

**Committee:** Council

**Date:** Tuesday,  
25 February 2025

**Title:** Former Waste Services Depot, New Street,  
Dunmow, CM6 1BH

**Lead Member:** Councillor Neil Hargreaves, Portfolio Holder for  
Finance and the Economy

**Report Author:** Nicola Wittman, Director of Innovation and  
Commercialisation, 01799 510413

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## Summary

1. This report provides details and update on the marketing of the freehold property known as Former Waste Services Depot, New Street, Dunmow, CM6 1BT and recommends the sale, subject to Planning, to John Catton Homes Ltd in the sum of £1,250,000.

## Recommendation

2. It is recommended that Council approves the sale of the Former Waste Services Depot, New Street, Dunmow, CM6 1BT subject to Planning permission to John Catton Homes Limited in the sum of £1,250,000; and
3. Delegation is given to the Director of Innovation and Commercialisation and the Strategic Director of Finance, Commercialisation and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and the Economy, to complete the sale; and
4. The capital receipt is used to offset future borrowing requirements.

## Financial Implications

5. The Blueprint Uttlesford programme, as approved by Cabinet, assumes the sale proceeds will be used to offset future borrowing requirements. This along with the saving on Business Rates and utilities will provide a contribution of £79,000 per annum to the Blueprint Savings target. This is in addition to the £21,000 per annum saving already identified in utility savings from vacating the site.

## Background Papers

6. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report:

None

## Impact

7.

Communication/Consultation	Dunmow Town Council has been made aware of the planned disposal
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

## Background

8. The site is located off of New Street in Dunmow. It was originally part of the UDC offices and parking (now Livermore Court).



9. The site was previously used by the Environmental Services staff as the base for the southern half of the Waste service. Over the years the site has become less and less suitable for this purpose, it is up a single lane access road that serves a busy doctor's surgery and a large housing estate.
10. As Dunmow grew so the site, probably at one point towards the edge of the town became part of the centre. Having thirty two tonne refuse trucks going up and down New Street several times a day was far from ideal.
11. In 2019 the Council acquired and developed the new single Environmental Services site in Little Canfield. In early 2023 full operation from Little Canfield started and the site in New Street became surplus to requirement.
12. The site is 0.58 acres in size and as can be expected from a former waste services depot, is highly contaminated with significant oil ingressions, diesel fuel tanks that remain buried on site and a part asbestos workshop.



13. The site is on several levels and slopes markedly from the access to the widest part of the site in the bottom left of the photograph above.



14. The former vehicle workshop, as well as being part asbestos has significant contamination from the various works undertaken in it.
15. The rear of the workshop and the tree area adjacent to it provide a boundary to the adjacent cemetery. Because of the slope, the cemetery is much higher than the depot land and the UDC owned retaining wall needs significant work.



16. As part of the Blueprint Uttlesford programme, options for the site were considered. These included
  - a. Alternative public authority use. Options were explored, through the One Public Estate programme, with the NHS, Police, Fire and Essex County Council, however no viable alternative public authority use was identified.
  - b. Rental to generate an income for the Council. The estimated rent was only £30,000 per annum and soft marketing identified no interest.
  - c. Commercial redevelopment by the Council – The level of contamination along with few options for the site meant this was not viable. In addition, the only way in and out is via New Street and therefore the town centre. There is an industrial estate (Hoblongs) adjacent to the depot site but there is a ransom strip preventing access into that road network. The Council tried in the past to acquire the strip but was unsuccessful.
  - d. Sell to the HRA for social housing development – The HRA has a history of buying General Fund assets to develop for social housing (Knights Park in Saffron Walden and currently the former Takeley Day Centre site). However, the HRA would be required to buy the site at open market value and then the costs of decontamination would mean a business case would not add up. The conclusion was that there were better sites for the HRA to use its relatively scarce development funding on.

17. Having evaluated all other options, it was agreed to market the site. A procurement process was undertaken and Lambert Smith Hampton were appointed.
18. The agents advised that due to the nature, shape and location of the site, as well as access being across a Council owned car park, there would be limited interest and the recommended that to maximise interest the site should be marketed without any form of Planning permission. This was agreed acknowledging that, any sale would likely be 'subject to Planning'.
19. At the close of the advertising period there had been two bids. A protracted period of agreeing Heads of Term with the highest bidder then took place, with the discussion concluding on 5 February 2025.
20. The highest bid of £1,250,000 (£1.25 million) was submitted by John Catton Homes Ltd and it is understood that, subject to planning approval, the development will be for a number of mews style homes.
21. As part of the due diligence process the Council has confirmed the financial standing of John Catton Homes Ltd as a suitable counterparty.
22. As the access is through the New Street car park, it has been negotiated that
- either the purchaser or a body agreed by the Council (management company) shall pay a fair and reasonable proportion towards the maintenance of the access road;
  - either the purchaser or a body agreed by the Council (management company) to retain responsibility for any utilities laid, until such time as they may be adopted;
  - the purchaser to repair any damage to the access road caused during construction.

It should be noted that this is the agreement that is in place with the individual owners of the properties in Livermore Court who also use this access road.

23. To protect the Council, given the site is being sold subject to Planning, there is also built into the Heads of Term a longstop date, which will be 18 months from the date of exchange of contracts, which is likely to be early March 2025.

## Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Sale not completing by longstop date	2 – delay in purchaser submitting planning application or delay in	2 – The Council would need to re-advertise	Working with lawyers and others to ensure the process is successful

	Planning process		
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.