

Bond Riverside 13B, C & D

Part I

Committee considering report:	Executive
Date of Committee:	21 May 2026
Portfolio Member:	Councillor Justin Pemberton
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	7 May 2026
Report Author:	Bill Bagnell

1 Purpose of the Report

To inform the Executive that the marketing exercise for the potential disposal of the Council's freehold interest on 13B, C & D Bond Riverside has been completed. Following an independent formal valuation in order to satisfy Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, the report proposes to progress disposal of the freehold.

2 Recommendations

- 1 That the Executive considers the financial information and legal advice contained in this report and supports the disposal of 13B, C & D Bond Riverside.
- 2 That delegated authority be given to the Executive Director Place, working with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, s151 Officer and Service Lead for Legal and Democratic Services, to conclude negotiations and enter into contracts for disposal.

3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
Financial:	<p>The Council has received an unconditional offer with overage for the sale of the freehold interest at 13B, C & D Bond Riverside. The Council sought a formal valuation of the site in April 2026 and the unconditional element of the offer made is acceptable to satisfy s123 of the Local Government Act 1972</p> <p>Should the Executive decide to proceed with a disposal, it will forego ground rent income which has the capacity to rise via</p>

	<p>rent reviews. This has been considered against the capital receipt for the disposal of the freehold.</p> <p>If the unconditional capital receipt is to be used to fund the Council's capital programme, it would reduce the need to borrow and appreciably reduce financing costs. It would also avoid future Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP). Alternatively, the capital receipt could be used to helpfully fund qualifying transformation projects that deliver ongoing revenue savings.</p>
Human Resource:	N/A
Legal:	<p>The marketing exercise was conducted based on the sale of the freehold and leasehold from the current leaseholder and did not result in offers that were acceptable to both parties. However, a bid for the freehold offering both an unconditional element and overage was received and represents a proceedable offer.</p> <p>The council has sought external legal advice to support the potential disposal process and support the s123 assessment.</p>
Risk Management:	Working with both internal and external legal support, officers will complete due diligence in respect of any transaction.
Property:	The council has no liabilities in respect of 13B, C & D beyond maintaining appropriate insurance and in line with the terms of the lease.
Policy:	Should the council to dispose of its freehold on 13B, C & D it maximises the chance of regeneration taking place on the site which complies with Council Priority Area: 4. A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire:

	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		
B Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		X		
Environmental Impact:		X		
Health Impact:		X		
ICT Impact:		X		
Digital Services Impact:		X		

Council Strategy Priorities:	X			<p>Potentially disposing of the freehold maximises the chances of regeneration on 13B, C & D, which contributes:</p> <p>Council Priority Area: 4. “A prosperous and resilient West Berkshire” :</p> <p>4.B. Regeneration of Bond Riverside and build a new community sports stadium</p> <p>4.7. The Bond Riverside regeneration programme is progressed</p>
Core Business:	X			<p>The capital receipt can be used to fund the Council’s capital programme reducing the need to borrow or fund qualifying transformation projects that deliver ongoing revenue savings.</p>
Data Impact:		X		
Consultation and Engagement:	Finance, Legal Services and Property Services Officers			

4 Executive Summary

The council has completed a marketing exercise on the basis of the freehold being sold and the leases surrendered, which did not result in a proceedable offer. However, the council has received an offer for the sale of the freehold which following formal valuation is considered acceptable to satisfy s123. Subject due diligence, the report proposes the disposal of the site.

5 Supporting Information

Background

- 5.1 The combined land holding of 13B, C & D is an important edge of town centre site which is generally tired. The council has long held the aspiration to regenerate the industrial estate and sees 13B, C & D as a key gateway into the estate, which should it be redeveloped to act as a catalyst for the wider regeneration on the rest of the estate.

Proposals

- 5.2 After completing a marketing exercise of 13B, C & D Bond Riverside for the sale of the council's freehold and the surrender of leases by the current leaseholder, a proceedable offer was not received. However, the Council received an unconditional offer for the sale of the freehold with the opportunity for overage.
- 5.3 The Council undertook a formal valuation of its interest in the site and this was assessed against the current and future ground rental, and the offer received, it is considered that this offer satisfies the test set out in s123 for the Local Government Act 1972. If the unconditional capital receipt is to be used to fund the Council's capital programme, it would reduce the need to borrow and appreciably reduce financing costs or fund qualifying transformation projects that deliver ongoing revenue savings.

6 Other options considered

- 6.1 That the council purchases the leasehold interest and redevelops 13B, C & D itself. This option is not practical and highly risky. The Council would need to borrow the capital at a time of high interest rates and the Council has limited experience and capacity to deliver regeneration itself without considerable risk to itself.
- 6.2 The Council could choose to market the freehold of the whole of the Bond Riverside Estate (excluding the football ground). While there has been an indication that there may be some appetite to purchase the freehold of the whole site, the likelihood of receiving a realistic offer is uncertain and while the site is marketed, the current offer could be withdrawn undermining the ability of the Council to secure a capital receipt and the potential to support regeneration on this part of the estate.
- 6.3 The Council could determine to retain the freehold and continue with the current arrangements. This option has been discounted in view of the benefits of securing a capital receipt and the potential to support regeneration.

7 Conclusion

- 7.1 On the basis of the information contained in this report, it is proposed the council disposes of the freehold on 13B, C & D.
- 7.2 If the Executive supports the disposal, delegated authority is requested for the Executive Director Place, working with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, s151 Officer and Service Lead for Legal and Democratic Services, to conclude negotiations and enter into contracts for exchange supported by external legal advisers.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 N/A
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Background Papers:

N/A

Subject to Call-In:

Yes: No:

The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval

Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council

Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position:

Considered or reviewed by Scrutiny Commission or associated Committees, Task Groups within preceding six months

Item is Urgent Key Decision

Report is to note only

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