Council's Business Plan and its aims and targets. Specifically, the business plan describes taking a *commercial approach to managing assets* as part of the *Working with partners as an innovative and effective council* priority.

Background

3. The receipt of capital from the sale of assets is used to support the capital programme of investment in the communities of Wiltshire. Examples of the types of investment made and programmed to be made are provided in the Council's Budget but they range from investment in better roads, waste collection and recycling, extra care homes, health and wellbeing centres and initiatives to provide better and more efficient customer access to Council services.
4. At its meeting on 15th September 2015, the Council's Cabinet Capital Assets Committee, approved the sale of around 0.59 hectares (1.45 acres) forming part of the land at Middlefields, Hungerdown lane, Chippenham to The Orders of St John Care Trust (OSJCT).
5. The sale did not complete and the Trust no longer requires the land.
6. Contracts have been exchanged on the remainder of the land, and a planning application has been submitted for a mixed development of housing and retail.

Main Considerations for the Council

7. The land is currently vacant and unused. Therefore following the withdrawal of its interest by OSJCT, it can be offered for sale.
8. Whilst the land has yet to be offered for sale, the Council has received an offer from the Pilgrim's Friend Society. The key elements of the Society's offer, which has the approval of its Board of Trustees, are:
 - It will pay market value for the land.
 - No external funding is required.
 - It will exchange contracts, conditional upon obtaining planning consent for a care home, within 3 months of receiving the draft legal documentation.
 - It will give the Council first refusal to acquire its existing property at market value.
9. A letter dated 9th March 2018 from the Society's Chief Executive can be found at Appendix B.
10. It is anticipated that the proposed purchaser of the Council's adjoining land, see paragraph 6 above, may submit an offer. If it does so prior to this meeting of Cabinet, Members will be informed.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

11. Not consulted

Safeguarding Implications

12. None known

Public Health Implications

13. None known

Procurement Implications

14. None.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

15. None known

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

16. It is anticipated that a purchaser of the land will submit a planning application for development at which time full consideration can be given to any environmental and climate change considerations.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

17. The land could become overgrown and used for antisocial activities that may be a nuisance or cause distress for the community and neighbours.
18. The MTFP for the Council is, in part, dependent on the success of the disposal of property and assets. Failure to decide to declare new freehold interests to be sold or failure to sell those that are currently declared will impact on the council's ability to achieve its business plan.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

19. The Council's selling agent, Alder King, will advise on the terms of the disposal to ensure that the Council obtains Best Value. Accordingly it is considered that any risk of proceeding will be minimal.

Financial Implications

20. The Council will receive a substantial capital receipt.

Legal Implications

21. The land is to be sold at or above market value, thus ensuring that Best Value is achieved thus satisfying the requirements of s123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Options Considered

22. The option of not offering the land for sale is rejected as the opportunity for a substantial capital receipt to support the medium term financial plan would either be missed or delayed

Conclusions

23. It is in the Council Tax Payers of Wiltshire's best interests to dispose of the land.

Alistair Cunningham (**Director - Housing and Commercial Development**)

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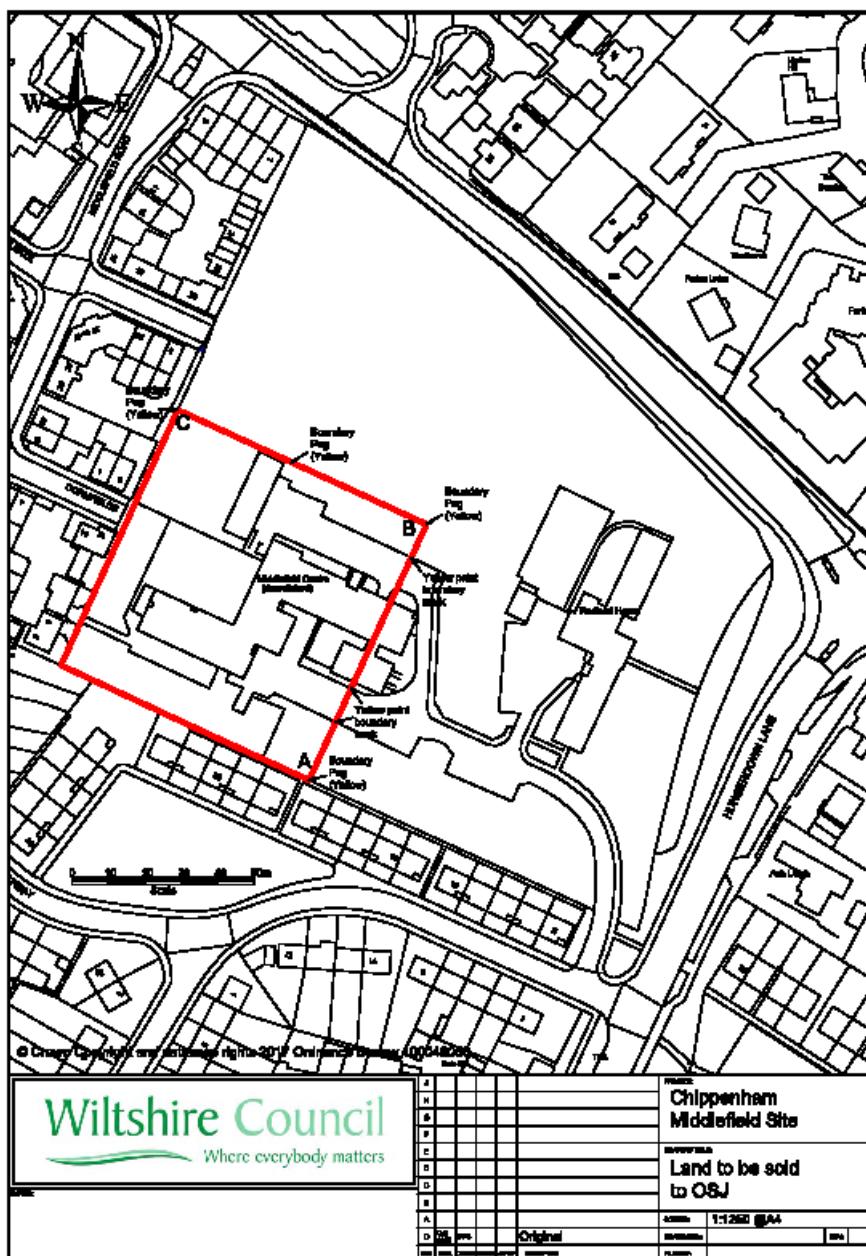
Date of report: 20th February 2018

Appendices: A - Site Plan; B- Letter

Background Papers: None

Appendix A

Site Plan



Appendix B

Letter from Chief Executive of Pilgrims' Friend Society



9 March 2018

Mr Will Oulton, The Cabinet Committee Clerk
Cllr Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Spatial Planning, Development
Management and Property Cllr Jerry Wickham, Cabinet Member for
Adult Social Care, Public Health and Public Protection Wiltshire
Council

Dear Sirs

Council land at Middlefields, Hungerdown Lane, Chippenham SN14 0JP

Further to authorisation by its Board of Trustees, Pilgrims' Friend Society (the Society) has made an offer to purchase part of the above property. The land in question is 0.59 hectares (1.45 acres) of land forming part of Middlefields, Hungerdown Lane, Chippenham and was previously under offer to The Order of St John Care Trust who now no longer require the site.

We understand that this site will be discussed at Wiltshire Council Cabinet on 27 March 2018 and in support of our offer the Chief Executive Officer of the charity would be pleased to make a representation at the meeting. In advance of the meeting we submit the following representation setting out the benefits of pursuing an off-market sale to Pilgrims' Friend Society.

1. Introduction

Although this is a commercial offer its added value to the people of Chippenham comes from our commitment as a charity to the wellbeing of older vulnerable people both within our homes and in the communities, we serve.

As the rest of this letter explains, we want to be a growing force for good in Chippenham, but the lack of suitable premises over the longer term is calling into question our capacity to do that.

We regard ourselves as a partner with the council in the delivery of Wiltshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy and our thinking and practice joins that up with the Wiltshire End of Life Care Strategy 2017 -2020 and its Volunteering Strategy.

Particularly exciting to us is that we have a commitment to doing what we see written in the Wiltshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy, but we do that in partnership with volunteers and follow through right to the end of life.

Using language borrowed in part from Wiltshire strategies our plans will support and sustain healthy living and we will explicitly deliver:

- Healthy lives: through our work with volunteers and churches, encouraging communities, families and individuals to take on more responsibility for supporting older vulnerable people
- Empowered lives: personalised care through our homes right through to the end of life, and out in the community by engaging churches and others in support and care for older people again right through to the end of life.

The following sections explain in more detail what our plans comprise and what we plan to offer to the people of Wiltshire if we can find the right site.

2 Open Market Offer

The Society will step in where the Order of St John Care Trust have left off and pay open market value as discussed with Wiltshire Council officer Mark Hunnybun.

3 Benefits to the people of Chippenham

3.1 Our commitment to care and the community in Chippenham

The purchase will be subject to contract and obtaining satisfactory planning permission for a C2 use care home. The Society is looking to replace its 20-bed care in Chippenham with a high-quality care home with increased capacity and purpose built facilities that the local community will be encouraged to use and engage with. We have consulted widely with local organisations and specifically with a wide range of churches through open public meetings and we have been delighted with the positive responses we have had to our proposition to:

- Care for people who need that level of attention, so that they live fulfilled lives right through to the end of life.
- Share with the local community what we have learned about care for older people so that people, organisations and particularly churches are better equipped to support care in the community. We plan to employ an engagement officer to make sure that this happens
- Site permitting, to have a community facility linked to our home that benefits the community.

Having missed out on other potential sites in Chippenham we have started to look elsewhere in the region. We have commissioned a report from JLL to this end. This has identified that there are no other viable sites for us in Chippenham and this makes a move away from Chippenham and Wiltshire an unwelcome possibility. We are keen to stay in Chippenham where we have committed staff, dependent residents and good support and links with the local community, churches and health professions. The Middlefields site is well located for a care home and is close to Ladyfield Church on Hungerdown Lane who are longstanding supporters of the charity and the Chippenham care home.

3.2 No delays

The offer is made with the approval of the Charity's Board of Trustees. The Society is a willing buyer with funds available and is not reliant on external funding.

The Society would be committed to meeting Wiltshire Council's timescales of entering into an exchange of contracts on a subject to planning basis within three months of receiving the draft documentation.

3.3 Affordable Housing possibilities

The Society would offer Wiltshire Council first right of refusal to buy the freehold of its existing care home and adjoining properties at Wood Lane, Chippenham totalling approximately 1.35 acres at Market Value. Wiltshire Council to have an exclusivity period of three months from the resolution of grant to the Society satisfactory planning consent at the Middlefield site. Wood Lane is a sustainable brownfield residential site which might yield some new affordable housing. We have explored rebuilding our care home on this site and our current view is that the level of disruption that this would cause to existing residents and the constraints that it would impose on what we can build renders it at best a last resort option. We are not prepared to close the existing home while we rebuild on the site.

3.4 A Distinctive Values based Investment in Chippenham

Pilgrims' Friend Society, is a charity founded in 1807 when it was called the Aged Pilgrims' Friend Society (Charity Number 1045920). The Society has to compete with the private residential and retirement sector for suitable sites and every pound spent on due diligence for an abortive purchase is funds diverted from the charity's purposes.

As a not for profit organisation the Society provides for a gap in the market which is not as profitable or attractive to corporate operators, particularly end of life care. We welcome people who are funded by the Local Authority and we have never declined admission to any of our homes because of a person's lack of ability to pay.

We currently provide 260 care rooms in the eleven Care Homes we own and operate across England. We provide high quality person-centred care for the old and frail, the majority of whom suffer a degree of dementia. One of our key reasons for needing a new home is so that we can invest in the quality of care for people living with dementia.

We rely heavily on community and church support and volunteers, so close proximity to these groups is very important. We also seek integration into the wider community via publicly accessible facilities and providing resources including establishing the care home as a site to develop and disseminate best practice in supporting people with dementia.

We see older people as having gifts and abilities that benefit us, their fellow residents and the communities around our homes. We will also invest in sharing that perspective with others in and around Chippenham and if we are able to proceed will employ an engagement officer to make sure that this happens alongside the sharing of best practice in supporting people with some of the challenges of older age such as dementia.

3.5 Alignment with Wiltshire Council's policies and commitments to vulnerable people

Pilgrims' Friend Society's objectives align well with Wiltshire Council's policies and commitments to vulnerable people, especially Wiltshire's Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and End of Life Care Strategy 2017 -2020. The following is an extract from a design document for our new care home and sets out what we expect from this new facility:

- We promote a relationship-based experience of receiving care and support that enables a natural life, promotes choice, control, independence and meets the spiritual, social and emotional needs of the people we support.
- Improved listening and assessment. We understand 'what matters' and we know the person 'ordinarily'. In this context person centred support is only ever about the individual and founded on the person's individual needs for autonomy, inclusion, identity, attachment, comfort and spiritual support.
- Making it home. We recognise that "home" is different to us all and our homes reflect who we are as an individual. For those that live and stay at the home we will support the person to create a home and be at home; what comfort, security and individuality is to you. Shared areas will reflect the people who live in the home and their preferences.
- Services support the spirit of the person. We will place equal importance on the spiritual, social and emotional well-being of the person as well as their physical well-being.
- Services support families, friends and other important people to remain involved so that they will feel involved and listened to and encouraged to actively advocate for their loved ones.
- The home looks, sounds and feels like a place for individuals to express themselves, have fun, make noise, be involved, be busy, find retreat and privacy and is at its heart whatever it needs to be to respond to how any person feels at any given moment.
- We recognise the importance of food and drink to a person's well-being. Meal times should be an occasion and be about so much more than just the food we eat.
- Maintaining connections with their local communities and specifically church communities - to support people to maintain a sense of personal identity and inclusion in the local community. Communities will become more inclusive and awareness of dementia will increase. We will actively seek opportunities to engage in the local community both through accessing the community and inviting community groups to visit regularly. In particular we aim to share what we have learned about living with older people with visitors, churches and others locally.
- The role of our teams develops. We utilise the skills of individual team members and they feel empowered, valued and their well-being improves. Individual team members are fully engaged and involved in developments.

It is envisaged that our new care home will complement best care practices and get away from the previous and outdated institutional model. That is a key reason why we need a new home in Chippenham that is generally domestic in scale, attractive and welcoming in appearance. It will

facilitate basic life-affirming things such as enjoying the natural environment, enjoying the health- giving benefits of natural daylight, living in safe, domestic-scale accommodation. The building layout of the care home will be based around significant places that are held within a person's oldest and strongest memories. This will aid a person to recollect the purpose of that space or how they should interact with it. It will appeal to a person's earlier memories and in most cases evoke positive and useful associations. In addition to evoking memories of home and familiar settings, these visual clues are also useful for 'wayfinding' around the building. Critical to the ethos of this development is the sub-division of the home into small, familial, domestic scale units giving a feel of being part of a household rather than a large institution.

The building will also encourage contact with the wider community, family, friends and churches. It is therefore envisaged that the new Care Home will have a 'Community Hub' which might include a Bistro/Café area, hairdresser, nail bar/treatment room and meeting/multi-purpose rooms.

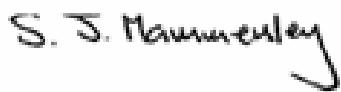
Volunteers are a vital ingredient to the success of such a care home and volunteers from the local community will be encouraged and supported.

3.6 A commitment to end of life care

Just as it is important that in life those we care for are supported to live well, we also place significant emphasis on ensuring that as end of life approaches residents are helped to live meaningful lives, surrounded by their families and the people who have cared for them. Through Advance Care planning they and their families can be confident that their wishes have been taken into account and that their emotional social, spiritual and physical needs will be met by those caring and supporting them.

Given the opportunity we very much look forward to working with Wiltshire Council in providing this facility benefiting the local elderly, frail and vulnerable, both in our home and in the wider community, being a source of fulfilling employment and a community facility offering services, resources and support to the locality.

Yours faithfully



Stephen Hammersley
Chief Executive

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