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**POTENTIAL DEVELOPMENT SITES AT FEETHAMS AND BEAUMONT STREET**

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**Responsible Cabinet Member - Councillor Stephen Harker**  
**Efficiency and Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Director – Ian Williams, Director of Economic Growth**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To declare areas of Council owned land at Feethams and Beaumont Street surplus to requirements and to seek approval to market and subsequently dispose of the sites for development.

**Summary**

2. In March 2015, Cabinet approved the purchase of the parcel of land at the corner of Feethams and Houndgate. This was duly acquired and is now used in part as an extension to the Beaumont Street pay and display car park,
3. On completion of the new Multi Storey Car Park, the surface car parking on Beaumont Street will cease and Site 1 shown on the attached plan (**Appendix 1**) will be surplus to operational requirements.
4. Once vacant it is proposed that Site 1 be made secure and screened through the use of re-cycled perimeter hoardings which in the interim will improve the appearance and promote the site for potential development.
5. The other surface car park at Beaumont Street West, referred to as Site 2 and shown on Appendix 1, is currently used for contract parking.
6. As and when Site 2 is no longer required for contract parking it will become surplus to the Council's operational requirements and available for potential development.
7. Additionally, there is another parcel of Council owned land situated between the DFE office building and the Leisure development referred to as Site 3 and shown on Appendix 1.
8. This site was originally earmarked as the "Green box" for a possible creative/cultural venue in conjunction with the Leisure scheme but it was later taken out and the site remains surplus to requirements. Given its proximity to both

schemes and overlooking the “riverside”, it is seen as a potential development plot.

9. It is anticipated that all three sites will be of interest to developers and in line with the Feethams Brief it is proposed that the sites be made available to the market at the appropriate time with a view to securing complementary development.

### Recommendation

10. It is recommended that :-

- (a) Sites 1, 2 and 3 as shown on Appendix 1 be declared surplus to requirements.
- (b) The Director of Economic Growth, in consultation with the Efficiency and Resources Portfolio Holder, be authorised to market the sites at the appropriate time and subsequently dispose of them for development.

### Reasons

11. The recommendations are supported to bring Council owned land forward at the appropriate time for potential development and to generate a capital receipt

**Ian Williams**  
**Director of Economic Growth**

### Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report

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|----------------------------------|--|
| S17 Crime and Disorder           | There are no crime and disorder implications.  |
| Health and Well Being            | The visual appearance of the site is currently poor and by acquiring the site it will provide the Council the opportunity to tidy it up.             |
| Carbon Impact                    | There are no carbon impact implications in this report.  |
| Diversity                        | The recommendation does not have any specific diversity implications   |
| Wards Affected                   | Central  |
| Groups Affected                  | There are no groups adversely affected.  |
| Budget and Policy Framework      | This decision does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework   |
| Key Decision                     | This is considered a Key Decision.   |
| Urgent Decision                  | This is not an Urgent Decision.  |
| One Darlington: Perfectly Placed | The recommendation will help to achieve the Perfectly Placed priority by facilitating potential development and generating economic growth.          |
| Efficiency                       | Declaring the sites surplus and subsequently disposing of the sites will provide a capital receipt and also remove an ongoing maintenance liability. |

## MAIN REPORT

### Background

12. The Feethams Brief was adopted by the Council in 2008. This brief sets out the following objectives for Feethams:-
  - (a) Provision of uses which substantially raise the level of attraction in the town centre and drawing more people to the town centre;
  - (b) Provision of uses which draw people across town, providing footfall past the indoor market and market square, helping rebalance the town centre in context of major redevelopment proposals for Commercial Street to the north;
  - (c) Delivery of a development that cherishes and respects the key environmental features such as St Cuthbert's Church, the River Skerne, the Conservation Area and Listed Buildings;
  - (d) Creation of good pedestrian and cycle links;
  - (e) Outstanding design quality which creates an impressive gateway to this part of Darlington; and
  - (f) Attract new businesses to the town with higher wage employment.
13. The activity in the Feethams area over the past two years, including the completion of the DfE offices, the bus and coach improvements to Feethams and the commencement of the Feethams Leisure development and Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) have made a significant contribution towards the realisation of these objectives.
14. There are three sites with development potential remaining in the Feethams area which are all in the Council's ownership. It is intended that these will be released to the market at the appropriate time and developed in a manner which will compliment and further achieve the objectives of the Feethams Brief. The primary uses will be commercial in their nature, providing in the region of 10,000 sq.m. of floor space.
15. In March 2015, Cabinet approved the purchase of the parcel of land at the corner of Feethams and Houndgate. This was duly acquired and is now used in part as an extension to the Beaumont Street pay and display car park.
16. On completion of the new Multi Storey Car Park, the surface car parking on Beaumont Street will cease and Site 1 shown on Appendix 1 will be surplus to operational requirements.
17. Once vacant it is proposed that Site 1 be made secure and screened through the use of re-cycled perimeter hoardings which in the interim will improve the appearance and promote the site for potential development.

18. The other surface car park at Beaumont Street West, referred to as Site 2 and shown on Appendix 1, is currently used for contract parking.
19. As and when the site is no longer required for contract parking or the parking transfers to the Multi Storey Car Park, it will become surplus to operational requirements and available for potential development.
20. Additionally, there is another parcel of Council owned land situated between the DFE office building and the Leisure development referred to as Site 3 and shown on Appendix 1.
21. This site was originally earmarked as the "Green box" for a possible creative/cultural venue in conjunction with the Leisure scheme but it was later taken out and the site remains surplus to requirements. Given its proximity to both schemes and overlooking the "riverside", it is seen as a potential development plot.
22. It is anticipated that all three sites will be of interest to developers and in line with the Feethams Brief it is proposed that the sites be made available to the market at the appropriate time with a view to securing complementary development.
23. The strategy for marketing the sites is to bring Site 1 to the market first, most likely in Spring 2016 when the MSCP is open and the Leisure scheme is further advanced. However, depending on the level of developer interest it may be appropriate to keep the site available until after the Leisure scheme is open and rental/investment levels are firmly established.
24. The availability of Site 2 is subject to its use as contract parking being resolved and marketing will follow accordingly. The potential of Site 3 will become more visible and identifiable when the landscaping to the Leisure Scheme and Riverside is in place towards the summer of 2016.
25. By declaring the sites surplus and making them available for potential development should facilitate comprehensive complimentary development opportunities and generate financial benefits for the Council and the Borough.

### **Financial Implications**

26. Following completion of the new MSCP it is expected that there will be sufficient parking capacity created to offset the loss of parking spaces income due to the closure of both the Beaumont Street car parks.
27. The costs of the marketing and sale of the surplus property will be met from the capital receipt. The remainder of the final capital receipt will be available to meet the strategic needs of the council.

### **Legal Implications**

28. The Council is under a legal duty to achieve best consideration that can reasonably be obtained in disposing of the sites in accordance with S123 Local Government Act 1972.

## **Asset Management**

29. Declaring the sites surplus and making them available to the market at the appropriate time should facilitate comprehensive complimentary development opportunities and generate financial benefits for the Council and the Borough.

## **Consultations**

30. There has been no external consultation in respect of these sites being declared surplus to operational requirements and as the sites come forward for development there will be an opportunity for public consultation as part of the planning application process.