

FORMER OAKLAND SCHOOL SITE DEVELOPMENT, BAYSTON HILL**Responsible Officer: Chris Edwards**e-mail: chris.edwards@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 258 921**1. Summary**

- 1.1 Oakland Primary School and Longmeadow CE Primary and Nursery School were discontinued on 31 August 2009 as part of Shropshire Council's School re-organisation. Oakmeadow CE Primary School was established with effect 1 September 2009 at the former Longmeadow site. The Oakmeadow School was extended and redeveloped as part of Shropshire Council's Primary Capital Programme and pupils from the Oakland school transferred from the Oakland site on completion of the building work in 2010. The Oakland site, owned by Shropshire Council was vacated in 2010 and subsequently declared surplus to the educational requirements, although is currently used for storage purposes.
- 1.2 Neighbouring landowners the Diocese of Lichfield have also earmarked the site known locally as the 'Glebe land' for disposal. There is an opportunity to create a single unique development that could also build new community facilities which would help safeguard services in the area for the foreseeable future. This report identifies these opportunities, potential risks, and consultations that have taken place to date with the Bayston Hill community and recommends several actions including the submission of the outline planning applications.
- 1.3 As part of the statutory process for the discontinuance of the school, Cabinet has already agreed for the receipts from the disposal of the Oakland site to be ring-fenced for education purposes (Learning and Skills).
- 1.4 A Landowners Development Brief (The Brief) for future developers has been brought forward by the Oakland and Glebeland Steering Group and is to be used by developers to understand the site potential. The Brief highlights what Shropshire Council and the Diocese of Lichfield, the principal landowners, wish to see delivered by developers. The Brief has been consulted on with the local community.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet are asked to:

- 2.1 Approve the Landowners Development Brief for developers for the Oakland and Glebeland site.
- 2.2 Approve the submission of outline planning application in conjunction with the Diocese of Lichfield for the Oakland and Glebeland site.
- 2.3 Approve the next steps in the process of disposing of the site and realising a capital receipt:

- A) Preparation of a joint documents pack for marketing purposes in conjunction with the Lichfield Diocese.
- B) "Soft market research" to inform the most appropriate procurement/disposal method, again in conjunction with the Lichfield Diocese.
- C) A future report to come back to Cabinet to confirm the exact method of disposal of the site.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

3.1 The development of the former Oakland School site offers a variety of potential opportunities for Shropshire Council and the local community with further opportunities arising out of a joint development proposal with the Diocese of Lichfield including;

- A range of housing sizes and types identified for local housing need.
- A new purpose built community building that future proofs facilities and services for residents including a library.
- A central hub of services managed by the Parish Council.
- Provision of public open space and recreation area
- Improved community resilience through the enhancement of community facilities
- Development of an area that has been targeted by those perpetrating anti-social behaviour on its grounds
- Increase and improve the general parking issues and drainage in the immediate surrounding area of the development site.
- Provide a new vicarage for the Parish, including space for confidential discussions where appropriate.
- Opportunities for Christ Church to engage in more community activities, including the popular community café days.

There are however potential risks to be considered including;

Potential Risk	Mitigation plans in place	Risk Rating
Development potential could lead to an increased number of primary school aged children and the affect it could have on the local Primary School	Any adverse effect on local School provision will be identified within the formal planning process.	Low
Environmental impact of the proposal could lead to a loss of green space.	The target within the Landowners Development Brief is to exceed the SAMDEV requirements as outlined in consultation with the local community. Alternative provision at Yew Tree Drive is contained within the development brief.	Low
If development fails to materialise, the former School building would	Soft market testing undertaken by Officers will ascertain the level of	Low

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remain the liability of Shropshire Council.	developer's interest.	
Impact on adults with learning disabilities given the close proximity to York House	York House have been involved in discussions throughout the past two years and have themselves offered solutions to help mitigate any potential risks associated with the development, including increasing the level of boundary screening.	Low
Loss of School site / places	Mitigated the risk by providing a new School site (Oak Meadow) which has the capacity to support the new influx of children expected from the new development. Secretary of State approval has also been sought as per the authorities' statutory duty.	Low
Proposed size of greenspace in the development brief not being delivered, as per the communities wishes	The approval of the Landowners Development Brief by Cabinet will show a robust strategy for how Shropshire Council wish this particular development to proceed. A soft market testing approach led by officers will ensure certain wishes within the 'Brief' are contractually agreed to, such as the amount of greenspace required.	Low
Loss of Scouting facilities	Land has been identified near Stanley Parker Bowls club which can host the Scouts, should they wish to move. External funding will be sought, and a fair settlement from the Diocese reached for their existing leased land.	Low

The Brief associated with this Cabinet report contains further details on opportunities and risk and is detailed in Appendix 3 to this report.

An Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment has been completed for the project.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 Due to the range of stakeholders involved who claim some land interest in the whole site (See Appendix 1), the percentage of total land that outline planning permission will be sought for includes;

Land Owner	Percentage of total land
Shropshire Council	46.50%
Lichfield Diocese	48.00%
York House	4.50%
Bayston Hill Scouts	1%

The area of Shropshire Council land within the Brief is 1.21 hectares or 46.5% of the combined developable land.

The costs associated with applying for outline planning permission and other associated costs will be shared equally between the Diocese of Lichfield and Shropshire Council as the two principal land owners.

- 4.2 Any receipts from the disposal of the Oakland site are ringfenced for educational purposes (Learning and Skills).
- 4.3 Given the need for the provision of community facilities such as the community hub, additional car parking, enhanced public open space etc, the sites will not potentially generate their maximum capital receipt value.

5. Background

- 5.1 The former Oakland Primary School site, consisting of school building, parking area and school grounds is owned by Shropshire Council. The school closed in 2009 when the Oakland and Longmeadow schools merged to form Oakmeadow Primary School. The Oakland school site was declared surplus to requirements and earmarked for disposal. As part of the statutory process for the discontinuance of the school, on 15th February 2011, Cabinet agreed the above and agreed for the receipts from the sale of the Oakland site to be ring-fenced for education (Learning and Skills), subject to Secretary of State approval. Secretary of State approval was granted in August 2016.
- 5.2 Any sale of land used as playing fields within the last 10 years is subject to the acquisition of the Secretary of State for Education approval under Section 77 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, and also Schedule 1 to the Academies Act 2010. The process for this included public consultation and the submission of applications to the Education Funding Agency (EFA), who then scrutinised applications and supporting documents prior to them being forwarded to the School Playing Fields Advisory Panel which consisted of representatives from:
 - Fields in Trust
 - Learning through Landscapes
 - Local Government Association
 - National Association of Head Teachers
 - Sport & Recreation Alliance

The panel in turn advised the Secretary of State on their recommendation as to whether the disposal was the right course of action.

- 5.3 In respect of the Shropshire situation; applications for the disposal of the playing fields at four schools were submitted in 2013/14 to the Education Funding Agency (EFA). EFA officers visited Shropshire Council on 4 December 2015 to discuss each submission and final queries were discussed. This meeting paved the way to the most recent submission of the applications in January 2016. These have been reviewed by the case officer and on 26 August 2016 Shropshire Council were formally notified that the Secretary of State consent to the disposal of the playing field at the school site on the understanding that the capital proceeds are to be spent as outlined in the Councils application dated 14th June 2013.
- 5.4 Options in 2009 were to sell the site to developers in its entirety, or sell the site with community input through consultation taking on board community aspirations through the Parish and Place Plans. The latter approach was the route taken. At the end of 2012 the Diocese of Lichfield approached Shropshire Council sharing their intention to sell the adjoining Glebe land and their wish to explore the possibility of developing the two sites in co-ordination.

- 5.5 Shropshire Council in its capacity as Local Authority explored the wider potential that two sites could deliver as opposed to two single sites thus maximising community benefit but potentially reducing overall capital receipts. Due to the number of potential stakeholders involved in this work, a Steering Group was created in 2013.
- 5.6 The group consisted of representatives from the Diocese of Lichfield and their agent Balfour's, Shropshire Council's Learning & Skills, Bayston Hill Ward Member, Bayston Hill Scouts, Christ Church, York House (Livability), Shropshire Council's Community Enablement Team, and Estates and Facilities, Bayston Hill Parish Council. This group was chaired by the Head of Infrastructure and Communities at Shropshire Council. The groups function was to facilitate discussions looking at the development of the wider site which would incorporate the Diocese's Glebe land and Shropshire Council's former Oakland School. Another core function of the steering group was to listen to community views and take on board comments in both the Place and Parish plans.
- 5.7 During Steering Group discussions it was generally accepted that greater opportunities and community benefits could be generated by the development of the two individual sites as one wider development, however, both sites would potentially not receive their maximum capital receipt due to this approach. The Diocese of Lichfield have stated from the outset that this is an opportunity for the community that they wholly wish to support. The profits of each site would be retained by the respective land owners.
- 5.8 The Brief for developers has been produced to look at the various aspects of a joint site proposal including; opportunities arising from the development, the nature of the site and size of its surrounding, planning policy context, development considerations and planning application requirements.
- 5.9 A key task for the Steering Group has been to bring forward the Brief for the overall site. This document's aim is to provide a balanced approach to development, maximising capital receipts for the principal land owners whilst also realising the wider community benefits that should be delivered for local residents.
- 5.10 The Brief has been the subject of ongoing consultation undertaken between Shropshire Council, the Steering Group (representing all interested landowners), the Parish Council, the local community and any other interested parties. Internal consultations have also been undertaken. Comments received as a result of these consultations have all been given full consideration, and where appropriate, the Brief has been amended with any required changes. The document seeks to inform developers and other interested parties of the opportunities and constraints presented by the site, and the type and scale of development expected and encouraged by local (and national) planning policies.
- 5.11 The final draft of the document forms Appendix 3 to this Cabinet Report, and is proposed to be approved by Shropshire Council Cabinet. The Brief has guided the production of a Masterplan (Appendix 4), and these two documents will provide a firm basis for submission of any future planning application for development of the area.
- 5.12 Since the closure of the former Oakland School, there has been community interest in retaining some of the site for some community use/facilities. Evidence can be found in the 2006 Parish Plan, 2010 Parish Plan review and the Place Plan annual conversations. Further consultation with the community has been undertaken via the Parish Council and the Local Joint Committee (LJC) which looked at all community

views. A list of community uses for the site taking in to consideration all other existing community facilities in Bayston Hill was drawn up – these were to provide a community hub with Library and a Parish Council Office, flexible use space, meeting rooms and options for home working/business use.

- 5.13 Further community engagement regarding the wider development site opportunities (Glebe land and Oakland School site) took place during 2014-15. The main concern from residents was the loss of the Diocese owned Glebe land that has been leased to Bayston Hill Parish Council by the Diocese over a long-term lease period. There were also concerns regarding parking, size and number of housing, concerns regarding primary school places and concerns about loss of a Library service. (Appendix 2)
- 5.14 As detailed in the 12th July 2017 Cabinet report, the Council is currently consulting on a new Library Services Strategy. The strategy proposes that Bayston Hill Library is a tier 3 Community library. Under the proposals, a tier 3 library would be managed by a community organisation with ongoing “back offices support provided from the Shropshire Council Libraries Team, and would aim to achieve cost neutral provision to the Council by the end of 2018/19.
For details of the proposed library services strategy visit:
<https://new.shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved/draft-library-services-strategy-for-shropshire-2018-to-2023/>

The Library service has been identified as a key Stakeholder in any new Community hub building developed as part of the site detailed within the development brief. Current Library facilities are in need of extensive refurbishment and upgrading. The current Library site also suffers with a lack of car parking spaces with users having to use street parking which through consultation came back as a community concern. The current site also suffers from high energy consumption due to the relatively large unused storage space in the old garage. The building is not economically viable for small community based organisations to manage.

- 5.15 The proposal to develop a new community hub building as part of the sites wider development has the potential to ensure the future of a Library service in Bayston Hill. The intended proposal would involve working with appropriate local community partners to manage or fund the library differently. Any new ‘hub’ building that is developed as part of the wider site, is proposed to be kept under ownership by Shropshire Council and leased out on a long term lease to a new management organisation.

6. Additional Information

- 6.1 A tree preservation order was created on 1st March 2016 and confirmed on 11th August 2016 to preserve the visual amenity and character of the area by protecting trees that makes a significant contribution to these attributes. A total of eight Oak trees on the southern boundary now have this TPO on them.
- 6.2 An Ecological Appraisal was undertaken in September 2014 on the former Oakland School site including Scouts and Glebe land. The Brief contains recommendations from this survey.

7. Future Actions

- 7.1 Following the process to approve the Brief and the submission of the outline planning application as set out in this report, the next steps in the process of disposing of the site and realising a capital receipt will be:-
- D) Preparation of a joint documents pack for marketing purposes in conjunction with Lichfield Diocese.
 - E) "Soft market research" to inform the most appropriate procurement/disposal method, again in conjunction with Lichfield Diocese.
 - F) A future report to Cabinet to confirm the exact method of disposal of the site.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 The former Oakland School site is redundant and earmarked for disposal. There are further opportunities should outline planning permission be granted. The development has the potential to provide mixed housing sizes with the site including a range of community facilities e.g. a community hub – incorporating but not limited to a Library and Parish office.
- 8.2 The proposed development within the Brief could enable current library provision to be moved to an alternative site. Building the Library (as part of a community hub) on this new development would enable a community group to express an interest in managing the service thus supporting the Council's draft Library Services strategy.
- 8.3 Amongst the opportunities for development, community consultation has fed back a number of concerns that are important to local residents. These concerns centre primarily on the loss of a green field – the Glebe land. Residents also highlighted concerns relating to traffic, parking, tree protection and the demand for a lower-density housing development all of which has been addressed within the development brief.
- 8.4 Notwithstanding these concerns, for the Oakland School site to deliver both on its financial expectations and also on wider community aspirations, the wider development opportunity of including the Glebe land to form a larger single development is the only way financially that both of these objectives can be met.
- 8.5 The Brief sets forward how the principal land owners wish this site to be developed and Cabinet approval is now required in order to proceed with the outline planning application associated with this site.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Cabinet Report 12th July 2017 - Library Services Strategy for Shropshire 2018-2023

Cabinet Report 15th February 2011 – School Organisation in Shropshire – Report on Consultation and Identification of Next Steps.

Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder)

Steve Charmley – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Corporate Support

Local Member

Ted Clarke

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Site plan of land for sale

Appendix 2 – Community Engagement details and Q&A

Appendix 3 – Landowners Development Brief

Appendix 4 – Site Masterplan

Appendix 5 – Equality and Social Inclusion Impact Assessment