

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 16 December 2025

Wards affected: Various

Report Title: Disposal of Surplus Assets

When does the decision need to be implemented? As soon as possible.

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Cllr Chris Lewis, Cabinet Member for Place Development and Economic Growth. chris.lewis@torbay.gov.uk

Director Contact Details: Malcolm Coe, Director of Finance. malcolm.coe@torbay.gov.uk

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. Torbay Council's Asset Management Strategy provides an overview of the Council's land and property estate and identifies the main priorities for managing and developing the estate, including the disposal of surplus assets. The Strategy defines surplus assets as those assets that have been declared surplus to our commercial and/or operational requirement. Often these assets are close to or beyond useful economic life and should be considered for disposal to release the value so the capital can be re-invested elsewhere across the estate.
- 1.2. The Estates Team has prepared a list of property assets which meet this criterion for disposal. The list and type of assets are varied and the potential capital receipts per disposal may exceed the levels that are delegated to the Director of Finance in the Council's Scheme of Delegation. The team can deploy a range of disposal methods, and it is important to obtain approval from Cabinet to proceed prior to instructing a local commercial agent to deal with individual assets. This will avoid unnecessary cost and the abortive use of resources going forward.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1. The proposal to dispose of surplus assets will help deliver our vision of a healthy, happy, and prosperous Torbay by reducing the level of surplus assets held by the Council. When considering individual assets for disposal we have taken account of the holding cost of retaining an asset which includes physically managing and visiting each site regularly, extent of backlog repairs and maintenance, security and insurance whilst ensuring the property remains safe and compliant.
- 2.2.1 The reasons for the proposal, and need for the decision are, multi-levelled. We are aware many of these identified assets are situated in the community and have lain empty and unused for some time. Frequent site inspections are necessary. Disposing of assets will

have an immediate impact by reducing the cost and necessity for staff and resources to be deployed to manage these properties. On disposal, these sites will be repurposed and brought back into beneficial use by the individual purchasers. The Council will also receive a capital receipt which will be recycled for the repair and maintenance of the remaining estate. We recognise the detrimental impact of holding assets empty for prolonged periods of time and how this can generate anti-social behaviour and negative social impact. Releasing these assets will help to deliver our vision of a healthy, happy, and prosperous Torbay by making more of our assets and giving residents the opportunity to use these in a productive way.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

- 3.1. That the Director of Finance be authorised to dispose of the freehold interest of the land and buildings listed in Appendix 1 on suitably agreed terms, adopting the most appropriate methods of disposal, to be determined by Strategic Head of Asset Management, following an adequate period of marketing on each individual asset.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1: Disposal Schedule – September 2025

5. Background Documents

N/A

Supporting Information

6. Introduction

- 6.1 Torbay Council Strategic Asset Management Plan sets out the Council's approach to the strategic management of its assets, how it will support service delivery, provide the Council with income and how it will fulfil its mission to support, enable and empower its residents, our communities and our partnerships, to promote growth and place shaping within Torbay.
- 6.2 An identified principle of Strategic Asset Management Plan is at regular intervals to review all non-operational and surplus assets to identify opportunities to create or increase revenue income, provide investment opportunities or deliver capital receipts to stimulate development, growth and reinvestment. To this end a disposal schedule of under-performing assets which provide a low return, are non-strategic and are at the end of the economic life has been created.
- 6.3 The disposal schedule identifies 15 assets. In disposing of an asset, it is important to ensure the best outcome is achieved and the following has been taken into consideration:
- Holding costs of any surplus assets if to be retained to include staff costs managing the asset, visiting the asset for insurance purposes, dealing with backlog repairs,

maintenance and improvements to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and fully compliant.

- Running costs for under-utilised assets.
- Service requirements across the Council.
- Achieving best value.
- Loss of revenue from any income producing assets if sold.
- Detrimental impact on the local area from holding assets empty for prolonged periods, ASB and associated social impact.
- Reputational and safety issues around holding long term vacant assets.

- 6.4 Of those assets listed for freehold disposal, several have been identified as benefiting from a planning brief to support the process, to attract interest from developers and to maximise receipts without further investment in the asset or expenditure associated with obtaining planning consent. The Planning Department are working on these briefs currently.
- 6.5 In the last 18 months 4 assets have been disposed of generating capital receipts for the Council. For several reasons and competing priorities, further disposals have not been progressed as envisaged.
- 6.6 The Estates Team has therefore engaged a local agent to provide informal and initial advice on the most appropriate method of disposal, whether that is Private Treaty, Informal Tender, Auction, and packaging up the assets for disposal. Given the nature of many of the assets it is likely that disposal of groups of assets by auction is the most advantageous approach for the Council.
- 6.7 Set out in the schedule is a proposed delivery programme for disposal of tranches of assets. Tranche 1 which will occur between December 2025, and March 2026 will primarily see the grouping of assets to be auctioned via a single local auction event. This will create a marketing opportunity in that there will be a greater ground swell of 'combined catalogue' interest than if each lot were to be placed into a regional or online auction amongst other remote, unconnected properties.
- 6.8 Tranche 2 will see disposal of assets that require planning briefs and are likely to be sold via informal tender, with tranche 3 disposed of via private treaty or informal tender.
- 6.9 The timing and disposal method deployed are not fixed and will be informed by discussion with the appointed agent and known interest in any given asset. Disposal priorities and objectives will require agreement to finalise the tranches - certain assets will benefit from speed and simplicity of disposal, whereas others will have the potential for greater capital receipt with the benefit of a planning brief and further pre-marketing due diligence.

7. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 7.1. The Council's Asset Management Strategy makes specific that the Council will 'always seek to maximise the full market receipt for their assets whether by way of freehold disposal or

leasehold interest'. Disposing of assets following a suitable period of marketing will ensure that best value is established and obtained, meeting that requirement.

- 7.2. The Council is not under any obligation to dispose of any given asset. However, the Council's ongoing management and cost of holding these assets is significant. Disposing of the assets listed will remove this liability and generate a capital receipt.
- 7.3. To facilitate the disposal of assets an external, local agent will be appointed. Given the asset types it is likely that interest in the vast majority will predominantly be at a local level rather than regional or national level. Given this the appointment of an agent with knowledge and expertise in the local area to assist is paramount. We are therefore proposing to appoint a local agent to act as commercial agent in progressing the disposals.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1. There are no legal implications anticipated with these disposals. Disposing of these assets will need to be documented, along with the preparation of legal packs to support a sale. These disposals will be dealt with in the first instance by the Council's Legal Property Team where capacity allows, otherwise it will be outsourced.

9. Engagement and Consultation

- 9.1. The list of assets identified for disposal has been circulated and discussed. Following those discussions and representations the list has been refined. There has however been no formal consultation or engagement undertaken.

10. Procurement Implications

- 10.1. The Procurement Team has been engaged on the appointment of the local commercial property agent. No other procurement implications identified.

11. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

- 11.1. Through disposing of surplus assets which are close to or beyond economic life, these sites will be repurposed and brought back into beneficial use by the individual purchasers. The Council will also receive a capital receipt which will be recycled for the repair and maintenance of the remaining estate.

12. Associated Risks

- 12.1. Not disposing of assets beyond economic life in a timely manner results in additional and unnecessary cost and resources that could be deployed elsewhere across the Council's estate. Reducing the Council's backlog repair and maintenance liability is essential and disposing of these assets will have a positive impact in this regard.

13. Equality Impact Assessment

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	<p>18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old.</p> <p>55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old.</p> <p>27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.</p>	<p>Improve community engagement with opportunities for the wider community of all ages.</p>		
Carers	<p>At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.</p>	<p>No differential impact specific to this group</p>		
Disability	<p>In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by</p>	<p>No differential impact specific to this group</p>		

	a physical or mental health condition or illness.			
Gender reassignment	In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.	No differential impact specific to this group		
Marriage and civil partnership	Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.	No differential impact specific to this group		
Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	No differential impact specific to this group		

Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.	No differential impact specific to this group		
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	No differential impact specific to this group		
Sex	51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male	No differential impact specific to this group		
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.	No differential impact specific to this group		
Armed Forces Community	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay,	No differential impact specific to this group		

	5.9 per cent of the population have previously served in the UK armed forces.			
Additional considerations				
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)		Potential to improve community engagement.		
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)		N/A		
Human Rights impacts		N/A		
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council, and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced children and young people.	No differential impact specific to this group		

14. Cumulative Council Impact

14.1. None

15. Cumulative Community Impacts

15.1. None