
Report title: Homes England Asset Transfer

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Dormer
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Head of Service		Claire Felton
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Wards Affected		All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)		Finding somewhere to live and An effective and sustainable Council
Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee RESOLVE that:-

Approval is given to the transfer of the following assets from Homes England to the Council.

- 1) Land at Auxerre Avenue;**
- 2) The Anchorage;**
- 3) Land adjacent to Crossgates Depot, Crossgates Road, Park Farm ; and**
- 4) Matchborough West Meeting Rooms**

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 1964, with the formation of the then Redditch Development Corporation, one of their first main tasks was to undertake necessary land acquisition to ensure that new major developments and associated infrastructure for the New Town could be provided, within their designated programme.
- 2.2 On completion of their functions, the Redditch Development Corporation was wound up, with all assets then being transferred to the Commission for New Towns. This latter organisation was then replaced by English Partnerships, which in turn was then replaced by Homes and Communities Agency and ultimately was then replaced by Homes England.

- 2.3 The Commission for New Towns, before their decommission, commenced transferring assets to this Council, but in a piecemeal manner, which has progressed over time involving the succeeding organisations, finally to where currently there just remains a collection of land areas of varying sizes, spread across the Borough.
- 2.4 Back in 2019, Homes England suggested that the remaining land areas could be transferred to the Council in one process. These land areas as previously stated, range from small individual areas that are only sub-soil elements (lie beneath adopted highways), up to more significant land parcels.
- 2.5 Regrettably, this process is taking longer than originally anticipated and as a result officers have been working with Homes England to identify a first stage transfer of four land parcels that would enable the council to proceed with projects that could benefit the Town in the short term.
- 2.6 The site at Auxerre Avenue adjoins a site in the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) ownership that was approved to form part of the Housing development programme. The transfer of this site will enable the Council to increase the number of properties delivered.
- 2.7 The site known as the Anchorage is situated on the same site as the Sandycroft Centre and has been vacant for a number of years and is part of the Council's HRA portfolio. It was previously used to house vulnerable young women through a partner. This arrangement ended following a cut in funding to provide the support service. Homes England previously had an interest in Sandycroft & Arden House and when completing land registry of their holdings mistakenly registered the Anchorage as their property. The transfer of this site would therefore regularise the current position in terms of ownership.
- 2.8 The site known as Matchborough Meeting rooms has again been registered to Homes England in error and this proposed transfer will enable that position to be regularised.
- 2.9 The site adjacent to the Councils Depot site at Crossgates House will be a useful addition to the existing footprint of the Depot.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 At this moment in time the revenue implications are unclear on the land being transferred to council ownership. The property services department are confident that the value in the land is greater than the potential revenue implications of maintaining and securing the land. The revenue costs for maintaining the land will be determined post transfer and a pressure will be included in the medium term financial plan if the costs cannot be met from existing budgets. Any plans to utilise the land post transfer will require business cases to be developed and presented which will have fully costed financial models in them.
- 3.2 The two sites mistakenly registered by Homes England and being transferred back to the council are currently on the council asset registers so there are no financial implications.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no legal implications arising from the regularisation of these sites into council ownership, as they should have been already transferred and two sites were registered to Homes England in error.
- 4.2 Once the sites are in Council ownership, they will be added to the Asset Register. They can then be used or developed as the Council may decide.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 The addition of these sites will enable the Council to extend the delivery of much needed affordable homes.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 The green thread runs through the Council plan. The transfer of the Crossgates site will enable the Council to look at the way in which it delivers services through the depot and the extent to which additional space will enable the Council to achieve this.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 There are no Equality and Diversity implications arising as a result of the proposals in this report.

Operational Implications

- 6.2 Once transferred the assets will be included in the Councils asset register and the Council will assume responsibility for the same.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Any risks associated with the acquisition of these sites have been balanced in the context of the benefit that the asset affords.

8. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site plan for land at Auxerre Avenue

Appendix 2 – Site plan for land at The Anchorage

Appendix 3 – Site plan for land adjacent to Crossgates Depot

Appendix 4 – Site plan for the Matchborough West Meeting Rooms

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Dormer	17/08/21
Lead Director / Head of Service	James House Director of Resources	17/08/21
Financial Services	Chris Forrester	17/08/21
Legal Services	Clare Flanagan	17/08/21