

SUBJECT: SALE OF TWO FARM COTTAGES AT LEECHPOOL HOLDINGS

MEETING: CABINET

DATE: 21st January 2026

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: Portskewett

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To seek approval for the disposal of two vacant farm cottages located in Leechpool Holdings, Portskewett, identified as surplus to requirements following internal review with services that no longer have an identified need.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Agrees that the two cottages are declared surplus to requirements and can be disposed of on the open market to realise a capital receipt and relieve the Council of costs associated with vacant property.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The two cottages were subject to a decision by Cabinet on 17th January 2024 which approved the repurposing of vacant agricultural cottages, including for such purposes as temporary accommodation for homelessness and social services residential housing as supported accommodation.
- 3.2 Due to the cottages general condition and rural, semi-isolated locations the two cottages were subsequently deemed unsuitable for both Housing, Adult and Children's Service's needs, and with no other alternative use identified, they are considered surplus to requirements.
- 3.3 There are currently six vacant farm cottages held as accommodation options for farm tenants. These cottages provide accommodation options for Council farm tenants if a change of circumstances arises, on the expiry or termination of their tenancy, or due to retirement. There is currently no known demand for the cottages for this use, and no demand is anticipated with other housing options generally preferred.
- 3.4 The cottages are in poor condition having been vacant for some time and would require extensive refurbishment works to meet current housing and energy performance standards.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

- 4.1 The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation Assessment seen in Appendix One, details the following positive impacts which include:

- An opportunity to affect the open market housing supply in the locality, thereby providing an increased opportunity for local people to purchase a home within the community they grew up in.
- The Council will benefit from a Capital receipt.
- The Council will be relieved of costs associated with vacant properties.
- Makes best use of Council property assets bringing vacant properties back into use.

4.2 There are no negative impacts associated with this proposal.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 An options appraisal has been undertaken in Table One below and can be summarised as follows:

Table One – Options Appraisal

| Option | Positives | Negatives | Recommended? |
|---|---|--|--------------|
| Dispose of the farm cottages | <p>The Council will be relieved of all liabilities associated with the cottages.</p> <p>The Council will receive a capital receipt.</p> | Loss of potentially suitable accommodation for use by retiring farm tenants, although other farm cottages remain available if the need arises. | Yes |
| Retain the farm cottages 1. Repurpose farm cottages to meet core Council objectives | Provides accommodation to contribute towards meeting policy objectives, including the need for temporary accommodation. | <p>Cottages are located in semi-rural locations with no immediate access to facilities and services.</p> <p>Cottages require significant investment to bring accommodation up to appropriate living standards.</p> <p>No demand for these cottages from MCC Services.</p> | No |
| 2. Maintain the cottages as vacant in the unlikely event they are needed for farm tenants | Offers an option if and when such a need arises. | <p>Vacant properties fall into disrepair and carry significant costs.</p> <p>Payment of Council Tax premiums whilst property is empty.</p> <p>Damage to reputation for holding vacant properties when there is such a demand for housing across the County.</p> <p>Significant investment required to meet current housing and energy performance standards.</p> | No |

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|--|--|---|----|
| 3. Let the cottages under a Farm Business Tenancy (FBT) or similar agreement | <p>Offers accommodation for suitable tenants under its current use.</p> <p>Generates revenue stream via rent of approx. £25k pa.</p> <p>Relieves Council of vacant property costs.</p> | <p>Insufficient land available to ensure a viable holding can be achieved.</p> <p>Reduced rent (cannot attract market rent as unable to let on the open market on Assured Shorthold Tenancy agreement)</p> <p>Improvement works at cost to Council as WG funding unavailable.</p> | No |
|--|--|---|----|

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The decision to declare the properties surplus and for sale will be reviewed 12 months following Cabinet decision. It is envisioned the sale of both properties will complete during this period.

7. REASONS:

- 7.1 The cottages are held as options for Council tenants who may be in need of rehoming due to a change in personal circumstances (i.e. retirement or the passing of a tenant or their partner). Such occasions are few and far between and generally not sought by the tenants due to alternative preferred housing options.
- 7.2 Of the farm cottages Cabinet previously approved for repurposing, numbers 5 and 28 Leechpool Holdings are considered unsuitable as temporary or supported accommodation. Two other cottages (3 and 23 Leechpool Holdings) are considered suitable for alternative small scale market garden type operations and could be let on the open market by Estates via a Farm Business Tenancy Agreement. The cottages would require improving to bring up to lettable standards, with works managed by Landlord Services and funded by the County Farms Maintenance Budget. Another formerly vacant cottage has been refurbished and is now let as temporary accommodation via MCC Housing. The others remain vacant and held as accommodation options for farm tenants.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 The disposal of the two cottages will generate a capital receipt in the region of £700k.
- 8.2 The Council are currently paying vacant property costs including council tax. The proposed disposal of two cottages will relieve MCC of this financial liability.
- 8.3 Landlord Services will ensure the two retained vacant properties are refurbished in line with WG accommodation standards and Council Asset Management Plan including improved energy efficiency measures. The cottages will be occupied, maintained and will generate a financial return in the form of rent.

9. CONSULTEES:

County Councillor Ben Callard (Cabinet Member for Resources)

Senior Leadership Team

County Councillor Lisa Dymock (Portskewett)

Nicholas Keyse Head of Landlord Services
Ian Bakewell - Housing and Communities Team
Social Services (Adult & Children's Teams)
MCC Legal Services

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Appendix 1 – Equality and Future Generations Evaluation
Appendix 2 – Property Plans

11. AUTHOR:

Ben Thorpe – Development Surveyor
Emily Hayes – Asset Surveyor

12. CONTACT DETAILS:

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Integrated Impact Assessment document (incorporating Equalities, Future Generations, Welsh Language and Socio-Economic Duty)

| | |
|---|---|
| Name of the Officer completing the evaluation Ben Thorpe Phone no: 01633 644964 Email: benthorpe@monmouthshire.gov.uk | Please give a brief description of the aims of the proposal The proposed disposal of two vacant farm cottages located in Leechpool Holdings, Portskewett, identified as surplus to requirements following internal review with services that no longer have an identified need. |
| Name of Service area Landlord Services – Estates | Date 21 st January 2026 |

1. **Are your proposals going to affect any people or groups of people with protected characteristics?** Please explain the impact, the evidence you have used and any action you are taking below.

| Protected Characteristics | Describe any positive impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic | Describe any negative impacts your proposal has on the protected characteristic | What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---------------------------|---|---|---|
| Age | None | None | None |
| Disability | None | None | None |
| Gender reassignment | None | None | None |

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|-------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Marriage or civil partnership | As above | As above | As above |
| Pregnancy or maternity | As above | As above | As above |
| Race | As above | As above | As above |
| Religion or Belief | As above | As above | As above |
| Sex | As above | As above | As above |
| Sexual Orientation | As above | As above | As above |

2. The Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice

The Socio-economic Duty requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage when taking key decisions. This duty aligns with our commitment as an authority to Social Justice.

| | Describe any positive impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage | Describe any negative impacts your proposal has in respect of people suffering socio economic disadvantage. | What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---|---|--|--|
| Socio-economic Duty and Social Justice | None | None | None |

3. Policy making and the Welsh language.

| How does your proposal impact on the following aspects of the Council's Welsh Language Standards: | Describe the positive impacts of this proposal | Describe the negative impacts of this proposal | What has been/will be done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts |
|--|---|---|---|
| Policy Making Effects on the use of the Welsh language, Promoting Welsh language Treating the Welsh language, no less favourably | None | None | N/A |
| Operational Recruitment & Training of workforce | None | None | N/A |
| Service delivery Use of Welsh language in service delivery Promoting use of the language | None | None | N/A |

4.

4. Does your proposal deliver any of the well-being goals below? Please explain the impact (positive and negative) you expect, together with suggestions of how to mitigate negative impacts or better contribute to the goal. There's no need to put something in every box if it is not relevant!

| Well Being Goal | Does the proposal contribute to this goal? Describe the positive and negative impacts. | What actions have been/will be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|--|---|--|
| A prosperous Wales Efficient use of resources, skilled, educated people, generates wealth, provides jobs | Positive: Positively contributes to local economy providing housing options for people looking to live and work in Monmouthshire. The construction improvement works | None |

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| | <p>required may contribute to the local economy through the supply of materials and labour.</p> <p>Negative: None</p> | |
| <p>A resilient Wales</p> <p>Maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystems that support resilience and can adapt to change (e.g., climate change)</p> | <p>Positive: N/A</p> <p>Negative: N/A</p> | <p>There is the option to increase the energy efficiency standards of the properties through the refurbishment works.</p> |
| <p>A healthier Wales</p> <p>People's physical and mental wellbeing is maximized, and health impacts are understood</p> | <p>Positive: Positively contributes to the health of people. Good housing supports well-being.</p> <p>Negative: N/A</p> | <p>None</p> |
| <p>A Wales of cohesive communities</p> <p>Communities are attractive, viable, safe, and well connected</p> | <p>Positive: Positively contributes by effectively increasing housing supply thereby helping local people remain in their home communities. Increased availability of housing in the area provides opportunities for young people looking to remain in the communities where they grew up.</p> <p>Negative: N/A</p> | <p>N/A</p> |
| <p>A globally responsible Wales</p> <p>Taking account of impact on global well-being when considering local social, economic, and environmental wellbeing</p> | <p>Positive: Refurbishment works will likely improve and maximise the energy efficiency of the properties to reduce future energy costs and loss.</p> <p>Negative: N/A</p> | <p>N/A.</p> |
| <p>A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language</p> <p>Culture, heritage, and Welsh language are promoted and protected. People are encouraged to do sport, art, and recreation</p> | <p>Positive: N/A</p> <p>Negative: N/A</p> | <p>N/A</p> |
| <p>A more equal Wales</p> <p>People can fulfil their potential no matter what</p> | <p>Positive: N/A</p> <p>Negative: N/A</p> | <p>N/A</p> |

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| their background or circumstances | | |
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5. How has your proposal embedded and prioritised the sustainable governance principles in its development?

| Sustainable Development Principle | Does your proposal demonstrate you have met this principle? If yes, describe how. If not explain why. | Are there any additional actions to be taken to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|--|--|--|
| Balancing short term need with long term and planning for the future | Yes. There is a surplus of vacant farm cottages. The proposed disposal of two will bring them back into use, providing housing on the open market whilst not impacting the availability of other housing for Council farm tenants. | No |
| Working together with other partners to deliver objectives | No | N/A |
| Involving those with an interest and seeking their views | Estates have consulted MCC Services that may have a need for the vacant cottages. | N/A |
| Putting resources into preventing problems occurring or getting worse | If the vacant properties remain vacant for an extended period of time they will fall into disrepair and be subject to vandalism and break-in. The cottages would need securing and would become a blight on the landscape of which would upset local communities and in particular immediate neighbours. | Maintain the gardens and grounds until their disposal to reduce the unkempt visual impact of the cottages. |
| Considering impact on all wellbeing goals together and on other bodies | The proposal indirectly positively impacts on well-being, for example, has the potential for additional good quality accommodation in the area, supporting well-being and reducing the Council's financial liabilities. | N/A |

6. Council has agreed the need to consider the impact its decisions has on the following important responsibilities: Corporate Parenting and Safeguarding. Are your proposals going to affect any of these responsibilities?

| | Describe any positive impacts your proposal has | Describe any negative impacts your proposal has | What will you do/ have you done to mitigate any negative impacts or better contribute to positive impacts? |
|---------------------|---|---|--|
| Safeguarding | None. | None. | N/A |
| Corporate Parenting | None. | None. | N/A |

7. What evidence and data has informed the development of your proposal?

The legislation and good practice which have informed the policy revisions are:

- Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972
- Asset Management Strategy

8. SUMMARY: As a result of completing this form, what are the main positive and negative impacts of your proposal, how have they informed/changed the development of the proposal so far and what will you be doing in future?

Positive -

The positive impacts of this proposal are:

- An opportunity to affect the open market housing supply in the locality, thereby providing an increased opportunity for local people to purchase a home within the community they grew up in.
- The Council will benefit from a Capital receipt.
- The Council will be relieved of costs associated with vacant properties.
- Makes best use of Council property assets bringing vacant properties back into use.

Negative

None.

9. ACTIONS: As a result of completing this form are there any further actions you will be undertaking? Please detail them below, if applicable.

| What are you going to do | When are you going to do it? | Who is responsible |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
|--------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|

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| Prepare marketing/sales particulars and prepare tender packs. Engage Property Services colleagues regarding the improvement works to the two cottages proposed to be retained and let on an FBT. | Immediately following Cabinet decision. | Estates. |
| Consider and plan next steps and responsibilities. | On going | Estates. |

10.VERSION CONTROL: The Equality and Future Generations Evaluation should be used at the earliest stage, such as informally within your service, and then further developed throughout the decision-making process. It is important to keep a record of this process to demonstrate how you have considered and built-in equality and future generations considerations wherever possible.

| Version No. | Decision making stage | Date considered | Brief description of any amendments made following consideration |
|-------------|-----------------------|-----------------|--|
| 1. | SLT/Cabinet Members | January 2026 | |

Appendix 2
Property Plan

