

**MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL**  
**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD CALL-IN**  
**OUTCOME: NUNTHORPE GRANGE FARM DISPOSAL**

**11 MARCH 2021**

**PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1. Following the Overview and Scrutiny Board (OSB) Call-in meeting in respect of Nunthorpe Grange Farm Disposal, and the decision taken by the Board to refer the matter back to the Executive for reconsideration, the Executive is required to provide the OSB with a written response outlining its subsequent decision and the reasons for it.

**BACKGROUND**

2. At the Executive meeting held on 24 November 2020, the Executive considered a two-part report (Part A and Part B – Part B containing exempt information) in respect of Nunthorpe Grange Farm Disposal. The decision taken at the meeting was as follows:
  - a) That the recommendations of the report be approved.
  - b) That a proportion of the capital receipt (i.e. £43,500) generated by the disposal of the land be allocated to Nunthorpe and Marton East wards, for community use.
  - c) That a land-related covenant be applied, imposing restrictions on future use of the land.
  - d) That, in respect of the disposal of Council assets, a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Executive to ensure that when a negotiated sum exceeded the asset value, a proportion of the capital receipt generated would be allocated to the relevant ward/s, for community use.
3. This decision was subsequently called-in and considered by OSB on 18 December 2020 (meeting adjourned pending legal advice) and (continued on) 29 January 2021.
4. At the OSB Call-in meeting held on 29 January 2021, it was agreed that the decision taken by the Executive did not fall outside of the Budget and Policy Framework, and therefore the matter would not be referred to Full Council. However, there was sufficient evidence of a lack of consultation and inadequacy of information. The matter would be referred back to the Executive for reconsideration, with the following reasons/recommendations:
  - a) That alternative uses for the site be explored, such as community uses, that would be of benefit to a greater number of residents within the area by not restricting use for/to a particular purpose/group; and
  - b) That further consideration be given as to whether best value for money has been achieved, or whether enhanced consultation and an open tender exercise could generate additional interest/alternative proposals.

**EXECUTIVE MEETING**

5. The Executive met on 9 February 2021 to reconsider the decision initially taken on 24 November 2020.

6. Following consideration, the decision of the Executive was that the recommendations put forward by OSB be noted, but not endorsed.
7. The reasons for the Executive's decision, as per each recommendation, are as follows:

**OSB Recommendation: That alternative uses for the site be explored, such as community uses that would be of benefit to a greater number of residents within the area by not restricting use for/to a particular purpose/group.**

- The Brethren has been a part of the community for many decades and has contributed positively to the Nunthorpe area in various ways. Irrespective of religious beliefs, supporting such community groups within any Ward is enormously positive for Middlesbrough, and the Council should be looking to encourage and adapt this across Middlesbrough wherever possible.
- Within this particular proposal, there is a commitment to protect the green space, and trees and fruit trees will also be planted. Therefore, not only would this proposal assist a community organisation which is looking to grow, but would also safeguard some of those highly valued green space areas in Nunthorpe.
- In terms of community use, this Hall, under certain terms, would be available to the community and could therefore be an important community asset. The Brethren does encourage community use/access, as has been the case in Marton.
- Development of a Community Centre is not deemed appropriate for this site due to accessibility and distance/locality from the centre of the community. It could potentially be used as parkland, but further planning, consideration and subsequent consultation would be required.
- Monies generated by the disposal of the land and allocated for community use could be utilised by more centralised community resources, such as the Nunthorpe and Marton Recreation Club or the play area located on The Avenue.
- The by-pass ought to form the ultimate boundary for housing development in Middlesbrough. There is a park and ride facility planned for the future; further development could be controlled through ten-year caveats.

**OSB Recommendation: That further consideration be given as to whether best value for money has been achieved, or whether enhanced consultation and an open tender exercise could generate additional interest/alternative proposals.**

- This site had already achieved a higher value than the asset register valuation. It was possible that putting the site out to open tender could potentially have resulted in an increased price; however, it is likely that interest would only have been received from housing developers. This is not what the people and residents of Nunthorpe want and could potentially have been detrimental to local communities. This proposal provides a way of protecting the piece of land for the good of the area.
- In terms of consultation, the Parish Council had been consulted and there is demonstrable evidence of this on the Parish Council website. Consultation in respect of land sales is generally not undertaken, and therefore there had been an increased level of consultation in respect of this proposal.

8. The Executive voted unanimously that the decision taken on 24 November 2020 would still stand and be implemented with immediate effect.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9. The following sources were consulted, or referred to, in preparing this report:

- Minutes of the Executive meetings held on 24 November 2020 and 9 February 2021;  
and
- Minutes of the OSB meetings held on 18 December 2020 and 29 January 2020.

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