

Date: October 2024

**Subject: The disposal of Old Forde House**

Dear Members of Newton Abbot Town Council,

Officers are going to present a paper to Full Council on October 29<sup>th</sup> asking Members to agree to the disposal of Old Forde House

As you will know, it is a Grade I listed building which the Council has previously let out in part as office space to other organisations and is used for meetings and lets for weddings. Use for public events has been restricted as the building does not meet the Disability Discrimination Act in terms of accessibility. Furthermore, since the Council has refurbished the Forde House offices and introduced hybrid working, there is significantly less demand for the rooms to be used by officers as meeting space.

Officers say the building and upkeep of grounds is a net cost to the Council of £120,000 per annum and the building will require significant amounts of capital expenditure to maintain it going forward. Given this, officers are recommending we should dispose of the building and if sold/transferred this will release a £120,000 per annum revenue saving.

There are 2 potential options for disposal dependent upon the requirements of any potential purchaser (with or without the walled car park) and the potential receipt that could be raised. Old Forde House has been accepted as an asset of community value and there will therefore be an exclusivity period where groups can work together to develop a bid.

Officers have outlined the formal next steps below, if they are granted permission to proceed.

The effect of the listing means that if the Council intends to sell the asset the Council's Spatial Planning and Delivery Service must be notified by way of a Section 95 Notice.

This triggers what is known as the Interim Moratorium Period. This lasts for a period of 6 weeks. Local Land Charges will contact the asset nominee in writing and publish the Council's intention to dispose of the asset locally and on its website etc so that any relevant community interest groups can consider whether they would like to place a bid for the asset.

If a relevant community and voluntary group requests to be considered as a bidder, what is known as the Full Moratorium Period is launched, enabling the group to develop an offer to purchase. This lasts for a period of 6 months (which includes the 6-week Interim Moratorium as detailed above).

At the end of the Full Moratorium Period, or if no expression of interest is received from a legitimate community and voluntary group at the Interim Moratorium stage, the Council is free to dispose of its asset on the open market. If the Council does not dispose of the asset within 18 months of the date when it first gave notification of its intention to do so, the sale process will begin again.

The documents regarding the disposal are online and the meeting takes place on October 29th. I look forward to hearing from you regarding the matter.

Yours sincerely

Cllr David Palethorpe

Deputy Leader, Teignbridge District Council  
Executive Member for Estates, Assets, Parking, Economic Development, FHSF and  
Communication