

**FORMER LANDSCAPE DEPOT & GREENHILL SCHOOL SITES,  
RHIWBINA, CARDIFF**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
AND DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING**

**AGENDA ITEM: 6**

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**PORTFOLIO: CORPORATE SERVICES & PERFORMANCE (COUNCILLOR  
GRAHAM HINCHEY**

*Appendix 2 to this report is not for publication as it contains exempt information of the description in Paragraph 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.*

**Reason for this Report**

1. To seek authority to determine a land sale incorporating replacement of the Greenhill Special School.

**Background**

2. The Council owns a 2.7 acre acres site in Rhiwbina known as the Former Landscape Depot (marked B on the attached plan at Appendix 1). The site is situated to the south of Greenhill Special School and was closed prior to Local Government reorganisation in 1996. It has been vacant since that time and the former nursery buildings were demolished and removed in the late 1980's. The land is surplus to Council requirements and is held pending disposal.
3. Access to the site is gained from a private lane (Heol Brynglas) off Heol-Y-Deri which also serves Greenhill Special School and adjoining residential properties. The lane is restricted in width and unable to be upgraded to sustain access for future development. This situation, plus the steep topography of the land, requires any development of the site to be accessed via an alternative route which needs to be secured through private land. The cost of securing this enhanced access would be offset against the value of the site which has led the Council to hold on to the site until a decision is taken regarding the future of the Greenhill Special School site.
4. The Greenhill Special School site is 6 acres (marked as A on the attached plan). The school originally functioned as a residential facility

with an indoor swimming pool and ancillary building. Today the school provides a day school facility only, and the residential block, swimming pool and ancillary buildings have been closed and demolished. The school building would benefit from replacement or significant investment would need to be undertaken in future years if it were to remain fit for purpose.

## **Issues**

5. The amalgamation of the two sites will maximise the development potential of both sites. The disposal will generate enough capital receipt to deliver a new modern replacement special school. The estimated total cost of a replacement special school including additional costs of access works to build on the existing site are highlighted in confidential Appendix 2.
6. The Council's strategy for Education has identified the need to provide a modern replacement special school facility in a suitable locality. An extensive site search of Council and privately owned land has been undertaken within the areas of the city identified as suitable for a relocated school. This search failed to identify a suitable alternative school site. As a result, it is intended to accommodate a replacement school on the lower site (marked as B on the attached plan at Appendix 1). However, to ensure the Council maximises value for money from the disposal of its land, as part of the process to market the site, the Council will consider proposals for alternative locations for the school. Any decision not to develop the school on the amalgamated site would need to be supported by the school governors, the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning, the Cabinet Member for Education and Local Members.

## **Conclusion**

7. Following initial discussions with all interested parties, the following benefits from implementing this proposal will arise:
  - Allows the release of a land asset which is currently land locked.
  - Provides the opportunity for a replacement special school to be achieved through a self-funding proposal at no cost to the Authority.

## **Local Member Consultation**

8. Local Councillors have recently been informed of this proposal, including keeping the school on the same site, and will be seeking the views of local residents in due course. To date no formal statutory consultation has been undertaken on the provision of a new school. This process will also take place in due course following the marketing of the site once it is understood that a suitable proposal for the redevelopment of the site and the provision of a new school is deliverable.

## **Reasons for Recommendations**

9. Cabinet authority is sought to pursue, in principle, the relocation and provision of a modern equivalent replacement special school on a suitable location facilitated by the comprehensive development of the combined sites.

## **Legal Implications**

10. The Council is obliged to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable from a disposal of land pursuant to s123 of the Local Government Act 1972. The consideration can take the form of works in lieu of a cash payment. The proposed transaction will need to take the form of a land disposal linked to a clawback of the land by the Council if the chosen developer fails to carry out the school works. Any relevant consultation will need to be carried out once the terms of a preferred bid are known. It will be necessary to ensure that value for money is obtained in regard to provision of the school

## **Financial Implications**

11. The report proposes that the amalgamation of two sites would allow the replacement of the existing special school which is deemed to be a requirement of the Education Strategy for the City. Appendix 2 provides estimated valuations of sites and costs for replacement provision. The latter which are deemed acceptable by the education directorate in meeting operational requirements. Whilst the option of amalgamation initially indicates that there could be a net capital receipt for the site, any such estimates are subject to the outcome of expressions of interest.
12. The report indicates that the existing school has a significant backlog of maintenance. If no action were taken, future capital expenditure would be required to ensure the facility remained fit for purpose.
15. The report proposes delegation of Disposal of land at estimates included in confidential Appendix 2 be given to the Director of Economic Development following consultation with key stakeholders including Section 151 Officer. Financial implications would need further consideration at that stage.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve in principle the relocation and provision of a modern equivalent replacement special school facilitated by the disposal of the combined sites A and B outlined in Appendix 1.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Economic Development in consultation with the Director of Education and Lifelong Learning and Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance to seek Expressions of Interest from the open market for the disposal of the land

marked A & B in Appendix 1 and the provision of a replacement Greenhill School on the basis of the details outlined in this report and to report back on the proposal for a replacement school.

**NICK BATCHELAR**

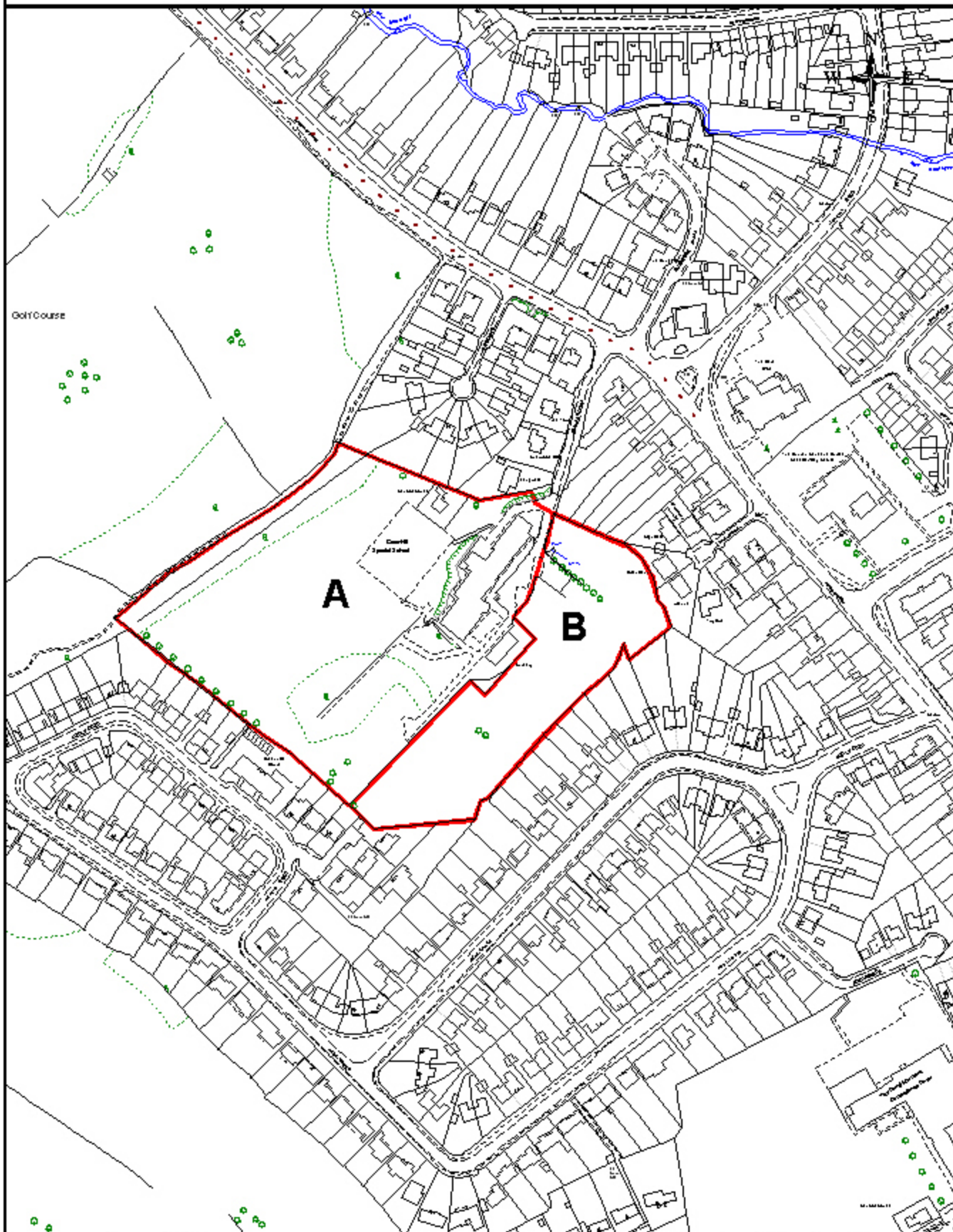
Director  
10 July 2015

**NEIL HANRATTY**

Director  
10 July 2015

*The following Appendices are attached:*

Appendix 1 Site Plan  
Appendix 2 Valuation Advice (Confidential)



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