

## **CABINET**

**Tuesday, 15 July 2025**

Attendance:

Councillors

Cutler  
Cramoysan  
Learney

Porter  
Reach  
Thompson

Apologies for Absence:

Councillors Becker

Members in attendance who spoke at the meeting

Councillors Cook, Godfrey, Laming, Lee and Tippet-Cooper

[Video recording of this meeting](#)

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### 1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillor Becker as noted above.

### 2. **MEMBERSHIP OF CABINET BODIES ETC.**

There were no changes to be made.

### 3. **DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS**

Councillors Tod and Porter declared disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of various items on the agenda due to their role as Hampshire County Councillors. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, they remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Audit and Governance Committee to participate and vote in all matters which might have a County Council involvement.

### 4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Ian Tait spoke regarding reports CAB3466 and CAB3489 and Lucy Taylor spoke regarding report CAB3466, as summarised under the relevant minutes below.

5. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 18 June 2025 be agreed as a correct record.

6. **LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no announcements made.

7. **FUTURE OF FORMER LEISURE CENTRE SITE**  
(CAB3466)

In Councillor Becker's absence, Councillor Tod introduced the report which outlined the background to the current proposals and set out plans to market the site for sale with evaluation criteria at paragraph 11.8 of the report. Initial public consultation on options for its future use had been undertaken with the results summarised in paragraph 6.4 of the report. The proposed plan confirmed that at least two further rounds of consultation would take place.

Ian Tait and Lucy Taylor spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.

Ian Tait

Ian Tait reminded members that he had spoken in support of the previous proposal in 2022 to lease the site to Southampton University and would welcome the use of the site for arts or cultural purposes. However, he believed there had been a lack of progress since and highlighted the negative impact on the area of the old leisure centre building in its current state. He queried what were the results of the earlier consultation which took place in 2022 and believed the latest consultation was inadequate. In general, he would support any new proposal that was deliverable in the area.

Lucy Taylor (Winchester Lido group)

Lucy Taylor highlighted that over 3,000 people had signed the recent petition supporting the provision of a Winchester lido and the council's most recent consultation had indicated a lido was the most suggested option for the site. Lidos were seeing a resurgence in popularity across the country with new lidos being developed in several areas. She highlighted the many benefits for both physical and mental health and also in terms of economic benefits to the area. In summary, she urged the council to work with partners to provide a Winchester lido.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillors Cook, Laming, Lee, Tippet-Cooper and Godfrey addressed Cabinet as summarised briefly below.

Councillor Cook

Councillor Cook made reference to the previous decision by Cabinet on 4 March 2022 to grant a five year option period to Southampton University

(SU). She expressed concern about the fact there was no contract, no legal obligation for SU to apply for planning consent and queried whether SU had been seriously interested in progressing. With regard to the current proposals, she believed the consultation was inadequate, expressed concern about the council entering into an agreement with only one partner again and about any proposal to dispose of existing public car parking spaces.

#### Councillor Lee

Councillor Lee welcomed confirmation that the site was a district asset and asked that future consultations better reflect this by engaging with residents across the district. He supported the use of a brownfield site to meet community requirements, but raised a number of queries and concerns, including the cost to the council of surveys and what options would be available if a viable investment proposal was not forthcoming. He emphasised the sensitive nature of the site and believed that emerging Local Plan new policy NE17 should be regarded as a material consideration, particularly as it was in a flood risk zone and queried the minimum buffer requirements.

#### Councillor Laming

Councillor Laming opposed the proposals for a number of reasons summarised below. He considered it was premature for any decision to be made in advance of the report of the Local Plan examination. He stated that submissions had been made to the Inspector regarding policy W10 contending that the policy failed the National Planning Policy Framework soundness test and took no account of the impact on local traffic. In addition, he believed the policy was inconsistent with the council's climate emergency plan. He highlighted that the site was in a flood risk area and he had concerns that it was not a brownfield site and that little account had been taken of either the historic statutory trust or the vendor's covenant on the land.

#### Councillor Tippet-Cooper

Councillor Tippet-Cooper spoke as a ward councillor and a nearby resident of the site. He highlighted that local residents were excited about redeveloping the area but it was clear that an investment partner was required as the council could not afford to develop on its own. He asked that proposals now proceed without further delay, highlighting that otherwise the potential impact of local government reorganisation would mean a future decision being taken by a larger, more remote unitary authority. He acknowledged that any proposal was unlikely to be supported by everyone, but believed the process proposed offered the best chance to ascertain what was the preferred option and to find a viable proposal with an investment partner.

#### Councillor Godfrey

Councillor Godfrey highlighted that he had expressed concern about the proposed previous agreement with SU and regretted the lack of redevelopment on the site to date. He welcomed the inclusion of best value

consideration in the new proposals but considered the plans placed too many restrictions on prospective investors. He urged the council to dispose of the site as quickly as possible and leave it to the open market to come forward with possible viable options.

Councillor Tod together with the Director of Regeneration responded to the comments made including those relating to the university's previous interest and subsequent withdrawal. Points relating to the Local Plan process and how the emerging plan's policies would be taken into account, together with the extent of the buffer were also clarified. The Director (Legal) also confirmed that the site was owned by the council.

Councillor Tod and other Cabinet Members noted the support for a lido on the site and any viable proposals were encouraged to come forward.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out in the report and outlined above.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the feedback from the resident engagement undertaken in June 2025 be noted.
2. That the recommended approach to market the site for sale and find a new investor be agreed, including agreeing the evaluation criteria as set out in paragraph 11.8 of the report.
3. That resident engagement events take place following the receipt of expressions of interest stage and final bid as part of the on-going and continued commitment to resident and stakeholder engagement.
4. That a budget of £130,000 be approved, financed from the MIR reserve, to fund the costs of marketing the site.
5. That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director with responsibility for the former Leisure Centre site project to market the site and invite bids.
6. That a further report be brought back to Cabinet with recommendation to approve the sale of the site to the preferred bidder.

8. **CORNER HOUSE, NORTH WALLS, WINCHESTER (LESS EXEMPT APPENDIX)**  
(CAB3489)

Councillor Reach introduced the report which requested authorisation to dispose of the Corner House. He outlined the background to the proposal and the reasons for the changed approach, as summarised in the report. He emphasised that, including the Corner House, the council had acquired 43 properties since 2020 and 42 of these had been made available for social or affordable housing.

Ian Tait spoke during public participation as summarised briefly below.

Ian Tait advised that he had spoken previously to raise his concerns about the council's acquisition of the property and the subsequent delays. He believed that there was no proper business case for the acquisition which had been taken quickly in order to prevent the loss of right to buy receipts but had resulted in costs to the council of over £800,000. He highlighted that his understanding of the latest proposal was restricted because he was unable to see the contents of the exempt appendix.

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillors Lee and Godfrey addressed Cabinet as summarised briefly below.

Councillor Lee

Councillor Lee stated that Scrutiny Committee had requested further detail about the Corner House acquisition at its meeting on 1 February 2025 but this had not yet been forthcoming. He requested confirmation that the correct procedures had been followed. He also queried why a leasehold disposal option was being offered as he believed freehold would offer better value.

Councillor Godfrey

Councillor Godfrey expressed concern that the property had remained empty since its acquisition in 2020 at a cost to the council. He also referred to other council owned properties which he considered remained empty for too long. He urged for action to be taken as soon as possible.

Councillor Reach together with the Strategic Director responded to the comments made including confirming that financial viability appraisals had been undertaken prior to the property being acquired and prior to planning permission being applied for which both indicated the scheme would be viable. Councillor Tod advised that he had responded to the queries raised by The Scrutiny Committee.

Cabinet members and invited councillors present confirmed that it was not necessary to go into exempt session to discuss the contents of the exempt appendix.

Cabinet agreed to the following for the reasons set out in the report (including the exempt appendix) and outlined above.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Corporate Head of Asset Management be authorised to dispose of the Corner House, North Walls, Winchester on the open market on a freehold or leasehold basis.
2. That it be noted that the £1.8m Corner House scheme in the capital programme (CAB3490 refers) will be subsumed into the 'Unallocated 1,000 Homes' scheme to increase the investment in other affordable accommodation, subject to authority to spend.

9. **FUTURE ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION BY CABINET**

RESOLVED:

That the list of future items as set out in the Forward Plan for August 2025 be noted.

10. **EXEMPT BUSINESS:**

RESOLVED:

1. That in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

2. That the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items of business because it is likely that, if members of the public were present, there would be disclosure to them of 'exempt information' as defined by Section 100I and Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

<u>Minute Number</u>	<u>Item</u>	<u>Description of Exempt Information</u>
11	Corner House, North Walls (exempt appendix)	) Information relating to the ) financial or business affairs of ) any particular person (including ) the authority holding that ) information). (Para 3 Schedule ) 12A refers)

11. **CORNER HOUSE, NORTH WALLS (EXEMPT APPENDIX)**  
(CAB3489)

RESOLVED:

That the contents of the exempt appendix be noted.

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and concluded at 11.00 am

Chairperson