

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Cabinet

Date of Meeting:	17 th January 2017
Report of:	Executive Director, Place
Subject/Title:	Sale of Former Children's Home, Redsands, Nantwich
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Don Stockton, Regeneration

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 Redsands, Nantwich is a former Children's Home. It is surplus to operational requirements and has been vacant since 2009. There have been a number of proposals for the site but none of these have managed to come to fruition. The Property has been subject to recurring vandalism and arson attacks that continue to present a security, health and safety risk and ongoing budget pressure.
- 1.2 The Property, shown edged red on the attached plan, has been marketed for sale by Engine of the North on behalf of the Council. Several offers have been received. The highest of these offers, which is for a nursing home development, is recommended for approval.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet authorise the Executive Director of Place to advertise the intention to dispose of the land in accordance with the Local Government Act should any of the land be identified as open space and the consultations will be considered by the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and approve the freehold disposal of the former Redsands Children's Home, Nantwich as shown edged red the attached plan to Richmond Care Villages Holdings Limited, or to a group company, on terms to be agreed by the Executive Director for Place in consultation with the Director of Legal Services, the Chief Operating Officer, the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The property is not required for any purpose by the Council and while vacant remains a liability. A sale will generate a significant capital receipt and save the Council ongoing holding and maintenance costs and health and safety risks.

4.0 Wards Affected

4.1 Wistaston

5.0 Local Ward Members

5.1 Cllr. Margaret Simon, Cllr. Jacquie Weatherill

6.0 Policy Implications

6.1 The Disposal will remove a number of derelict buildings, bring a redundant site back into economic use, create new local jobs and facilitate new development that is in keeping with the locality.

7.0 Implications for Rural Communities

7.1 The development of a new social care facility will remove a security issue and create around 80 new jobs in the rural community around Willaston.

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 The sale of the site will generate a significant capital receipt and dispose of a longstanding maintenance liability. The recommended offer is the highest offer received to date for the site.

8.2 Maintenance and holding costs are circa £40,000 per annum (half of which is business rates). The size of the buildings and their secluded location means they require significant security provision.

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows a Local Authority to dispose of an interest in land on such terms, as it considers appropriate subject to its obtaining the best consideration reasonably obtainable for the land interest

9.2 Section 123 of the Local Government Act requires the advertisement of any open space before its disposal and consideration of any objections received following such advertisement.

9.3 The Localism Act 2011 introduced the General Power of Competence, which allows the Council to do anything an individual can do, provided it is not prohibited by other legislation. These powers have replaced the previous wellbeing powers however the use of these powers must be in support of a reasonable and accountable decision made in line with public law principles.

10.0 Risk Management

- 10.1 The sale is subject to receipt of planning permission for a nursing home development. There is a risk planning permission will not be granted and the sale will not proceed however advice has been obtained from planning officers and there appears to be a realistic prospect of approval.

11.0 Background and Options

- 11.1 The site comprises the former Redsands Children's Home and associated buildings, which were closed in 2009 and have since been vacant. The buildings have been subject to arson attacks, repeated break-ins and acts of vandalism. They remain a security risk and maintenance liability. The Council is proactively mitigating these risks at a cost to its revenue budgets in holding costs.
- 11.2 The Council is intending to retain land shown edged blue on the attached plan to the north of the property comprising a pond, woodland and a football pitch. Access to the football pitch lies across the land being sold but will be secured for future use by a right of way.
- 11.3 The site has been marketed in the past and offers received and accepted but, to date, none have been converted into a sale.
- 11.4 The latest marketing exercise was undertaken by Colliers International between September and October 2016. Several offers were received. They were for a range of different uses and at prices that substantially exceed all previous offers. The offers were evaluated by Colliers and discussed with planning officers. The proposal recommended is the highest price and has a reasonably good prospect of being delivered.
- 11.5 The offer has been submitted by Richmond Care Villages Holdings Limited, a wholly owned subsidiary of BUPA which owns and operates 300 care homes in the UK. Richmond already operates a care village in Nantwich about a mile from the Property. Their intention is to develop the Property as a specialist centre of excellence for dementia care which will operate as a satellite campus to the existing care village in Nantwich. It will create around 80 new jobs.

12.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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