

## Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	<b>Children &amp; Young People Policy Development &amp; Scrutiny Panel</b>	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	<b>18<sup>th</sup> September 2018</b>	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	<b>Bath Community Academy Site - Developing Proposals for Future Use</b>	
WARD:	All	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b> Site Plan		

### 1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 On the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018 the Bath Community Academy Site (BCA) was returned to Council ownership following the closure of the Bath Community Academy School and the current 125 year lease to Cabot Learning Federation (CLF) came to an end.
- 1.2 There are currently a number of short term, two year, contracts with a nursery, GLL (Better) operating the sports centre and Bath Spa University that need to be honoured. The income generated by these current leases can provide resources to ensure safe and secure management of the site giving time to develop a long term plan for the future use of the BCA site. There is considerable interest in the future use and development of the site that could benefit the local community.

### 2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the planned use of the site for the next 2 years
- 2.2 To note the proposed options and outline timeline to develop a master plan for the future use of the site

### **3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)**

- 3.1 The resources required to maintain and manage the site will need to be funded from the income generated from site users. The Council will need to ensure caretaking and security of the site is maintained to a high standard until a decision is made about its long term future. We are currently negotiating with site users to establish the best route for caretaking to ensure site security and safety. The rental income from site users and community use will be approximately £175k per annum. A significant portion of the income will need to be used to provide caretaking and security along with continued utilities etc.
- 3.2 The Council has been allocated a grant of £65k from the One Public Estate project to undertake a Master planning exercise and work with local community so that the site meets local community needs. To that end this will require undertaking an initial Site Audit, a Visioning exercise, Master planning whilst at all times maintaining Community Engagement about the future use of the site.

### **4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL**

- 4.1 none

### **5 THE REPORT**

#### **Short Term Usage**

- 5.1 Now that the school has handed the site back to the LA (1st September 2018) the intention is to ensure that the community can continue to use and enjoy the relevant facilities (eg. Nursery, leisure centre) and protect and maintain the asset pending longer term decisions on the future of the site.
- 5.2 There are currently several users renting space on site. The main users are Bath Spa University, Footsteps Nursery, Learn@ academy (alternative education provision) and a number of community groups. Also on site are GLL running a council leisure centre. A site plan is shown as an appendix.
- 5.3 A significant number of community groups currently use the school for a range of activities outside of school hours and at weekend, and where possible it is essential that this community use is maintained. Officers are currently in discussion with site users about the most appropriate caretaking options for the whole site.
- 5.4 Bath Spa University is currently leasing three blocks of the school building directly from the Council for two years. The Income from the lease has been ring fenced to fund the running costs of the site including caretaking, rates, utilities and other such costs where they are not being made the responsibility of the various occupiers.
- 5.5 There is potential to generate small amounts of further income from renting to new users. There has been interest from several organisations and discussions about possible rentals are on-going.

#### **Timescales**

- 5.6 With the current leases in operation (2 years for Bath Spa University) there is a window of opportunity to assess the possible options for the long-term future of the site
- 5.7 Engagement with the community will be planned to ensure the community are involved and feed into the plans for longer term use of the site.

## Future Uses

A number of long term uses could be served by the BCA site as follows:

### A Community Uses

The site currently plays a wider community role distinct from that of the BCA school- i.e. providing a leisure centre, nursery and some educational facilities for other organisations as well as space for community groups running activities outside of school hours.

Any longer term plan will need to consider these uses and whether current site users need to continue using the site.

### B Educational Uses

Whilst the site has hosted a mainstream secondary school for many years, the DFE's Regional Schools Commissioner took the decision to close BCA at the suggestion of the Cabot Learning Federation as they had not been able to make the school financially or educationally viable with so few pupils.

The Council's School Organisation Plan recognises the need for some increase in the secondary school places in the city but there is insufficient demand to justify a new secondary school and the need can be met through the expansion of existing local schools.

There remains some scope for educational use of parts of the site (as there will continue to be from Sept 2018) though it is most likely to be a suitable base for more specialised provision serving a wider need, rather than a local mainstream schooling option.

### C Mixed Use

The site is large enough to support a mix of future users that could include continued community and specific educational uses as set out above if the need exists but could also include public or private office space and residential use.

The council has a duty to ensure that the public finances invested in the site are put to best use. It will need to consider the potential options and potential value of the site under each of the various development options.

An audit of the current uses and condition of the assets on the site will provide greater clarity on potential future uses. Community engagement together with planning advice will help the council shape the masterplan for the site

## Approximate Timelines

Undertake site audit and identify Council and current site user requirements	01/09/2018	30/06/2019
Develop options appraisal	01/07/2019	31/10/2019
Engagement with the local community and other stakeholders	01/09/2018	31/01/2020
Develop Master plan in light of engagement	01/02/2020	30/06/2020
Develop specific and deliverable plans for the future use of the site.	01/07/2020	31/08/2020

## 6 RATIONALE

6.1 The 2 year short term strategy will allow the council time to develop a longer term masterplan for the site. This masterplan will be drawn up to consider a wide range of options for the site

## 7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 None

## 8 CONSULTATION

8.1 To be built into the master planning process as outlined above.

## 9 RISK MANAGEMENT

9.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

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<b>Background papers</b>	
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	

