

CABINET

9 NOVEMBER 2010

DISPOSAL OF 78 WOODLANDS ROAD GILLINGHAM

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alan Jarrett, Finance

Report from: Deborah Upton, Assistant Director Housing and Corporate Services

Author: Noel Filmer, Valuation and Asset Management Manager

Summary

This report requests that Cabinet declares the above property surplus, so that it can be disposed of for best consideration.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1. As the value of the property is above £100,000, but will be below £1,000,000, this is a matter for Cabinet.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council owns in excess of 1,000 property assets and, next to staff, property is the Council's largest single cost. Effective management is therefore essential, if the Council is to fulfill its core objectives and provide good quality, value for money services. On 4 April 2006, Cabinet approved the Corporate Property Strategy, which provides corporate guidance to assist in the effective management of the Council's property assets over the next five years and beyond.
- 2.2 To ensure that the Council's property assets contribute to the council's priorities, outcomes, objectives and key actions as set out within the Council Plan, all properties are considered in the context of rationalisation.
- 2.3 This report brings forward proposals to dispose of a property, which is considered to be surplus to requirements.

3. The Cemetery Lodge and mess room at Woodlands Cemetery 78 Woodlands Road Gillingham

- 3.1. The Council owns the freehold of the above site as shown approximately edged black on the attached plan. The site has an area of approximately 0.05 Hectares (0.12 acres). The site includes a Cemetery Lodge and office. The office is used daily but can be located at minimal cost within a nearby messroom. The Lodge was occupied until recently by a tenant who acted as a cemetery gate keeper; he has now died leaving the Lodge vacant. If the site is declared surplus, then it is proposed that the Council will seek to obtain planning consent for a new vehicular access to the site from Woodlands Road, so that the access to the site can be separated from the access to the Cemetery.

4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1 This property can either be retained or sold. If it is sold, a capital receipt will be obtained, which the Council can use towards funding service priorities/reducing debt and the disposal will also hopefully result in further investment in the Medway area. It is no longer bereavement services policy to re-let cemetery lodges to service tenants when they become vacant. So if the property is retained, it is likely to remain empty, as the cost of bringing the property up to a standard so that it can be let as a council house is thought to be prohibitive when compared to the rental income, which could be generated.

5. Risk Management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk
The property will remain vacant and become expensive and difficult to manage.	The empty property may attract vandalism and antisocial behaviour. Thus reducing the value of the property.	Regular inspections of the property and offer for sale by auction as soon as consent is obtained for the new access.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Consultation has taken place with the service directorate and the relevant Portfolio Holders and no objections to this disposal have been received.

7. Financial and legal implications

- 7.1 The Council has a duty under s123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to obtain best consideration, when it disposes of property, unless consent is obtained from the Secretary of State, or one of the general

consents applies. The Council will need to ensure that any land to be sold with the lodge is not consecrated ground.

- 7.2 There will be some costs involved in obtaining planning consent for the new access, relocating the office to the mess room and separating any existing services, these costs are unlikely to exceed more than £5000 and will be funded from the capital receipt.

8. Recommendations

- 8.1 It is recommended that the site of the lodge/office at 78 Woodlands Road Gillingham, (as shown approximately edged black on the attached plan) be declared surplus and the Assistant Director of Housing and Corporate Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, be given delegated authority to dispose of it at best consideration.

9. Suggested reasons for decision(s)

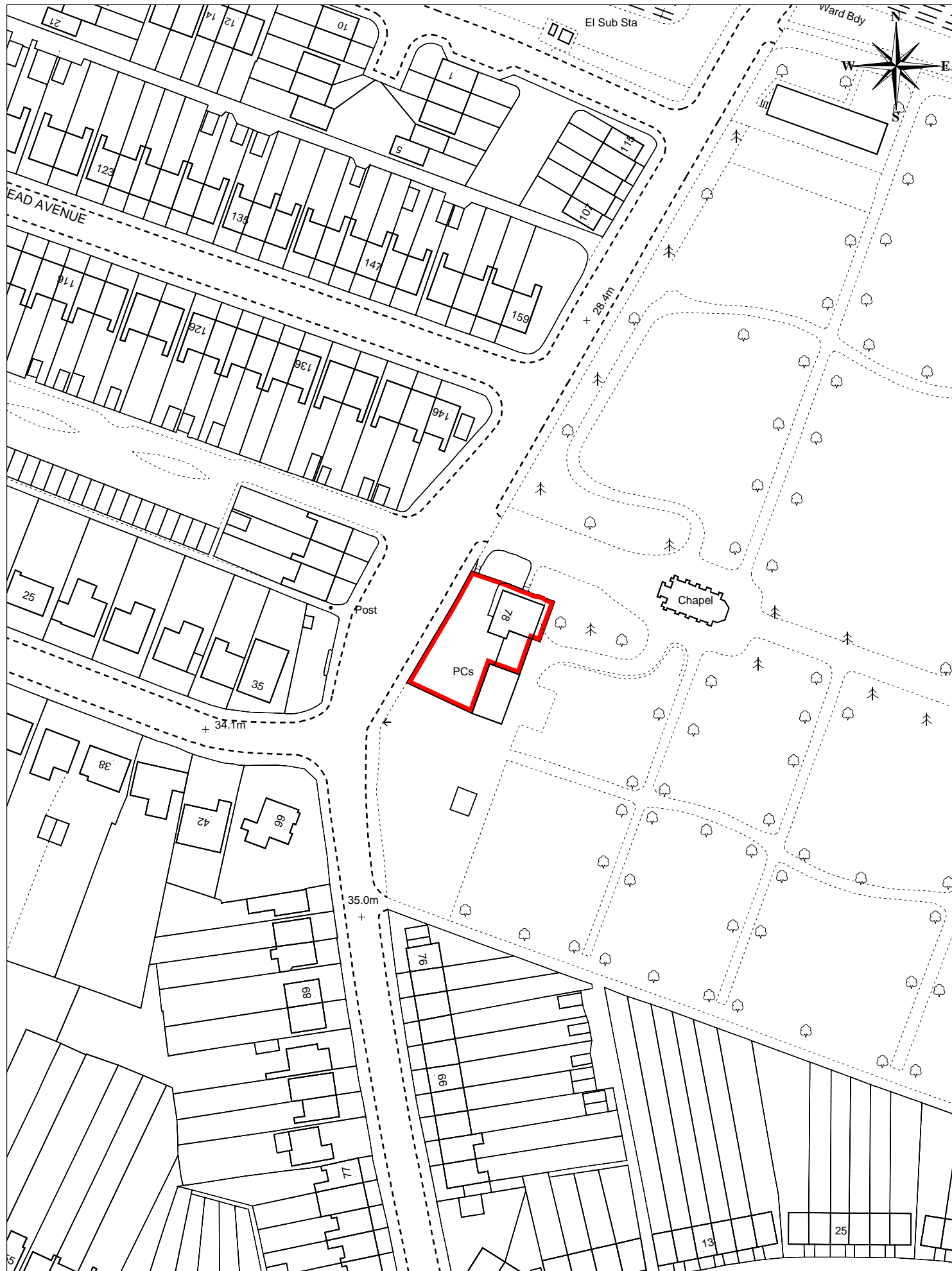
- 9.1 Cabinet is requested to declare the property surplus in order to reduce revenue costs, realise a capital receipt and gain investment in the Medway area.

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Background Papers:

Corporate Property Strategy, approved by Cabinet on 4 April 2006.



Cemetery Lodge - 78 Woodlands Road Gillingham