

From: Rebecca Spore, Director of Infrastructure
To: Brian Collins, Deputy Leader – 28 July 2025
Subject: Freehold Disposal of Sevenoaks Adult Education Centre, Hatton House, Bradbourne Road, TN13 3QN.

Decision no: 25/00049

Key Decision: *Yes, the decision involves expenditure or savings of maximum £1m.*

Classification: **Unrestricted report with exempt appendix D**, *not for publication under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).*

Future Pathway of report: Cabinet Member Decision

Electoral Division: Sevenoaks Town - Richard Streatfeild (Liberal Democrats).

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: This report considers the proposed disposal of Sevenoaks Adult Education Centre, Hatton House, Bradbourne Road, TN13 3QN.

Recommendations:

The Deputy Leader is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations on the proposed decision to agree to:

1. the disposal of Sevenoaks Adult Education Centre, Hatton House, Bradbourne Road, TN13 3QN; and
2. delegate authority to The Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, to finalise the terms of the disposal and execution of all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement the above.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report addresses the Council's intention to dispose of Sevenoaks Adult Education Centre (AEC), Hatton House, Bradbourne Road, TN13 3QN.
- 1.2 The site currently comprises the Sevenoaks AEC, housed in a building ('Hatton House') originally constructed in 1874 as a private residence as well as associated outbuildings and parking.
- 1.3 The site area is approximately 0.6ha with direct access via Bradbourne Road.

- 1.4 The site plan shows the redline boundary for the proposed disposal and is attached at Appendix B.
- 1.5 Exempt Appendix D includes more detailed and financial information which is commercially sensitive.

2. Background

- 2.1 A service decision (Decision 24/00046) was taken in July 2024, which changed the delivery of the Adult Education service. This was due to a change in focus and scope from Central Government in the delivery of the Community Learning and Skills (CLS) service. Going forward KCC CLS will deliver basic skills and other classes utilising community venues. During this academic year 2024/25, 41 courses have been delivered through 13 community venues in the Sevenoaks District, as well as the main offer delivered through the Sevenoaks Adult Education Centre. For academic year 2025/26, in addition spaces have also been secured at Sevenoaks Town Council to support basic skills delivery. Due to these changes the service confirmed that they no longer require Sevenoaks Adult Education Centre.
- 2.2 Alternative options have been considered as to whether there are any other uses for the building by other KCC services.
- 2.3 As part of this options appraisal, other nearby buildings were considered as to whether there were any options for consolidation / rationalisation, along with any known additional service requirements.
- 2.4 Potential alternative uses were discussed with the relevant services and explored further to see if this is a viable option. In this case, at the time of producing the options appraisal, no suitable alternative use for the building was identified. These considerations included possible educational use.
- 2.5 It has been confirmed by Education that whilst there is a need for SEN provision in Sevenoaks, there are options to address that need using existing provision, with some adaptations and enhancements.
- 2.6 KCC have just consulted on expanding two special schools (Parkwood Hall and Broomhill Bank) and we anticipate being in a position to present those schemes to Children's, Young People and Education Cabinet Committee (CYPE) Cabinet Committee in the Autumn term or early 2026.
- 2.7 There is also the planned new 250 place PSCN (Profound, severe and complex needs) Special School on the Birchwood site, which is to be built by the DfE. In addition, four primary schools are being considered for a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) along with one secondary. The two special school expansions and the secondary SRP will require some additional buildings to supplement existing infrastructure.

- 2.8 As a result, it has been confirmed that the Sevenoaks AEC is not required for educational use.
- 2.9 Since no other suitable KCC services require use of the building the property has been deemed surplus to the Council's requirements when it is vacated by the service in Summer 2025.
- 2.10 It is therefore proposed to market the site through our appointed agents, and it is expected that the level of net sales receipts to KCC will be over the £1m delegated threshold, which will therefore require a Key Decision.
- 2.11 The Government has set out its intention regarding Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) which will see the abolition of two-tier government. At this current time KCC have not received specific direction or decision from Central Government as to what form LGR in Kent and Medway will take. This is expected in May-August 2026 with the Government having set an ambition for LGR to be completed across the Country by 2028. Until there is direction to the contrary KCC continues to have a duty to make decisions in the best interests of Kent Taxpayers and where it has assets for which it has no use for to release these for disposal.
- 2.12 At the point at which the exchange of contracts is imminent, the Director of Infrastructure, in-line with the provisions of the decision considers all relevant factors, including financial considerations, any LGR decision that is forthcoming and legislation before a decision is made to enter into contracts.

3. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

- 3.1 **Reuse the site:** KCC has no operational requirement for the site – *Dismissed*.
- 3.2 **Continue to hold the site vacant in case of a future requirement:** Continuing to hold the site will leave the Council with ongoing costs for securing it against unauthorised access and potential claims for injuries arising from any trespassing. Continuing deterioration of the redundant buildings remains an inherent risk for KCC – *Dismissed*.
- 3.3 **Letting the property as part of the Tenanted Estate to generate an income:** The current buildings on the site are in poor condition and the prospect of securing a tenant is considered unlikely and unviable. KCC would forgo any capital receipt whilst this option was pursued – *Dismissed*.
- 3.4 **Disposal of the asset:** A freehold disposal will allow a capital receipt to be generated for reinvestment back into the Council's stated capital priorities and support the delivery of the Council's statutory obligations. Disposal will also eliminate holding costs associated with the property - *Recommended option*.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 The sale of the property will result in a capital receipt which will be reinvested back into the Council's Capital Programme.

4.2 The disposal will remove holding costs associated with the site, easing pressure on revenue budgets.

4.3 Further financial information is set out in the Exempt Appendix D.

5. Legal implications

5.1 The Council has an overarching duty under s123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to obtain not less than best consideration in the disposal of property assets and it also has a fiduciary duty to the residents of Kent.

5.2 External legal advisors have been appointed in consultation with General Counsel.

6. Equalities implications

6.1 The Key Decision to be taken by the Cabinet Member does not relate to a service delivery or change.

6.2 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken and has not resulted in any implications which might impact upon a disposal of the Council's interest; a copy of this is attached at Appendix C.

7. Data Protection Implications

7.1 As part of this approval process and in the handling of the disposal of the site, Data Protection regulations will be observed.

7.2 A Data Protection Implication Assessment (DPIA) screening has confirmed that there are no DPIA implications and that a further DPIA assessment is not required in respect of this decision.

8. Other corporate implications

8.1 None - This decision will not have any impact on other areas of the Council's work.

9. Governance

9.1 A Key Decision is being sought in line with the Constitution and the Council's governance processes. The views of the local Member in accordance with the property management protocol will be sought and will be reported to the Cabinet Member before a Key Decision is taken.

10. Conclusions

10.1 The site has been declared surplus to the Council's operational requirements. In accordance with the Council's strategy of recycling assets to produce capital receipts for reinvestment into capital project priorities, it is recommended that this site is progressed for disposal. It should be noted that until contracts are entered in 2026 any changes in requirements will continue to be considered.

10.2 An indicative timetable for the planned disposal is set out below:

Stage	Timescale
Marketing	Q3 2025
Bid Appraisal	Q4 2025
Exchange of contracts	Q1 2026
Completion of sale assuming unconditional sale	Q2 2026
Completion of sale assuming conditional sale	Q3 2027

10.3 In relation to the Asset of Community Value (ACV), Sevenoaks District Council was notified on 13 March 2025 of our intention to dispose of the property with this moratorium period ending on 13 September 2025.

10.4 The sale of the property will result in a capital receipt which will be reinvested back into the Council's Capital Programme.

10.5 The disposal of the property will remove holding costs associated with the property easing pressure on revenue budgets.

10.6 Subject to the necessary approvals being forthcoming, KCC will instruct solicitors and surveyors to prepare and execute a disposal strategy to affect a disposal in accordance with adopted KCC Freehold Property Asset Disposal Policy and its statutory and fiduciary obligations.

Recommendations:

The Deputy Leader is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations on the proposed decision to agree to:

1. the disposal of Sevenoaks Adult Education Centre, Hatton House, Bradbourne Road, TN13 3QN; and
2. delegate authority to The Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, to finalise the terms of the disposal and execution of all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement the above.

11. Background documents

11.1 Decision - 24/00046 - KCC CLS Adult Education Funding Reform
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieDecisionDetails.aspx?ID=2882>

12. Appendices

- 12.1 Appendix A – Proposed Record of Decision
- 12.2 Appendix B – Site Plan
- 12.3 Appendix C – EQIA/ DPIA
- 12.4 Appendix D – Exempt Information

12. Contact details

Lead Officer:

Mark Cheverton
Head of Real Estate Services
03000 41 59 40
Mark.Cheverton@kent.gov.uk

Relevant Director:

Rebecca Spore
Director of Infrastructure
03000 41 67 16
rebecca.spore@kent.gov.uk

Principal Surveyor:

Daniel Parkes
Acquisitions Investments & Disposals
03000 417 955
Daniel.Parkes@kent.gov.uk

Surveyor:

Rachel Paton
Acquisitions Investments & Disposals
03000 413526
rachel.paton@kent.gov.uk