

Report to Cllr Jeremy Hunt, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property
November 2023

Property and Assets: Surplus Declarations

Report by Andrew Edwards, Assistant Director of Property and Assets

Electoral divisions: Chichester East, Shoreham South, Fontwell, Billingshurst, Hurstpierpoint and Bolney.

Summary

This report seeks approval by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Property to confirm surplus declarations for a number of assets, deemed surplus to service operational requirements. Declaring them surplus enables a further decision to be made on either a sale of the asset (for a capital receipt) or to retain it for wider non-service led activities of the County Council such as redevelopment for investment, regeneration, social, community or environmental use, particularly where this could complement the Council's ambitions relating to climate change where it is viable.

Recommendation: That the Cabinet Member endorses that the County Council declares the following assets surplus to service operational requirements:

- a) Tangmere Perimeter Track, (Part), Tangmere Airfield, Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex, PO20 3TT
- b) Shoreham Mudflats under Adur Ferry Bridge, Shoreham BN43 5RA
- c) Stoneycroft Nurseries, Holding 26, Choller Estate, Eastergate Lane, Walberton, West Sussex BN18 0BA,
- d) Land adjacent to Billingshurst Primary School, High Street/Stane Street, Billingshurst, West Sussex RH14 9RE
- e) Car Park and Land known as Poor Mans Corner, Devils Dyke Road, Poynings, West Sussex.

Proposal

1 Background and context

To accord with Standing Orders the properties detailed below need to be formally declared surplus to service and operational requirements in order to allow them to be reviewed for either disposal on the open market or lease surrender, or to retain them for wider non-service led activities of the County Council such as redevelopment for investment, regeneration, social, community

or environmental use, particularly where this could complement the Council's ambitions relating to climate change where it is viable.

2 Proposal details

2.1 It is proposed to declare all these property assets surplus to operational requirements on the basis that there is no current operational service need for any of the sites.

2.2 Tangmere Airfield Perimeter Track (Part), Tangmere Airfield, Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex, PO18 0JW

The County Council owns the freehold estate of the airfield perimeter track at Tangmere. The part of the track to the east of the airfield is deemed surplus to requirements and is in a poor state of repair. Any subsequent proposal to dispose of the track will retain access rights to the County Council Solar Farm and other retained land and secure other existing access rights for other parties. The property is surplus to other operational requirements. The plan of the site is as set out in **Appendix A**

2.3 Shoreham Mudflats under Adur Ferry Bridge, Shoreham BN43 5RA

The County Council owns the freehold estate of the mudflats beneath a section of the Adur Ferry Bridge in Shoreham, the mudflats extend out into the river and up to the shoreline. The mudflats are difficult to maintain and it is difficult to manage and resolve repeated illegal occupations, as such this area has become a burden on the Council. Any subsequent proposal to dispose of the land will retain County Council Highway Authority access rights to the Adur Ferry Bridge and structure, which is part of the adopted highway. Public rights to cross the Adur Ferry Bridge will not be affected. The property is surplus to other operational requirements. The plan of the site is as set out in **Appendix B**

2.4 Stoneycroft Nurseries, Holding 26, Choller Estate, Eastergate Lane, Walberton, West Sussex BN18 0BA

The County Council owns the freehold estate of this 3-bed semi-detached farm house and garden. The property was previously let on a smallholding tenancy which has now ended and the property has been returned to the County Council. It is intended to retain the fields and other parts of this property to let out on a Farm Business Tenancy. The property is surplus to other operational requirements. The plan of the site is as set out in **Appendix C**

2.6 Land adjacent to Billingshurst Primary School, High Street / Stane Street, Billingshurst RH14 9RE

The County Council owns the freehold estate of Billingshurst Primary School. A small section of land to the side of the school along the High Street and Stane Street has for many years been outside the fenced area of the school although it is held as education land and the responsibility of the school to maintain. The land is steeply sloped and heavily wooded so has no purpose for the school and is currently a burden for it to maintain. The proposal is to carve out this section of land from the school demise and seek options to dispose or lease out in due course. Department of Education consent for any disposal will be required.. The property is surplus to other operational requirements. The plan of the site as set out in **Appendix D**

2.7 Devils Dyke Car Park and Land known as Poor Mans Corner, Devils Dyke Road, Poynings, West Sussex BN1 8YJ

The County Council owns the freehold estate of strip of land and a former carpark known as Poor Mans Corner, along the side of the Devils Dyke Road in Poynings, West Sussex. The site consists of the closed car park, and grassland both north and south. A permissive path runs through the site. The Countryside Service have confirmed the site is surplus to their requirements and negotiations are underway to resolve the future of the site with local partners. Along the southern boundary a 1.2m strip along the whole length, with the exception of the hard standing which forms the entrance to the now closed car park, is to be retained and not declared surplus. The plan of the site is as set out in **Appendix E**

3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 3.1 An options appraisal of all the assets to be declared surplus will be undertaken and the sites considered against a range of options including for possible social, community or environmental use, particularly where this could complement the Council's ambitions relating to climate change.
- 3.2 All alternative service uses for the properties have been explored prior to a proposal to declare surplus and discounted.

4. Consultation, engagement and advice

- 4.1 The Local Members for Shoreham South, Fontwell, Billingshurst and Hurstpierpoint and Bolney have been advised and support the proposals. The Local Member for Chichester East has recommended that the Tangmere Track is developed into a public right of way and cycle track and is not in support of a subsequent disposal without this prerequisite.

5 Finance

5.1 Revenue consequences

- 5.2 There are no financial implications in declaring these properties surplus, a decision report concerning the future of each site will follow once a decision has been made, which may provide revenue benefits.

5.3 Capital consequences

- 5.4 There will potentially be a capital receipt upon a subsequent decision to dispose of the properties.

- 5.5 The effect of the proposal:

- (a) **How the proposal represents good value**

A further decision to repurpose or dispose of the properties will enable the council to ensure it obtains value from its resources.

- (b) **Future savings/efficiencies being delivered**

There are no savings associated with this decision.

(c) **Human Resources, IT and Assets Impact**

The proposal supports the Asset Strategy to rationalise the property estate. There are no HR or IT implications.

6. Risk implications and mitigations

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
There is a continued financial risk in holding onto under-utilised assets, which can delay capital receipts or income, or where there is no or limited service benefit.	All vacant property is risk assessed at the time of handover to the corporate landlord by a service and appropriate security measures put in place pending a decision on the future of the property.

7. Policy alignment and compliance

- 7.1 The proposal supports the Asset Management Policy and Strategy 2022/23 to 2025/26 which has a key objective to manage, maintain, acquire and dispose of surplus property effectively, efficiently and sustainably, together with optimising financial return.
- 7.2 There are no direct implications arising from the proposal on equality duty and human rights, climate change, crime and disorder, public health or social value.

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Appendices

- Appendix A - Tangmere Perimeter Track, Part, Tangmere Airfield, Tangmere, Chichester, West Sussex, PO20 3TT
- Appendix B - Shoreham Mudflats under Adur Ferry Bridge, Shoreham BN43 5RA
- Appendix C - Stonecroft Nurseries, Holding 26, Choller Estate, Eastergate Lane, Walberton, West Sussex BN18 0BA,
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Background Papers None