

CROSS PARTY STRATEGIC ASSETS DISPOSAL WORKING GROUP

FRIDAY, 4TH OCTOBER, 2024

Present: Councillor Lisa Northover in the Chair

Councillors Cllr P Canavan (Vice-Chairman),
Cllr P Broadhead, Cllr L Dedman, Cllr C Goodall,
Cllr Dr F Rice and Cllr K Salmon

Also in Attendance:

Councillors J Beesley & D d'Orton-Gibson

8 Apologies for Absence

None.

9 Declarations of Interests

None.

10 Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2024 be approved as a correct record, subject to amendment of a typographical error in respect of Cllr Canavan's election as Vice-Chair.

11 Proposed disposal of former Westbourne Plus site

The Council's Section 151 officer introduced the report by outlining the agreed Principles of Disposal. The Working Group (WG) was reminded of the outcome of a public consultation associated with the 2024/25 Budget process showed public support for the selling of assets deemed no longer needed.

In response to a query at the previous meeting the WG was provided with an update on Transformation funding requirements and the capital receipts.

It was confirmed that there remained a £15.5m balance of expenditure to finance Transformation through flexible use of capital receipts.

£12m of receipts were forecast for 2024/25, though no monies have been received to date as none of the proposed disposals for the period had been completed. The forecast shortfall to target in the period was therefore £3.5m.

However, it was anticipated that slippage of Transformation costs would push expenditure requirements into the financial year 2025/26, for which £5.4m would be required (including the aforementioned £3.5m shortfall.) Current total receipts to the end of 2025/26 forecasted an overall shortfall of £1m.

It was highlighted that Council was to be asked to determine the disposal of Poole Civic Centre at its meeting of 15 October. Moving forward, the ambition was to develop a pipeline of capital receipts to fund Transformation and raise further investment capital.

Moving to the proposal to dispose of the former Westbourne Plus site, the officer relayed the history of the site, confirming it was previously a Bournemouth Borough Council asset that had been run by Tricuro since 2015. In 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic forced the closure of all day services, and when there were restarted in 2021 the service was relocated to Boscombe day

service. In March 2024 the decision was made to permanently close the service at the site, which had been vacant since 2020.

The asset was currently valued at £1.4m, and it was proposed for open market disposal by private treaty. As part of the disposal process an independent Red Book valuation would be commissioned. No alternative use for the site had been identified though Cabinet/CMB on 23 September 2024 have requested that the Housing Development and Community Services teams double check that there were no viable alternative uses. This included use as part of the CNAS programme. This process was still ongoing, and any WG endorsement to dispose of the asset subject to any potential alternate use being identified.

In response to a query, the officers confirmed that the asset was not listed, though it was located in a conservation area.

Regarding operational costs, these totalled £2k annually. It was highlighted that the figure was much lower than other Council assets due to the management agreement with Tricuro and the lack of a requirement to pay business rates on the site due to its use designation.

In response to a query on the way assets were deemed surplus, the Director of Finance confirmed that all service areas of the Council were invited to be engaged in such decision making through a regular officer-only meeting. Details were then passed to CMB/Cabinet for further review of whether the asset was truly surplus to requirements.

Regarding the Westbourne Plus asset, Cabinet members were in support of progressing the disposal process. Councillors were able to engage throughout the process, and as an example Cllrs John Beesley and David d'Orton-Gibson were present at this WG as Ward Councillors.

Cllrs Beesley and d'Orton-Gibson were invited to give their opinions on the proposed disposal as Ward Councillors for Westbourne & West Cliff. The Ward Councillors advised that while they could not speak to whether the relocation of the service to Boscombe Hub had disadvantaged users of the service, they had no particular concerns over the proposed disposal of the asset as long as the asset was sold at best value.

The WG echoed the need to dispose of the asset at best value, unless there was a compelling reason not to do so. The WG remarked that the site was not as large or high profile as previous disposal sites, noted that the Ward Cllrs had raised no objections, and were satisfied that checks on alternate uses were being carried out. Assuming no alternate use was identified, the WG was in support of the officer's recommendation as set out in the report.

The recommendation was moved, seconded and put to a vote as follows:

All those in favour: 6

All those against: 0

All those abstaining: 1

RESOLVED: that the Working Group support the officer's recommendation to Cabinet to dispose of the site, as set out in the accompanying report.

12 Next Steps

It was confirmed future meetings would be scheduled as required.

Duration of the meeting: 2.30 - 2.59 pm

Friday, 4th October, 2024
Chairman at the meeting on
Friday, 4 October 2024