
EASTBOURNE SCHOOL

**Responsible Cabinet Member – Councillor Chris McEwan,
Efficiency and Resources Portfolio**

Responsible Director – Paul Wildsmith, Director of Corporate Services

SUMMARY REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval to demolish Eastbourne School when it is vacated by the Academy and to seek the release of funding from the Capital MTFP to meet the cost of demolition and associated works.
2. To seek authority to dispose of the whole or parts of the school site for development in due course.

Summary

3. Eastbourne School shown on the **attached plan** is currently occupied by the Academy who, pending completion of the new Academy building at Hundens Park are due to vacate the school in September 2009.
4. In anticipation of the planned vacation, a number of options relating to the future use of the school buildings have been considered including retention, refurbishment and partial demolition but, having regard to the costs of retention and/or refurbishment and the Council's previous experience with trying to keep secure vacated school buildings, early demolition of the whole site excluding the Youth Centre building is considered the best solution.
5. A provision of £400k has been approved in the 2009/10 Capital MTFP for the proposed demolition, which will be financed by Corporate Resources.
6. Following demolition and clearance of the site it would then be available for disposal as a residential development or alternative uses subject to obtaining requisite consent from the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) to dispose of the former school site and subject to planning permission.
7. In the interim the Council will continue to be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the site, the cost of which is estimated to be in the region of £2K per annum to be met from existing resources.

8. A Planning and Development brief is in the process of being prepared and the site will be marketed when favourable conditions prevail.

Recommendation

9. It is recommended that :-
- (a) The former Eastbourne School be declared surplus to the Council's requirements and following vacation by the Academy demolition be approved.
 - (b) The £400k approved in the 2009/10 Capital MTFP for this purpose be released.
 - (c) The Director of Corporate Services be authorised to dispose of the cleared site in line with a Planning and Development Brief when favourable market conditions prevail and in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Efficiency and Resources Portfolio agree terms and complete disposals in due course.
 - (d) The Borough Solicitor be authorised to conclude transactions accordingly.

Reasons

10. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons :-
- (a) Early demolition will minimise the Council's holding and security costs and reduce the Council's exposure to risk through potential damage from vandals and fire.
 - (b) The alternative uses for the buildings are cost prohibitive and in the current economic climate there is little prospect of finding a purchaser for the existing buildings at an attractive price.
 - (c) Disposal of the cleared site when favourable market conditions prevail will generate a capital receipt for the Council.

Background Papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Guy Metcalfe : Extension 2375

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has implications for Crime & Disorder if the building remains empty following vacation.
Health and Well Being	There are no issues relating to Health & Wellbeing which this report needs to address.
Sustainability	There are no issues relating to Sustainability which this report needs to address.
Diversity	There are no issues relating to Diversity which this report needs to address.
Wards Affected	Lingfield.
Groups Affected	The impact of the report on any Group is considered to be minimal.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report does not adversely impact on the Strategy.
Efficiency	Early demolition of the school although requiring capital expenditure in advance will ensure efficiencies are made through not having to secure the buildings, engage ongoing surveillance and attend site pending disposal..

MAIN REPORT

Information and Analysis

11. Eastbourne School is located next to the Eastbourne Sports Complex and Youth Centre, both of which are to be retained and are reliant on shared services with the school.
12. The Academy, who currently occupy Eastbourne School are due to relocate to the new Academy being built at Hundens Park and vacation of Eastbourne School is expected in September 2009.
13. In anticipation of the planned vacation a number of options open to the Council have been considered internally including disposal of the existing school buildings, retention of the buildings; refurbishment for alternative use and demolition of the whole or parts.
14. Based on the Council's previous experience with vacant school buildings and having regard to the current economic conditions, the best option for the Council is the early demolition of the whole school excluding the Youth Centre building and clearance of the site.
15. Because the site is likely to remain undeveloped for a number of years subject to the return of favourable development market conditions, it is proposed that the demolition also includes for the grubbing up of the floor slabs, foundations and hard court areas, and then soiling and seeding. The cost of grubbing up and soil and seeding was not accounted for in the original estimate and a request for additional funding may need to be considered after the demolition contract has been tendered.
16. This proposal to seed the site will lead to an ongoing maintenance obligation but should provide a tidier and more manageable solution together with the added benefit of additional open space for recreational use pending disposal and/or alternative uses.
17. The cost of the future maintenance of the site as grassed recreational area is estimated to be in the region of £2K per annum and is considered capable of being met from existing resources.
18. It is proposed that the Eastbourne Sports Complex will be able to manage the additional recreational space in the interim.

Possible Playing Pitch Requirements

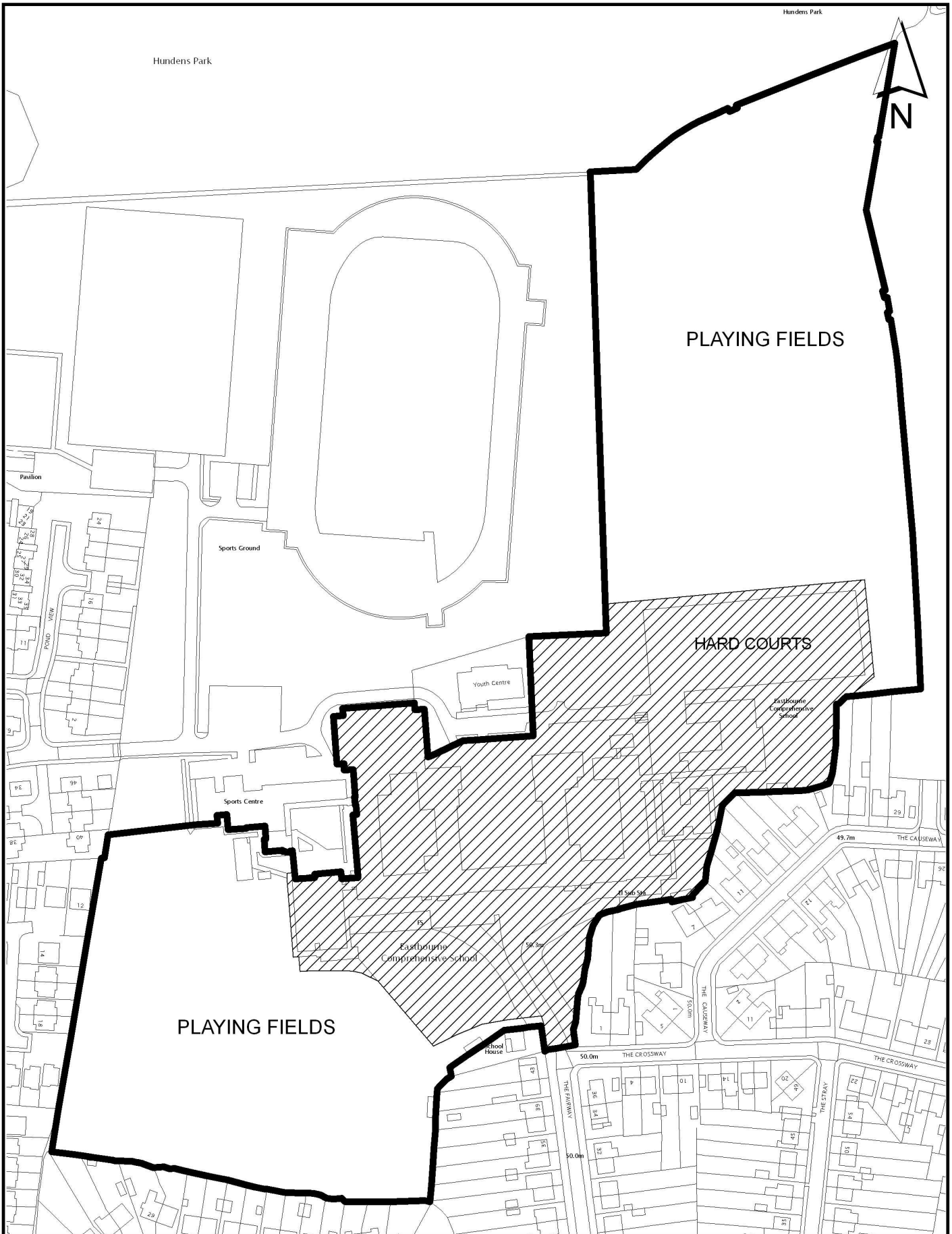
19. The recent playing pitch Strategy has identified that Darlington has a shortfall in playing fields. Also, there is a requirement by Sport England for the Council to provide playing fields to replace those taken by the development of Hundens Park for the Academy.
20. A number of possible sites have been considered and discussions with Sport England are ongoing.
21. In addition to the above pitch requirements, the Council are also assisting the University of Teesside and Darlington College trying to identify land which may be utilised as playing pitches to replace the college's existing pitches at Central Park which will be lost if the proposed University of Teesside development proceeds.

22. Again, discussions are ongoing with Darlington College and Sport England about potential suitable replacements and parts of the Eastbourne School site may be considered desirable.
23. A report on the issue of playing field replacement for the Academy and Darlington College is due to be submitted to Cabinet in due course.

Outcome of Consultation

24. Following discussion with the Cabinet Member for Efficiency and Resources Portfolio and the Ward Councillors it is proposed that subject to approval by Cabinet local residents be advised of the Council's decision.
25. Going forward local residents will then be consulted as part of any future planning application process.

APPENDIX 1



DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
CORPORATE SERVICES DEPT.
TOWN HALL, FEETHAMS
DARLINGTON
Co. DURHAM
DL1 5QT

Project Title: **EASTBOURNE SCHOOL SITE**
Drawing Title: **PROPOSED DEMOLITION**

Scale: 1 : 2000	Ref:
Date: 05/05/09	Area:
Drawn: RMH	

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