

## ***Report to the Cabinet***

***Report reference: C/076/2006-07.***

***Date of meeting: 13 November 2006.***



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio: Leader of the Council.**

**Subject: Merlin Way, North Weald – Industrial Development Land Sale.**

**Officer contact for further information: Michael Shorten (01992 - 56 4124).**

**Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 - 56 4470).**

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### **Recommendations:**

**(1) That a planning application be submitted for Class B1 (offices/light industrial) and Class B8 (warehouse/distribution) uses on land adjoining Hangar 3, Merlin Way, North Weald;**

**(2) That, upon the grant of the above planning permission and completion of the appropriate surveys and property information pack, the site be offered for sale on the open market by the invitation of best offers for the freehold interest;**

**(3) That an allocation of £20,000 be made from the General Capital Contingency to fund initially an environmental assessment, ground conditions investigations, planning consultancy and other necessary site reports, such that if the site is ultimately disposed of all costs incurred in this process be off-set against the capital receipt arising; and**

**(4) That a further report be submitted to the Cabinet on the developers' offers and schemes upon completion of the marketing exercise.**

### **Report:**

1. Following the successful disposal of the former Parade Ground Site, Merlin Way, North Weald for a housing scheme and in accordance with the Council's Asset Management Plan Programme for the disposal of surplus land, the last remaining plot on the industrial estate is being prepared for sale. This plot, adjoining Hangar 3, comprising an area of about 0.88 acre/0.36 hectares (see attached plan), is zoned in the Local Plan for employment generating development and is not considered to be suitable for residential use. Planning restrictions on the hours of working apply to the Booker warehouse and taking into account the close proximity of the residential properties it is likely that similar restrictions will apply to this vacant plot. More particularly, planning officers advise that planning permission will be recommended on the following basis:

(a) Class B1 (offices/light industrial), or Class B8 (storage or distribution). Class B2 (general industry) is not considered appropriate;

(b) vehicular access to the site will be via Merlin Way only on the northern side of the site;

(c) no outside working or storage;

- (d) no working or service deliveries outside 7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. Monday to Friday and 8.00 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. on Saturday;
- (e) maximum car parking: Class B8 – one space per 150 square metres, Class B1 – one space per 30 square metres;
- (f) transport assessment and travel plan for employees;
- (g) implementation of any decontamination measures shown to be necessary by prior study.

2. The approval of the Cabinet is sought for the proposed planning application, preparatory sale work, budget allocation and marketing exercise.

**Statement In Support Of Recommended Action:**

3. The proposed sale, in accordance with good practice guidelines and the Council's Asset Management Plan land sale programme, will achieve development of vacant land declared surplus to requirements and raise a valuable capital receipt.

**Other Options For Action:**

4. To retain the site pending later disposal or allocation for an alternative use or development.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

5. Consultation with Planning Services on the development possibilities for the site. An outline planning application for the proposed development will be publicly advertised.

6. Proposed sale included in the Cabinet's Forward Plan.

**Resource Implications:**

**Budget Provision:** Capital receipt from the sale of industrial development land.

**Personnel:** Valuation and Estate Management service, planning consultant and marketing agent.

**Land:** Industrial development land (0.88 acre/0.36 hectares), Merlin Way, North Weald.

**Community Plan/BVPP Reference:** FPM1 – Maximise income/capital receipt.

**Relevant Statutory Powers:** Section 123 Local Government Act 1972 – best consideration for land and property assets.

**Background Papers:** Property File EV/2426.

**Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:** N/A.

**Key Decision reference (if required):** N/A.