

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Former Mounton House School, Chepstow</b>
<b>DIRECTORATE:</b>	<b>CYP / Resources</b>
<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> December 2024</b>
<b>DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All</b>

## 1. PURPOSE:

This report is brought forward to declare surplus the site of the Former Mounton House School, Chepstow, by the Learning Skills and Economy portfolio for transfer to Landlord Services.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet agrees that the former Mounton House School, exclusive of retained land, be released from Learning Skills and Economy Directorate to Landlord Services for disposal.

## 3. KEY ISSUES:

### Background

- 3.1 Mounton House Special School was built in the 1950's and located in Mounton Pwllymeric, Chepstow. Mounton House School closed in August 2020, as part of the Council's Additional Learning Needs Review. The building has remained empty since the school closed and is now in a poor state of repair.
- 3.2 Members agreed to allocate a budget to refurbish the two staff houses on the site into accommodation which will be used by pupils who attend the PRS South base. The works are currently in progress, with completion in February 2025 and pupils will transfer from Hanbury House in Chepstow.
- 3.3 Various options have been explored to utilise the site since the closure however none have been developed and the remainder of the site, 11.4 acres, remain unused and redundant.
- 3.4 Learning Skills and Economy Directorate have no further use of the building and request that this asset is transferred to Landlord Services and declared surplus. This would enable Landlord Services to explore opportunities to generate a financial return from an otherwise largely vacant area of land and property.
- 3.5 The site would be advertised for sale inclusive of a retained right of access for services and users of the PRS provision. The site is already subject to an access right and annual service charge contribution for the private accessway.
- 3.6 The site sits within the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and outside of the Conservation Area. The site is partially in a limestone protection area and a very small part of the grounds falls within a historic park and gardens.

- 3.7 The permitted planning use is D1 Non-Residential Institution. There is no current permitted change of use. Planning permission is required for any alternative use.
- 3.8 Should Cabinet agree to the transfer of the land, Landlord Services will market the opportunity, and invite offers for the site. Any decision to award a tender would be presented before Cabinet, with recommendations based on an evidence-based scoring criteria, in accordance with the Council's Asset Management Strategy. It is proposed that marketing would commence in early January 2025.

#### 4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION:

- 4.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment has been undertaken, attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.2 A summary from Section 8 of the Integrated Impact Assessment identifying the significant positive and negative impacts is detailed below.

##### Positive Impact

- The proposal will enable an underutilised asset to be repurposed.
- The proposal to offer the site for alternative use may enhance the availability of opportunities that are open, accessible and of interest to people of all ages and abilities.

##### Negative Impacts

- The proposal may result in uncomplimentary uses being identified or that conflict with the service delivery of the PRS. Weighting will be applied as part of the scoring matrix to ensure any proposals reflect the necessity to work in collaboration with the PRS.

#### 5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Option	Benefits	Risks	Recommendation
Do not declare the site surplus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whilst the property would be vacant, the property would be retained for the delivery of other council services should the need arise.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That the property falls into disrepair and remains underutilized, in conflict with the commitments of the Asset Management Strategy to maximise the use of property.</li> <li>• The property would continue to result in costs to MCC through utilities and business rates.</li> </ul>	
Declare the site surplus and advertise for prospective occupiers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The property could generate a financial return.</li> <li>• MCC would offset any ongoing running costs associated with the asset.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That no offers are received for the property.</li> <li>• That the property fails to be repurposed and remains vacant.</li> <li>• The property requires investment to repurpose, which may prohibit our ability to identify a user or introduce capital costs to MCC.</li> </ul>	Recommended the site is declared surplus and transferred to Landlord Services to advertise.

## **6. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

6.1 Landlord Services will be responsible for assessing the merits of proposals received for the property and evaluating the extent to which they can be delivered or are sustainable alternative uses.

## **7. REASONS:**

7.1 Following completion of the refurbishment of the property for the Pupil Referral Services, the remainder of the asset is vacant.

7.2 The property has potential to generate a financial return to MCC. Maximising the use of property that is under-utilised features in the principles of the Council's Asset Management Strategy.

## **8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:**

8.1 The annual running costs (utilities and business rates) for the vacant former Mounton House School are approximately £13,615 per annum. Disposal of the surplus land/property on site would offset these costs, exclusive of any running costs associated with the retained land/property.

8.3 MCC would generate a financial return from disposal of the property.

## **9. CONSULTEES:**

- CYP Directorate Management Team
- Legal Services

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Appendix A – Redline Plan

Appendix B – Integrated Impact Assessment

## **12. AUTHOR:**

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