

# **Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee**

**10 March 2023**

## **Property and Assets: Freehold Disposal of Marle Place, Burgess Hill – Focus for Scrutiny**

### **Report by Director of Law and Assurance**

#### **Summary**

A proposed decision (P20 (22/23)) was published for the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property on 13 February 2023 in relation to the freehold disposal of Marle Place, 171 Leylands Road, Burgess Hill, West Sussex, RH15 8HZ. The Cabinet Member is being asked to endorse the disposal of the whole of the site and delegate authority to the Director of Property and Assets in conjunction with the Director of Law and Assurance to conclude the terms of the sale with the purchaser. The site was declared surplus to the Council's requirements in October 2022 (Decision FP10 22/23).

A request to call-in this decision for scrutiny has been accepted by the Deputy Monitoring Officer. The Committee is therefore asked to scrutinise the proposal set out in the decision report attached (Annex 1).

Annex 2 provides members of the committee with the response to the issues raised in the call-in request including consultation undertaken with the community.

#### **The focus for scrutiny**

Key lines of enquiry for the Committee include (by reference to the call-in request):

1. Whether sufficient effort has been made to ensure that community interests could be incorporated into the asset sale (as set out in the Council's Asset Management Policy) and also how community interest could be secured
2. Whether the potential for a sale of part only of the site has been properly considered.

The Chairman will summarise the output of the debate for consideration by the Committee.

#### **1. Details**

- 1.1 A call-in request has been accepted for scrutiny of the decision in relation to the freehold disposal of Marle Place, 171 Leylands Road, Burgess Hill. The request was made by four members of the Council (Councillors Stuart Condie, Kirsty Lord, Richard Cherry and John Milne). The reasons for the call-in request were:
  - a) The matter has not received public scrutiny
  - b) That the Asset Management Policy, objective 4 was not followed (To ensure an options appraisal of all potentially surplus assets giving due

consideration to a range of options including social, community or environmental use, particularly where this could complement the Council's ambitions relating to climate change where it is viable)

- c) That insufficient effort has been made to incorporate community interests in the asset sale
  - d) That the potential for a partial sale of the site was not properly considered.
- 1.2 The call-in request was accepted as there has been no previous scrutiny of the proposals and there are legitimate grounds for consideration prior to the proposals being determined. The decision report is appended. Scrutiny should focus on the proposals contained in the attached report.
- 1.3 Members are asked to note that correspondence has taken place between the local member (Cllr Condie), the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property and the Director of Property and Assets in relation to the site.

**Tony Kershaw**

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**Appendices**

Annex 1 – Decision Report ([Ref FP20 22/23](#)) to Sell Marle Place Part I

**Appendix A – Decision Report Part II Appendix (Restricted for Members only)**

Appendix B – Site Plan

Annex 2 - Response to call-in request

**Background Papers**

None