
Accommodation Review: Proposed Disposal of Unit 1 Turnhams Green Business Park

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	19 September 2024
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Vicky Poole
Report Author:	Stacey Bradshaw, Accommodation Review Programme Manager
Forward Plan Ref:	EX4507

1 Purpose of the Report

1.1 As part of the Council's Transformation programme approved by the Executive, the Council is focussing on reviewing its accommodation. One area where a disposal has been identified as a preferred option is in respect of the Council's offices located at Turnhams Green and the recommendations within this report would see this realised.

1.2 This report seeks approval to:

- (a) dispose of the Council's Corporate leasehold property known as Unit 1, Turnhams Green Business Park, Calcot ("Turnhams Green")
- (b) enter into appropriate required documentation relating to the disposal.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Council instructs agents to market Turnhams Green.
- 2.2 To delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources, in consultation with the Executive Portfolio Holder for Transformation and Corporate Services, and the Executive Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property to consider any offers received in respect of the disposal of Turnhams Green and to accept any such offer considered appropriate subject to compliance with the Council's duty to obtain best consideration.
- 2.3 To delegate authority to the Service Director- Strategy & Governance in consultation with the Service Director- Finance, Procurement and Property to enter into the appropriate disposal documentation for Turnhams Green including any such amendments that are necessary in line with agreed sales heads of terms.

2.4 That the existing Roger Croft meeting room at Market Street, Newbury, is reconfigured to allow the centralisation of Child Protection Conferences, and retained for Executive use on Thursdays and Fridays.

Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>Disposal of Turnhams Green would result in a net revenue saving of approximately £118k per year and would also release a capital receipt based on the latest valuation and subject to offers through marketing.</p> <p>There will be agent costs incurred through the sale and a capital outlay from existing maintenance budgets is required to reconfigure Roger Croft Room for family conferences at Market Street.</p>
Human Resource:	<p>There is potential for this project to have Human Resource implications as it will change working locations for staff in the People directorate.</p>
Legal:	<p>There will be legal resourcing implications from the disposal of Turnhams Green due to changes to work locations for staff, property appraisals, and disposals which will require support.</p> <p>The Council has a statutory duty under S123 Local Government Act 1972 (S123 LGA) to secure the best consideration reasonably obtainable on a disposal of its property assets and must be satisfied that it has complied with that duty on the disposal of Turnhams Green.</p> <p>Paragraphs 5.7 to 5.9 of this report refer to the S123 LGA duty.</p> <p>The Council must comply with this duty</p>
Risk Management:	<p>There will be a number of risks associated with the Accommodation Review. These will be analysed and managed using project-based risk registers which will report into the Transformation Delivery Board.</p>
Property:	<p>The proposal has significant property implications as it relates to the use of corporate buildings.</p>

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Policy:	The Accommodation Review is one of the six priority projects contained within the Transformation Programme.			
	Positive	Neutral	Negative	Commentary
Equalities Impact:				
A Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		x		The change to working location isn't significant so it is unlikely there will be an impact.
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		x		The change to working location isn't significant so it is unlikely there will be an impact.
Environmental Impact:	x			The consolidation of the Council's operations into fewer buildings will have a positive impact on its carbon impact.
Health Impact:		x		No impact
ICT Impact:		x		<p>The disposal of buildings or consolidation of more functions into fewer buildings could require IT capital works over time.</p> <p>This move will necessitate the relocation of the Disaster Recovery Centre.</p>
Digital Services Impact:		x		None

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Council Strategy Priorities:	x			Delivery of the Transformation Programme is a key component of the Council's commitment to delivering good, sustainable, value-for-money public services.
Core Business:	x			The improvements to customer service and savings realised through realisation of the accommodation review could significantly enhance delivery of core business services.
Data Impact:		x		None
Consultation and Engagement:	<p>The following officers were informed about plans to dispose of Turnhams Green given the potential impact on their teams or the need for them to support the disposal. Most of these have contributed to the report whilst others are aware of its high-level content:</p> <p>Corporate Board</p> <p>Jo England and Maria Shepherd- Interim Joint Service Directors, Adult Social Care</p> <p>Rebecca Wilshire- Service Director, Children's Social Care</p> <p>Neil Goddard- Service Director, Education</p> <p>Richard Turner- Property Services Manager</p> <p>Andi Blinco- Facilities Manager</p> <p>Karen Turner, HR Business Partner Manager</p> <p>Jon Martin- Finance Manager- Resources and Place</p>			

3 Executive Summary

3.1 A desktop review of the Council's existing office accommodation and the implementation of the Timelord 2 project, has highlighted that the Council's Turnhams Green site is under-utilised and that the continued financial outlay of maintaining it represents poor value for money.

- 3.2 Given the Council's very challenging financial position and the emphasis this has put on cost minimisation, disposal of the Turnhams Green site has potential to realise financial benefits.
- 3.3 It must be noted that many of the officers who currently use Turnhams Green are locality workers supporting communities in the East of the district; it is therefore essential to retain some desk capacity in this area. Following appraisal of options, scope has been identified for the Council to take advantage of co-location in nearby buildings belonging to other public sector partners to support a 'one public sector' approach by physically co-locating with another public sector partner.
- 3.4 The Council also has the opportunity to realise a capital receipt through the sale of its long lease of Turnhams Green and it is therefore recommended that agents are instructed to facilitate this.

4 Supporting Information

Introduction

- 5.1 The Accommodation Review is one of the major projects included within the Transformation Programme and will see the consolidation of its estate so that its use is more customer focussed and cost-effective. The disposal of Turnhams Green is one of the options put forward within the review to support this.

Background

- 4.2 The long lease at Turnhams Green was purchased in December 2008 with a lease term of 999 years at a cost of £1.68m. The ongoing revenue cost of the building is £118k per year and the sale of the lease would generate a capital receipt.
- 4.3 Turnhams Green contains 59 desks with occupancy data suggesting the facility is not well-used. The Council introduced a desk booking system in 2021 to facilitate the safe return to the office post-pandemic. Since then, the 59 desks at Turnhams Green have been bookable by officers based in the building. Data collected from this system suggests that over 50% of the desks within the building are unoccupied for the entire day on the busiest days, with up to and exceeding 75% unoccupied all day on quiet days. Of those which are booked, fewer than 10 of these are booked for the entire day by duty officers and desk-based staff, with the remainder of the desks being used as touch-down workspace for locality-based social care staff for parts of the day. Furthermore, the data suggests a downward trend in building use, which reinforces the view that the building provides larger accommodation than required and that an alternative would present better value for money.
- 4.4 The building also contains a number of meeting rooms which are used for family conferences and similar meetings. An average of 5 Child Protection meetings are held each week at Turnhams Green, suggesting that providing alternative space for these at Market Street will be crucial and should be factored into the project plan.
- 4.5 The potential revenue savings and capital receipts are summarised in the table below:

Current Revenue cost of Turnhams	Net Revenue Savings	Potential Capital receipt of sales of Turnhams
£118k	£118k	<i>pt2 information</i>

4.6 There is also likely to be an environmental benefit due to the reduced building footprint and utilities emissions, though this cannot be quantified at this stage.

Best Consideration Duty

4.7 The Council has the power to dispose of land in accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 (“the Act”) but has a duty to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable unless the Secretary of State has consented to the disposal, or the disposal meets the criteria set out in the General Disposal Consent Order.

4.8 Best consideration is that which has commercial or monetary value to the Council and can be demonstrated by marketing, by obtaining an appropriate independent valuation or by a combination of these methods.

4.9 The Council will consider and comply with its best consideration duty on its disposal of Turnhams Green.

Proposals

- That the Council instructs agents to market Turnhams Green.
- That the existing Roger Croft Room at Market Street, Newbury, is reconfigured to allow the centralisation of Child Protection Conferences.

It is expected that the proposals above could offer a number of benefits to residents whilst also ameliorating the Council’s financial position both in revenue terms and in terms of capital receipts.

5 Other options considered

5.1 Doing nothing could be considered, however this is not recommended given the need to take action to address the Council’s financial position and the strategic objective to improve the levels of service given to the Council’s customers.

6 Conclusion

6.1 The Accommodation Review is one of the six projects that the Executive has agreed should form part of the Transformation Programme.

6.2 In light of the Council’s efforts to address its financial position and its drive to improve services for its residents, the consolidation of its estate has the potential to realise a number of benefits. These could be financial, environmental or relating to service-improvement.

6.3 If successful, the sale of Turnhams Green has the potential to realise revenue savings and a capital receipt. It is therefore recommended that this is allowed to proceed.

7 Appendices

7.1 Appendix A – Equality Impact Assessment

7.2 Appendix B- Data Protection

7.3 Appendix C- Part II Confidential Information

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Item is Urgent Key Decision | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Report is to note only | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Officer details:

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West Berkshire Council Equity Impact Assessment

TEMPLATE

March 2023

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Section 1: Summary details

Directorate and Service Area	Transformation
What is being assessed (e.g. name of policy, procedure, project, service or proposed service change).	Sale of Turnhams Green
Is this a new or existing function or policy?	Sale of existing corporate building and relocation of officers
Summary of assessment Briefly summarise the policy or proposed service change. Summarise possible impacts. Does the proposal bias, discriminate or unfairly disadvantage individuals or groups within the community? (following completion of the assessment).	Proposal to sell the long lease Turnhams Green and centralise Child Protection Conferences to Market Street through reconfiguration of Roger Croft room.
Completed By	Stacey Bradshaw
Authorised By	Gabrielle Mancini
Date of Assessment	8/7/24

Section 2: Detail of proposal

<p>Context / Background</p> <p>Briefly summarise the background to the policy or proposed service change, including reasons for any changes from previous versions.</p>	<p>The Council's building at Turnhams Green is under-utilised and has high running costs considering its low level of occupation. There is scope to make revenue savings for the Council by selling the property's long lease. This will also result in a capital receipt for the Council.</p>
<p>Proposals</p> <p>Explain the detail of the proposals, including why this has been decided as the best course of action.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sale of Turnhams Green• Centralisation of Child Protection Conferences• Reconfiguration of Roger Croft room at Market Street, Newbury
<p>Evidence / Intelligence</p> <p>List and explain any data, consultation outcomes, research findings, feedback from service users and stakeholders etc, that supports your proposals and can help to inform the judgements you make about potential impact</p>	<p>5 Child Protection conferences are held</p> <p>Desk booking data has been analysed</p> <p>Facilities and property budgets for the building have been analysed</p>

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<p>on different individuals, communities or groups and our ability to deliver our climate commitments.</p>	
<p>Alternatives considered / rejected</p> <p>Summarise any other approaches that have been considered in developing the policy or proposed service change, and the reasons why these were not adopted. This could include reasons why doing nothing is not an option.</p>	<p>Retention of Turnhams Green. This has been discounted as it represents poor value for money and does not allow for partnership working across the public sector.</p>

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Protected Characteristics

Protected Characteristic	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of Impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner* (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Age	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact is expected.			
Disability	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact is expected.			
Gender Reassignment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact is expected.			
Marriage & Civil Partnership	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact is expected.			

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Pregnancy & Maternity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact is expected.			
Race	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact is expected.			
Sex	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	NoNo impact is expected.			
Sexual Orientation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact is expected.			
Religion or Belief	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact is expected.			

Section 3: Impact Assessment - Additional Community Impacts

Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Rural communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact is expected.			
Areas of deprivation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact is expected.			
Displaced communities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact is expected.			

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Additional community impacts	No Impact	Positive	Negative	Description of impact	Any actions or mitigation to reduce negative impacts	Action owner (*Job Title, Organisation)	Timescale and monitoring arrangements
Care experienced people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact is expected.			
The Armed Forces Community	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No impact is expected.			

Section 4: Review

Where bias, negative impact or disadvantage is identified, the proposal and/or implementation can be adapted or changed; meaning there is a need for regular review. This review may also be needed to reflect additional data and evidence for a fuller assessment (proportionate to the decision in question). Please state the agreed review timescale for the identified impacts of the policy implementation or service change.

Review Date	31/3/25
Person Responsible for Review	Stacey Bradshaw
Authorised By	

EDI employee related EQiA's should now be sent to Human Resources hrenquiries@westberks.gov.uk

Appendix B

Data Protection Impact Assessment – Stage One

The General Data Protection Regulations require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) for certain projects that have a significant impact on the rights of data subjects.

Should you require additional guidance in completing this assessment, please refer to the Information Management Officer via dp@westberks.gov.uk

Directorate:	Resources
Service:	Transformation
Team:	Transformation
Lead Officer:	Stacey Bradshaw
Title of Project/System:	Turnhams Green sale
Date of Assessment:	8/7/25

Do you need to do a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)?

	Yes	No
<p>Will you be processing SENSITIVE or “special category” personal data?</p> <p><i>Note – sensitive personal data is described as “ data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and the processing of genetic data, biometric data for the purpose of uniquely identifying a natural person, data concerning health or data concerning a natural person’s sex life or sexual orientation”</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will you be processing data on a large scale?</p> <p><i>Note – Large scale might apply to the number of individuals affected OR the volume of data you are processing OR both</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will your project or system have a “social media” dimension?</p> <p><i>Note – will it have an interactive element which allows users to communicate directly with one another?</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Will any decisions be automated?</p> <p><i>Note – does your system or process involve circumstances where an individual's input is “scored” or assessed without intervention/review/checking by a human being? Will there be any “profiling” of data subjects?</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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	Yes	No
Will your project/system involve CCTV or monitoring of an area accessible to the public?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will you be using the data you collect to match or cross-reference against another existing set of data?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Will you be using any novel, or technologically advanced systems or processes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Note – this could include biometrics, “internet of things” connectivity or anything that is currently not widely utilised		

If you answer “Yes” to any of the above, you will probably need to complete [Data Protection Impact Assessment - Stage Two](#). If you are unsure, please consult with the Information Management Officer before proceeding.