
A separate report is submitted in the private part of the agenda in respect of this item, as it contains details of financial information required to be kept private in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The grounds for privacy are that it refers to the identity, financial and business affairs of an organisation and the amount of expenditure proposed to be incurred by the Council under a particular contract for the supply of goods or services.

Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment

8th December 2015

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment –Councillor Maton

Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director of Place

Ward(s) affected:

Cheylesmore

Title:

Freehold Acquisition of 261 London Road Coventry

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

An opportunity has arisen to make a strategic acquisition of land adjoining the Councils depot at Whitley.

The owners of the freehold interest in 261 London Road, a three bedroomed two storey end terraced house with garden have approached the Council to establish if there would be interest in acquiring their freehold interest.

Accessed from the rear of the garden, there is an additional area of unused land extending to approximately 0.35 acres which is adjacent to the Whitley Depot.

The opportunity for the Council is that it can merge this interest into the Whitley Depot and expand the working operational area of the depot, subject to the grant of planning permission.

The owners are only willing to dispose of the whole of the freehold interest and not part. A purchase price has been agreed and Godfrey Payton Chartered Surveyors acting for the Council have approved the acquisition as representing open market value.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Business, Enterprise and Employment is recommended to authorise the acquisition of 261 London Road and adjoining land on the terms contained in the private part of this report.

List of Appendices included:

Appendix 1 – Site Plan

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Freehold Acquisition of 261 London Road Coventry

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1 The three bed property at 261 London Road comprises of a two storey end terrace. The property fronts London Road and is adjacent to the main Whitley Depot entrance. The extent of the freehold interest is outlined in red on the plan annexed hereto (“the Plan”).
- 1.2 Accessed from the rear of the garden, is a further area of land of approximately 0.35 acres which is unused and overgrown. This area of land is hatched on the Plan and is adjacent to the southern boundary of the Depot and could be incorporated into the Council’s operational depot subject to the grant of planning permission for depot use.
- 1.3 The Owners, who do not reside in the property and have in recent years rented the property, have decided to dispose of their interest and approached the Council because of the previous interest shown. This would represent an opportunity for the Council to strategically acquire land adjacent to the depot to be incorporated into its operational working area.
- 1.4 It became apparent in negotiations that the Owners were not willing to sell part of their interest i.e. will only dispose of the whole.
- 1.5 If the Council could acquire this interest, there is the opportunity to amalgamate the property into the Whitley Depot operation. This opportunity will provide further benefits to the operation of the Depot as it will provide additional land that can be utilised.
- 1.6 Godfrey Payton Chartered Surveyors were instructed to negotiate with the Owners and a purchase price has been agreed to acquire the property and land.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

2.1 Acquire 261 London Road Coventry

This is probably the only opportunity for the Council to acquire this interest in recent years and amalgamate into the operation of Whitley Depot. The main benefit will be the incorporation of the land into the depot for operational purposes.

2.2 Withdraw from negotiations

If the Council do not take advantage of acquiring this interest then it may not have another opportunity in the foreseeable future. The opportunity to increase the size of Whitley Depot and the operational benefits that will be gained with the additional land will be lost.

- 2.3 It is recommended that the Council proceeds with the freehold purchase of 261 London Road.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 None undertaken.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 Providing Cabinet Member approval is secured, and due diligence is undertaken to ensure that the Council has good title and is free from any restrictions or encumbrances then it is expected that the freehold purchase will be completed within this financial year.

5. Comments from Executive Director of Resources

5.1 Financial implications

The freehold purchase will be funded from corporate resources.

5.2 Legal implications

The Council is under a fiduciary duty when utilising the Council's resources. The purchase price for the acquisition of the freehold interest has been verified by external Chartered Surveyors, Godfrey Payton Surveyors as representing open market value.

Officers within Legal Services will prepare the freehold transfer documentation and complete the acquisition.

6. Other implications

Property Implications

The purchase of the freehold interest will expand the working operational area of Whitley Depot and allow the better utilisation of the site.

6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

The acquisition of the land in question will provide the opportunity for the depot to be more effectively utilised and provide future opportunities to improve access and circulation.

6.2 How is risk being managed?

The two risks that need to be managed are the securing of planning permission for the additional land and ensuring contracts are exchanged to complete the acquisition. Officers in Place and Resources Directorates will monitor these risks.

Informal advice from planning officers is that the inclusion of the additional land into the operational land of the Depot could be recommended to Planning Committee in principle subject to satisfactory mitigation measures.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

The impact to the organisation will be minimal however it will generate additional work for officers within Place and Resources Directorate in dealing with the freehold purchase.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

An equality impact assessment is a process designed to ensure that a policy project or service does not discriminate against any disadvantaged or vulnerable people. Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 imposes an obligation on Local Authorities to carry out an equality impact assessment when the local authority is exercising a public function.

An equality impact assessment has not been undertaken by officers as the proposal set out in this report relates to the granting of or the creation of a legal interest in the land and does not constitute a change in service delivery policy or the exercise of a public function.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

Any environmental impact will be addressed through the planning process.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

None

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