

## **Cabinet – 12 April 2006**

### **Site of Redhouse JMI School, Gorsey Way, Aldridge**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Eddie Hughes, Children's Services  
Councillor John O'Hare, Resources

**Service Area:** Asset Management

**Wards:** Aldridge Central and South

**Forward Plan:** No

#### **Summary of report**

Following the site being declared surplus to Education requirements, it is necessary to apply to the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) for consent before the Council can dispose, or change the use, of school playing fields. Prior to any application, there is a requirement to consult with local schools and the local community on local schools' needs for playing fields, any wider community use of the playing fields and the use of the anticipated sale proceeds that can be attributed to the school's playing fields.

#### **Recommendation**

That Cabinet delegate to relevant Executive Directors in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council authority to develop proposals for consultation on the use of the proceeds that can be attributed to the sale of the playing fields at Redhouse JMI School.

#### **Resource and legal considerations**

At its meeting on 1 March 2006, Cabinet received a report from Education Walsall on a number of school sites, including Redhouse JMI, and decided that:

- i. The site be declared surplus to requirements;
- ii. Legal Services be directed to begin application to the DfES for reuse of the school playing fields.

Prior to any application to the DfES, it is necessary to carry out consultations with local schools and the local community on local schools' needs for playing fields, any wider community use of the subject playing fields and the use of the anticipated sale proceeds that can be attributed to the school's playing fields. This consultation requires to be a minimum of 10 term-time weeks and the outcome of the consultations requires to be included in the application to the DfES.

In order to achieve a disposal of the school site during the financial year 2006/2007, it is necessary that these consultations are concluded prior to the end of the school year. This is due to the fact that the DfES aims to give a decision within 16 weeks of receipt of the application. It is upon receipt of this consent that the Council can commence marketing the site.

As such, the consultation requires to be commenced no later than Monday 8 May 2006. As mentioned above, part of the consultation requires the Council to advise of its intended use of the proceeds that can be attributed to the sale of the playing fields.

The criteria set out by the DfES requires the proceeds from the sale of school playing fields to be applied to enhance or improve outdoor sports or leisure facilities at or for other local schools. Otherwise the proceeds should be used to enhance or improve indoor sports or leisure facilities at or for other local schools. Exceptionally, where the proceeds are not to be used for sports or leisure facilities, the proceeds may be re-invested to enhance or improve educational facilities at other schools within the authority's control, particularly schools in the local area.

Work is currently being carried out by Education Walsall and the Sports Development Team within Leisure, Culture and Lifelong Learning on the most appropriate use of the proceeds, based on the criteria set out by the DfES.

#### **Citizen impact:**

The sale will enable resources to be more effectively focused on raising the quality of outdoor and/or indoor sports and leisure facilities and/or other educational facilities.

#### **Community safety**

It will be necessary to keep the length of time that the school is vacant as short as possible, in order to keep vandalism and anti-social behaviour on the site to a minimum.

#### **Environmental impact**

The sale will lead to a high quality residential development on the site.

#### **Performance and risk management issues**

The sale will assist the Council in achieving its Capital Receipt target for the financial year 2006/2007.

#### **Equality implications**

It is likely that there will require to be an amount of affordable housing provided as part of the development.

## Consultation

There has been, and will continue to be, consultation with Education Walsall and the Sports Development Team within Leisure, Culture and Lifelong Learning regarding the use of the proceeds.

## Vision 2008

The use of the funds for outdoor/indoor sports and leisure facilities or other educational facilities will contribute to the delivery of Walsall's Vision, Section 4 Make Our Schools Great.

## Background papers

None.

## Contact officer

Steve Pugh  
Principal Property Surveyor  
☎ 01922 652034  
✉ pughs@walsall.gov.uk



**Signed:**  
**Executive Director: Jamie Morris**

**Date:** 4 April 2006



**Signed:**  
**Portfolio Holder: Councillor J G O'Hare**

**Date:** 4 April 2006



**Signed:**  
**Executive Director: David Brown**

**Date:** 4 April 2006



**Signed:**  
**Portfolio Holder: Councillor E F Hughes**

**Date:** 4 April 2006