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**AGENDA ITEM: 7 Pages 25 – 32**


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<b>Meeting</b>	Cabinet Resources Committee
<b>Date</b>	28 July 2011
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Church Farmhouse, Greyhound Hill, NW4 4JR</b>
<b>Report of</b>	Cabinet Member for Resources and Performance
<b>Summary</b>	To seek approval that the property be declared surplus to the Council's requirements and that it be advertised on the open market to enable submission of schemes and initial bids for the Council's freehold interest. The appraisal and result of the open market testing will be reported to a future Cabinet Resources Committee meeting for consideration.

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Officer Contributors	Judith Ellis – Property Services Valuation Manger Suzanna Ellis – Principal Valuer (Property Services)
Status (public or exempt)	Public
Wards affected	Hendon Ward
Enclosures	Appendix 1 - Location Plan No. 24323 and Photos
For decision by	Cabinet Resources Committee
Function of	Executive
Reason for urgency / exemption from call-in (if appropriate)	Not applicable

Contact for further information: Suzanna Ellis, Principal Valuer (Property Services), 020 8359 7356, [suzanna.ellis@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:suzanna.ellis@barnet.gov.uk).

## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 That the Council's freehold interest in the land edged red on the attached plan no. 24323 which includes the Church Farm Museum building be declared surplus to its requirements.**
- 1.2 That the disposal of the freehold interest be advertised on the open market to seek details of proposed schemes and initial bids.**
- 1.3 That the appraisal and results of the open market testing be reported to a future meeting of the Cabinet Resources Committee for further consideration.**

## **2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

- 2.1 The budget setting process for 2011-2013, which took a decision to withdraw funding for museums from 1 April 2011.

## **3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan 2010-2013 commits the Council to delivering 'Better services with less money'. A key principle of the medium term financial strategy is to continually review the use of Council assets so as to reduce the cost of accommodation year on year and to obtain best consideration for any surplus assets to maximise funds for capital investment and/or the repayment of capital debt. The sale of the Church Farmhouse would provide a capital receipt which would support the Council's priorities and bring this currently unused area of land back into use.

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

- 4.1 It is considered likely that the sale of this land will raise significant levels of public concern and will give rise to policy considerations. We expect local residents to actively have a particular focus on the future of this site.
- 4.2 Where the Council proposes to dispose of land in reliance on Section 123 (2) of the Local Government Act 1972, subsection 2 of that section prevents the council from disposing of the land (otherwise than by way of a short tenancy) for a consideration which is less than the best that can be reasonably be obtained.

## **5. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 5.1 The recommendation has been evaluated against the principles in the Equalities Policy and Equalities scheme and there are no adverse implications for specific groups.
- 5.2 The receipt from the disposal of this site will feed into the Council's Capital Programme which supports the overall aim of the Council's Equalities Policy and supports the equality priorities outlined in Council's Equality Scheme.

## **6. USE OF RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (Finance, Procurement, Performance & Value for Money, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

- 6.1 There are no procurement, performance and value for money, staffing, IT or any other property matter other than that set out in paragraph 9 below.

- 6.2 Any costs incurred in the preparation of this process will be covered by the commercial services directorate budget.

## **7. LEGAL ISSUES**

- 7.1 The freehold of the land is owned by the Council and is registered with the Land Registry under title number MX146 351. No covenants are shown on the registers of the Council's title.
- 7.2 Any sale would be subject to rights of way in favour of No.12 Greyhound Hill Road which affects a small part of the land.
- 7.3 As the grounds within which the museum building sits may have been used as open space land then any disposal of the land will be advertised under the provisions of S123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **8. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS**

- 8.1 The Council's constitution in Part 3, Responsibility for Functions, paragraph 3.6 states the functions delegated to the Cabinet Resources Committee including all matters relating to land and buildings owned, rented or proposed to be acquired or disposed of by the Council.

## **9. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 9.1 The site under consideration is outlined in red on the attached plan, is an irregular piece of land some 0.36 Ha/0.88 acres.
- 9.2 The property is bordered to the east with residential uses, the north by Sunny Hill Park, to the west by a Public House and Hendon St Mary Parish Church, to the south Greyhound Hill Road. The site is located on the north side of Greyhound Hill at its junction with Church End. The site is some 0.6 miles from Hendon Central tube station.
- 9.3 The building comprises an 'L' shaped, Grade II Listed, brick built farmhouse, of some 450 sqm/4844 sqft, the original parts of which are circa 17<sup>th</sup> Century. The building is arranged over three levels although parts also have cellarage. The building was adapted for museum use. To the rear of the property is a lawn with a pond and a number of established trees. To the frontage of the property is a stone wall which marks the boundary to the road.
- 9.4 The Site was originally purchased by the Middlesex County Council for museum purposes, on the 21 February 1944, and became vested in the London Borough of Barnet in 1965 following the abolition of Middlesex County Council.
- 9.5 The strip of land fronting the whole of the property was acquired by the Hendon Council in 1934.
- 9.6 The 2 residential properties 12 and 14 Greyhound Road were bought for residential purposes under a consent dated 31 May 1947.
- 9.7 Consents dated 6/3/1959 and 19/1/1954 land was appropriated from housing to land for public walks and pleasure grounds.

- 9.8 By an agreement dated 8 December 1959 both No. 12 and 14 were occupied on a service occupancy agreement.
- 9.9 No 12 Greyhound Road has been sold albeit there is a licence for the property to park a car in the museum car park.
- 9.10 The Council will engage with Middlesex University as a Strategic Partner in this location in the process of obtaining best value.

### **Planning Advice**

- 9.11 The museum building is of historic significance and will involve full consultation with English Heritage.
- 9.12 A range of development opportunities exist including residential and/or community and education uses. These may serve as stand alone or enabling development to secure improvements to facilities if identified on or off-site.
- 9.13 Any new development should demonstrate compliance with Unitary Development Plan policies and guidance and have regard to the emerging policy context in relation to the Local development Framework. Development should in particular respect adjoining residential boundaries and uses and ensure adequate access arrangements in addition to securing any necessary planning obligations.
- 9.14 Residential densities should reflect the character of the surrounding area and in relation to enhance and protect the historic fabric of the building.

### **Summary**

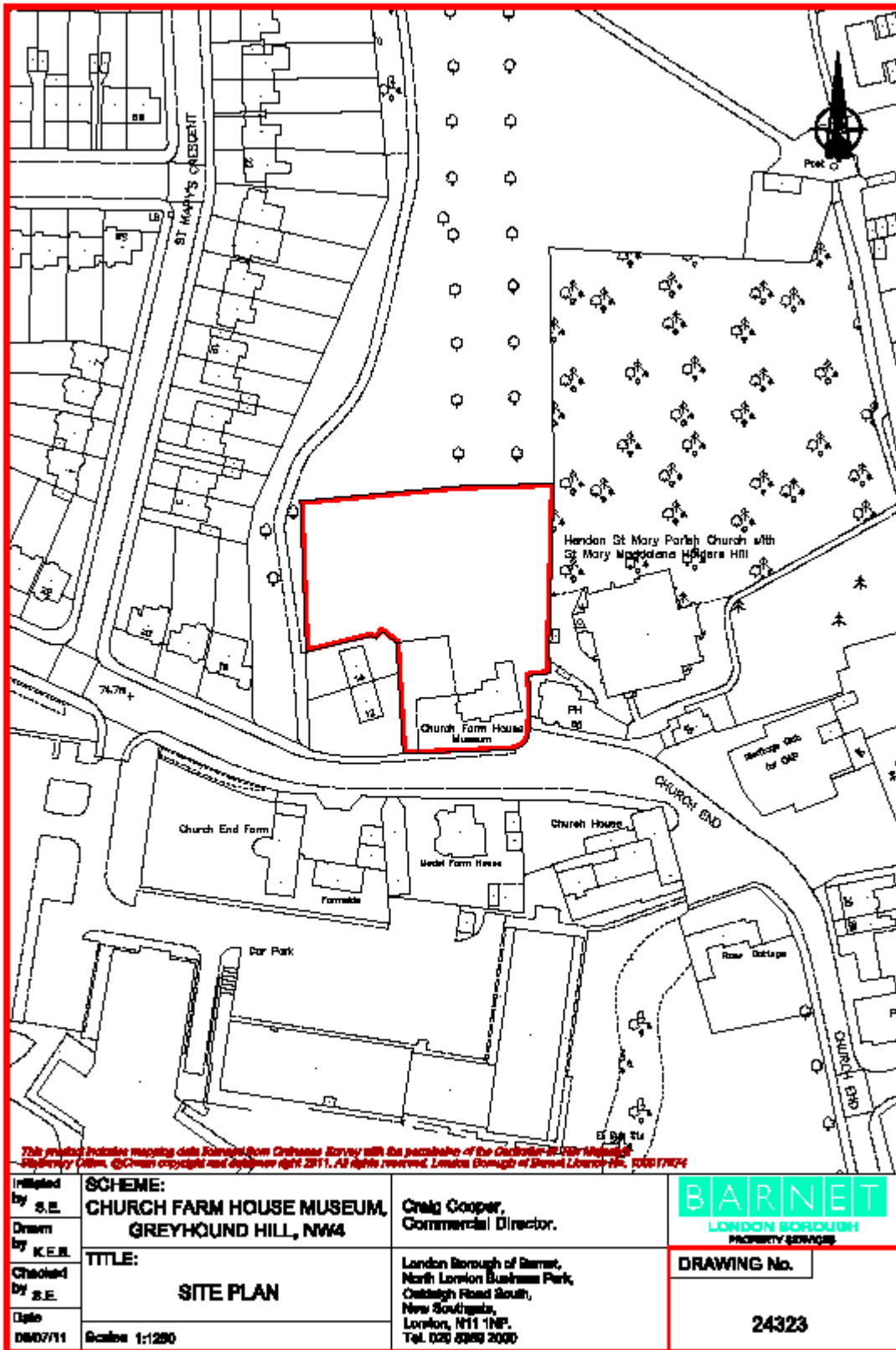
- 9.15 There is significant potential for various forms of development of this land subject to planning permission. This is a specialist building in a sought after location, and may attract a variety of uses ranging from residential development to educational uses, and despite the down turn in the market a market rent is likely to exist for this site.
- 9.16 In order to fully examine the potential development opportunities for the site together with the likely capital receipts that may be achieved, and market appetite for this site it is recommended that a two phase approach is adopted with an initial marketing campaign to identify the possible proposals and likely bids which can then be assessed and considered against the planning criteria and the Council's objectives.
- 9.17 The open market testing will be reported back to a future Cabinet Resources Committee meeting for a further decision on the proposal / proposals to be pursued.

## **10. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 10.1 None.

Legal – JOH  
CFO – JH

**Appendix 1: Site Plan**



## Photos



The car parking to the rear of the property.



The property frontage onto Greyhound Hill.



View over the pond to the rear of the property.



Land to the rear of the subject property

