

## Slough Borough Council

<b>Report To:</b>	Council
<b>Date:</b>	25 September 2025
<b>Subject:</b>	Petition – "Support the Preferential Sale of the Wexham Court Parish Council Hall Property from the Asset Disposal List to Jeeyar Educational Trust, UK (JETUK) for the establishment of a Hindu Temple/Hub in Slough"
<b>Chief Officer:</b>	Pat Hayes, Executive Director Property and Housing
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Peter Hopkins, Director Property and Assets Gary Lelliot, Head of Democratic Services
<b>Ward(s):</b>	Wexham Court
<b>Exempt:</b>	No
<b>Appendices:</b>	None

### 1. Summary and Recommendations

- 1.1 This report sets out the details of a Petition titled "Support the Preferential Sale of the Wexham Court Parish Council Hall Property (Asset) from the Asset Disposal List to Jeeyar Educational Trust, UK (JETUK) for the establishment of a Hindu Temple/Hub in Slough", which has been received under the Council's Petitions Scheme.
- 1.2 The petition is before the Council this evening and received a total of 2,551 signatures. An additional 1,276 signatures were received via a paper petition submitted in line with the closing date of this ePetition. This now brings the total amount of signatures to 3,827.
- 1.3 The Council is invited to review and agree its course of action in relation to the petition.

### Recommendations:

Following the debate, the Council is asked to resolve what action it wishes to take with regard to the Petition, noting the service officer's recommendation provided below:

Council recommends that the Executive Director of Regeneration, Housing and Environment

- (i) Acknowledges the petition and informs the Petitioners that due to operational reasons, Wexham Court Parish Council Hall is only available for purchase by Wexham Parish Council.
- (ii) Ensures that the Petitioners are made aware of other assets currently declared Surplus that may suit its requirements and is advised of any sales processes

that the council initiates to demonstrate Best Value in accordance with Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

- (iii) Ensures that any future intended disposal of similar, suitable assets is widely publicised, and specifically includes the Petitioners.
- (iv) Ensures that the Petitioners are made aware of other community buildings owned by the Council that are available for commercial hire.
- (v) Ensures that the Petitioners are made aware of the Council's newly adopted Community Asset Transfer programme and are advised when application procedures have been set up.

## Reasons

Article 17 of the Council's constitution contains the petition scheme. This confirms that where the threshold is met for a Council debate, if the issue is one on which the Council's Executive (Cabinet) is required to make, the final decision the Council will decide is whether to make recommendations to inform that decision. Full Council has no power to direct Cabinet to make a specific decision, but it can make recommendations.

Cabinet is expected to support the above recommendations taking account all relevant information, including this petition.

## Commissioner Review

This report is outside the scope for pre-publication commissioner review; please check the [Commissioners' instruction 5 to CLT to sign off papers](#) for further details.

## 2. Report

- 2.1 This report advises the Council of a Petition – Support the Preferential Sale of the Wexham Court Parish Council Hall Property from the Asset Disposal List to Jeeyar Educational Trust, UK (JETUK) for the establishment of a Hindu Temple/Hub in Slough, which was received by the Council in June 2025.
- 2.2 The Council's Petition Scheme states that if a petition receives 1,500 or more valid signatures, the petition will be debated at a full Council meeting.
- 2.3 The Petition has surpassed the threshold of triggering a debate at full Council and contains **3,827** signatories, comprising of 2,551 collected via an e-petition on the Council's website and 1,276 from a paper version of the petition collated by the Petition Organiser.
- 2.4 The Petition text reads as follows:

"We the undersigned petition the council to consider allocating a preferential sale of the Wexham Court Parish Council Hall property from the Slough Council's Asset Disposal List to Jeeyar Educational Trust UK (JETUK). This initiative aims to contribute to the local community by fostering social cohesion, promoting cultural enrichment, and supporting charitable activities that will benefit residents from all backgrounds. We are the 4th largest community in Slough, with Hindus representing 8% of the total population, according to the latest Census. The larger and suitable property will not only serve the Hindu community but will also enrich the cultural fabric of Slough, further strengthening our borough's commitment to inclusivity and diversity. Establishing a dedicated JETUK Hindu Temple and

community hub will not only serve the spiritual and cultural needs of this community but will also contribute to the broader social and economic development of the area.

For over 14 years, Jeeyar Educational Trust UK, <https://jetuk.org/> (JETUK) has been enhancing human lives through education, service, and ancient wisdom. Below are some of the charitable activities worldwide;

- Distributed essential groceries to international students in UK during the Covid-19
- Recent donations to flood relief & Tsunami Relief in Tamil Nadu, India and Japan
- Donation to Vedic students £35000 for last couple of years and
- Blood donations, walkathons for UK Diabetes & Support to UK Cancer research.

Slough has a significant and growing Hindu population, making it a strategic location with a strong tradition of cultural integration. JETUK has already contributed to the local community through many events. Expanding our presence with a dedicated larger space would further enhance the local community by providing essential spiritual, educational, and charitable services.

We envision a community hub that will:

- Preserve our cultural heritage by celebrating the diversity of our traditions and providing a platform for Hindu festivals from various regions.
- Foster community cohesion by creating a welcoming, inclusive environment where Hindu residents can connect, socialize, and form lasting relationships.
- Empower our youth through educational opportunities, cultural workshops, and leadership programs, helping them grow into confident.

As the standard process for the sale of properties from the Council's Asset Disposal List typically involves competitive bidding, we would like to propose an exception. Given the non-profit nature of JETUK and the valuable community service it provides, we respectfully request that the Council engage in a direct commercial discussion with JETUK on Wexham Court Parish Council Hall based on both the Council's and market assessment of the property, rather than proceeding with a bidding process.

We have a full confidence in the Council's commitment to supporting local communities. Furthermore, we believe that designating Wexham court Parish Council Hall from the Asset Disposal List for JETUK would greatly benefit the broader community.

We appreciate your consideration of this request and thank you in advance for your support."

### **3. Supporting Information for Debate**

3.1 The Petition Organiser has been invited to the Council meeting to speak on the Petition (up to five minutes) and the Petition will then be discussed by Members of the Council for a maximum of 15 minutes. The Mayor has discretion to extend this time taking account of the degree of public interest in the issue, the level of support given to the petition and the number of elected members wishing to express their views on the subject.

3.2 Following this discussion, the Council will need to decide what action to take with regard to the Petition. As this matter relates to an executive function, the Council can only decide whether to make recommendations to Cabinet since it (the Council) has no power to make a decision on an executive function.

3.3 The Scheme indicates that the Council's response to a petition will depend on what a petition asks for and how many people have signed it but may include one or more of the following (for executive functions, these could be formal recommendations to Cabinet).

- Taking the action requested in the Petition.
- Considering the Petition at a Council Meeting.
- Holding an Inquiry.
- Commissioning relevant research.
- Organising a public meeting.
- Mounting a wider public consultation.
- Meeting with the Petition Organiser or representatives of signatories.
- Providing a written response outlining the Council's views on the subject.
- Referring the issue to the Council's Corporate Improvement Scrutiny Committee **OR**
- Referring the issue to the relevant Committee/Cabinet.
- Consulting statutory partners and local service providers.
- Instigating discussions with the voluntary and community sectors; and
- Making representations to Commercial or other Interests.

Assets identified for disposal will prior to sale need to be declared surplus, which has already occurred in the case of this asset.

As a general principle, all disposals should be on commercial terms and demonstrably evidence that the test in Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 is met, namely that the disposal is for best consideration reasonably obtainable. Any decision to dispose of an asset for less than best consideration, with the exception of disposals to comply with statutory obligations, should be approved by Cabinet. In this case the asset is already leased to the local parish council and as a consequence the Council cannot at present unilaterally dispose of the property with vacant possession.

A Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Policy has recently been adopted by the Council that clearly sets out the framework for elected members, council officers and local communities, and provides a consistent and transparent approach to dealing with both applications that can be supported and those applications which are unsuccessful.

#### **4. Implications of the Recommendation**

##### **4.1 Financial Implications**

4.1.1 The Council is required to dispose of its property assets at best consideration reasonably obtainable. It should be noted that the presentation of a such a petition in no way changes that requirement and should infer no financial advantage to any applicant. Should a Special Purchaser situation be determined then this would

require a commensurate premium to market value to be paid, due to the acquisition being non-competitive. Full transparency would also be required.

- 4.1.2 Wexham Court Parish Hall is currently leased to Wexham Parish Council until 2032. If the petition were to be progressed, consideration would need to be given to the costs of lease termination and loss of any income from the Parish Council, plus the need to seek alternative premises for Wexham.
- 4.1.3 Any additional financial implications would need to be considered as part of a full options and financial appraisal report to Cabinet.

#### **4.2 Legal Implications**

- 4.2.1 Slough Borough Council adopted a petition scheme in July 2010. This Petition meets the criteria listed in the [Council's Petition Scheme](#).
- 4.2.2 Under the Council's published Petitions Scheme a Petition that contains 1,500 signatures triggers a debate at Council.
- 4.2.3 Disposal of a property asset is an executive function and therefore reserved to Cabinet. Full Council does not have the power to direct Cabinet to take a particular decision on this matter. Therefore if Full Council is minded to make a recommendation, this should be a recommendation to Cabinet. When making a decision, Cabinet must take account of relevant policies, its legal duties and in particular its duties under s.123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and the financial implications of any decision. Any decision to dispose of an asset at less than best consideration reasonably obtainable is reserved to Cabinet.

#### **4.3 Risk Management Implications**

- 4.3.1 At this stage the only known risks are potentially reputational. As the property is currently leased to the parish council any disposal would be subject to suitable, mutual agreement being reached with them, and other arrangements for accommodation being made. Any further risks, if any, will be assessed when the asset is ready to be disposed, if it is agreed that the asset is to be disposed.

#### **4.4 Environmental implications**

No environmental implications have been identified as a direct result of this report.

#### **4.5 Equality implications**

The Equality Act duties apply to the Council when changing service provision and disposing of assets. The Council has not made final a decision with regards disposing of the asset and to whom, and on what basis, at the time of such decisions, the Equality Act duties will need to be considered.

### **Background Papers**

There are no background papers arising from this report.