

Report subject	<b>Wessex Fields - Proposed Land Disposal</b>
Meeting date	10 February 2021
Status	Public Report with Confidential Appendix
Executive summary	<p>On 16 December 2020 Cabinet agreed in principle to dispose of part of the Wessex Fields site to the adjoining landowner University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust in partnership with Bournemouth University, to deliver their proposal for a strategically relevant development with a focus on Medical technology, medical research and education. Cabinet authorised officers to negotiate the heads of terms for the disposal.</p> <p>It is proposed that circa 5.65 acres of the site is sold to University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust, leaving the Council with circa 8.95 acres of remaining land.</p> <p>The purchase price has taken into consideration an obligation on BCP Council to design, fund and build a new junction into the site from Deansleigh Road and a new access road from the A338.</p> <p>The terms of the disposal have been agreed between the parties and are outlined in the confidential appendix to this report.</p> <p>Progressing with this disposal will still enable BCP Council to develop the remainder of the Wessex Fields site in line with the preferred use themes, and in the most strategically beneficial way to the conurbation and local community and supports the Council's desire to work with the NHS Trusts.</p>
Recommendations	<p><b>That Cabinet RECOMMENDS to Council to;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>(a) agree to dispose of approximately 5.65 acres of land at Wessex Fields, as outlined in blue on the attached plan in Appendix 1, to University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust for the purchase price detailed in the confidential appendix to this report;</b></li> <li><b>(b) agrees to construct the new access road (including junctions) into the site shown on the attached plans in Appendix 3 and 4;</b></li> <li><b>(c) delegates authority to the Corporate Property Officer in consultation with the Portfolio holder, Monitoring</b></li> </ul>

	<p><b>Officer and Section 151 Officer to finalise the detailed terms of the disposal;</b></p> <p><b>(d) amend the 2021/22 Capital programme to include an allocation as detailed in the confidential appendix to fund the road/junction works to enable the development of this land;</b></p>
Reason for recommendations	<p>The disposal of the land to allow the development proposed by UHD NHS Foundation Trust contributes to the Council's Corporate strategy priorities, specifically helping to create dynamic places and fulfilled lives and enables the repayment of part of the prudential borrowing utilised for the site acquisition in 2017.</p> <p>The proposed disposal meets the aspirations of the Council and its key strategic partners, the local NHS trust and Bournemouth University, to deliver the vision developed for Wessex Fields which is set out in a Memorandum of Understanding between the parties.</p>
Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Philip Broadhead, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Economy and Strategic Planning
Corporate Director	Bill Cotton, Corporate Director, Regeneration and Economy
Report Authors	Sarah Longthorpe, Strategic Projects and Investment Manager
Wards	Littledown & Iford;
Classification	For Recommendation

## Background

1. A Cabinet report dated 16 December 2020 outlined the options in relation to the future development of the land at Wessex Fields.
2. Cabinet agreed the recommendation that sought approval in principle to a freehold disposal of part of the site to University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust (UHD), working with Bournemouth University (BU), and to work in collaboration with these organisations on the longer term development of the remainder of the Wessex Fields site.
3. Cabinet authorised officers to negotiate the terms of the proposed disposal of part of the site which sought to maximise the preferred uses for the land and provide the best long term strategic and economic benefits for all parties.
4. The Council has already agreed in principle to dispose of a small parcel of land to UHD for the Pathology Laboratory, authority for this disposal was delegated to the Corporate Property Officer due to the value being under £350k.
5. The proposed disposal of a larger parcel of land, which runs along the existing boundary with the hospital adjacent to the proposed pathology laboratory site, will

enable UHD to progress the development of the pathology Laboratory at pace, commencing in 2021. It will allow UHD and BU to follow on with the delivery of education, research and Medtech uses an Energy Centre, and any other ancillary related use, together and a Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP), subject to planning.

6. The disposal will enable the realisation of new educational and research facilities and develop medical sciences and technologies, a high value growth sector, in partnership with BU who has a track record for being a Medtech anchor institution.
7. The exact land area (approx. 2.29 hectares or 5.65 acres) including the Pathology Laboratory site) is outlined in blue on the plan attached at Appendix 1.
8. The proposed heads of terms of the disposal have now been agreed between the parties and are outlined in the Confidential report attached at Appendix 2. As a result of the negotiations, consent is now being sought from Cabinet to progress with the disposal.
9. The agreed land value reflects an obligation on BCP Council that will be incorporated in the sale contract to fund the construction of part of the site access at the Deansleigh Road entrance, in accordance with the existing planning consent together with a new road to the proposed MSCP subject to the necessary planning consents. The indicative location of the road to the MSCP is detailed on Appendix 3 and the Deansleigh Road Junction in Appendix 4.
10. The final design of the junction from Deansleigh Road into the site which is in part on Council owned land will need to be determined in consultation with the adjacent landowner as a section of the adjoining land will need to be transferred to the Council and adopted as public highway. The landowner has agreed in principle to transfer the required land hatched blue in the plan in Appendix 4.
11. It is proposed that the new road infrastructure will be designed and built by the Council and designated as a public highway under the Highways Act 1980.
12. The proposed road works will increase the value of the retained land holding and are pivotal in unlocking the wider development potential of the site.
13. As previously mentioned, the Council has retained a large part of the site, circa 8.95 acres of employment land, and is committed to progressing the delivery of the wider masterplan (as shared by UHD in October 2020) in collaboration with UHB and BU to create a campus with pedestrian access and public spaces, minimising the impact of new road infrastructure; facilitating the delivery of key worker housing, estimated at 500 units, on the remainder of the site to provide affordable accommodation and help the NHS attract and retain staff. This close link between the hospital and housing will enable walk to work, thus reducing vehicle movements to and from the site.

#### **Consultation with Ward Councillors**

14. The site lies within the Littledown and Iford Ward. The ward Councillors were consulted on the options presented in the Cabinet report dated 16 December 2020 and were supportive of the disposal of part of the site to UHD.

#### **Summary of financial implications**

15. The financial implications are detailed in the Confidential report attached at Appendix 2.

### **Summary of legal implications**

16. The Council has the necessary statutory powers to dispose of this land under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, which gives a general power of disposal for the best consideration reasonable obtainable.
17. An independent RICS red book valuation has been produced by Savills in order for the Council to satisfy its obligations under Section 123, Local Government Act 1972. The report confirms the agreed sum represents best consideration.
18. The Council will retain vehicular access rights together with rights to lay services across any land sold to UHD, in order to facilitate the future wider development of the site.
19. Section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 ("TCPA") authorises the Council to acquire land for planning purposes where the Council believes the acquisition will facilitate development or improvement of the land and achieve or promote the economic, social or environmental well being of any part of its area. The proposed disposal of the land at Wessex Fields is in accordance with this purpose.

### **Summary of human resources implications**

20. There are no People implications arising from the recommendations within this report. There is no Equality Impact Assessment required or any contractual consequences.

### **Summary of sustainability impact**

21. A Decision Impact Assessment (DIA) has been undertaken for this proposal and is attached in Appendix 5.
22. This impact assessment identified that whilst the disposal of land will have a positive impact it will also have some minor negative impacts. The Council aspires to a carbon-neutral development at Wessex Fields and has already taken measures to reduce the impact of site development through previous cabinet decisions, such as a commitment to reducing vehicle movements on the site and create green open spaces within the development.
23. UHD and BU both have excellent carbon reduction track records and support the aspiration to low or zero carbon developments.
24. These principles are underpinned in the Memorandum of Understanding. All parties have agreed to collaborate to create sustainable, efficient and quality developments including sustainable transport solutions at this site which will help to mitigate some of the minor negative impacts identified in the DIA.

### **Summary of public health implications**

25. The health and wellbeing of the local community will be enhanced through the recommendations in this report.
26. The challenge of an ageing society here in Dorset (where the average age is 20 years older than the rest of the UK) is not something which can be ignored. Medical research, Medtech developments and provision of sufficient care infrastructure for those not able to remain in their own homes, is vital to give the local population the best quality of life possible in their later years.

27. The disposal of part of the land to UHD will facilitate development uses in line with public consultation previously undertaken which has affirmed the appetite within the community to use the land in a way which enhances the options of the eldest sector of the community.
28. It is hoped that by working in collaboration with UHD and BU and Friends of the Elderly, as a local stakeholder on the wider site master plan, facilities will be improved for older people.

### **Summary of equality implications**

29. There are no equality implications associated with the recommendations brought forward in this report. However, we wish to continue to work with local community groups with specific needs in the longer term, to ensure all implications are identified and addressed.

### **Summary of risk assessment**

30. Cabinet should be mindful of the following specific risks attached to any transaction of the land at Wessex Fields:
31. The financial risks associated with developing out the remainder of the site remain with the Council. Funds have been allocated to seek further professional, commercial and development advice as a matter of priority to determine how development of the remainder of the site is structured in the future in order to mitigate this risk and maximise returns.
32. The planning and design of the road to the MSCP has yet to be finalised and a planning consent secured. Should the funding of the proposed road infrastructure exceed the budgeted allocation BCP Council would need to fund these increased costs. This has been mitigated by a high contingency provision of 50% for this element.
33. The delivery of the necessary highway's infrastructure works will need to be appropriately resourced by the Council to ensure they are delivered within the agreed timescales.
34. The UHD still has to obtain a planning consent for its proposed development, except the pathology laboratory. However, the land has been allocated for employment uses and therefore there is a low risk of planning not being granted for the uses that UHD are proposing. This has been factored into the land value which considers the value of the employment land allocation.

### **Background papers**

None

### **Appendices**

**Appendix 1** – Plan - Disposal area

**Appendix 2** – CONFIDENTIAL Financial Report

**Appendix 3** – Proposed indicative new road and junction locations

**Appendix 4** - Plan - Proposed highways dedication for Deansleigh Road Junction

**Appendix 5**- Decision Impact Assessment.