

From: Brian Collins, Deputy Leader

Rebecca Spore, Director of Infrastructure

To: Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee – 10 September 2025

Subject: Freehold disposal of Land to the South of Pratling Street, Aylesford

Decision no: 25/00060

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

Classification: *Unrestricted report with exempt appendix A, not for publication under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular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: Malling North East - Local Member, Andrew Kennedy (Conservative)

Is the decision eligible for call-in? Yes

Summary: This report considers the proposed disposal of Land to the South of Pratling Street, Aylesford.

Recommendations:

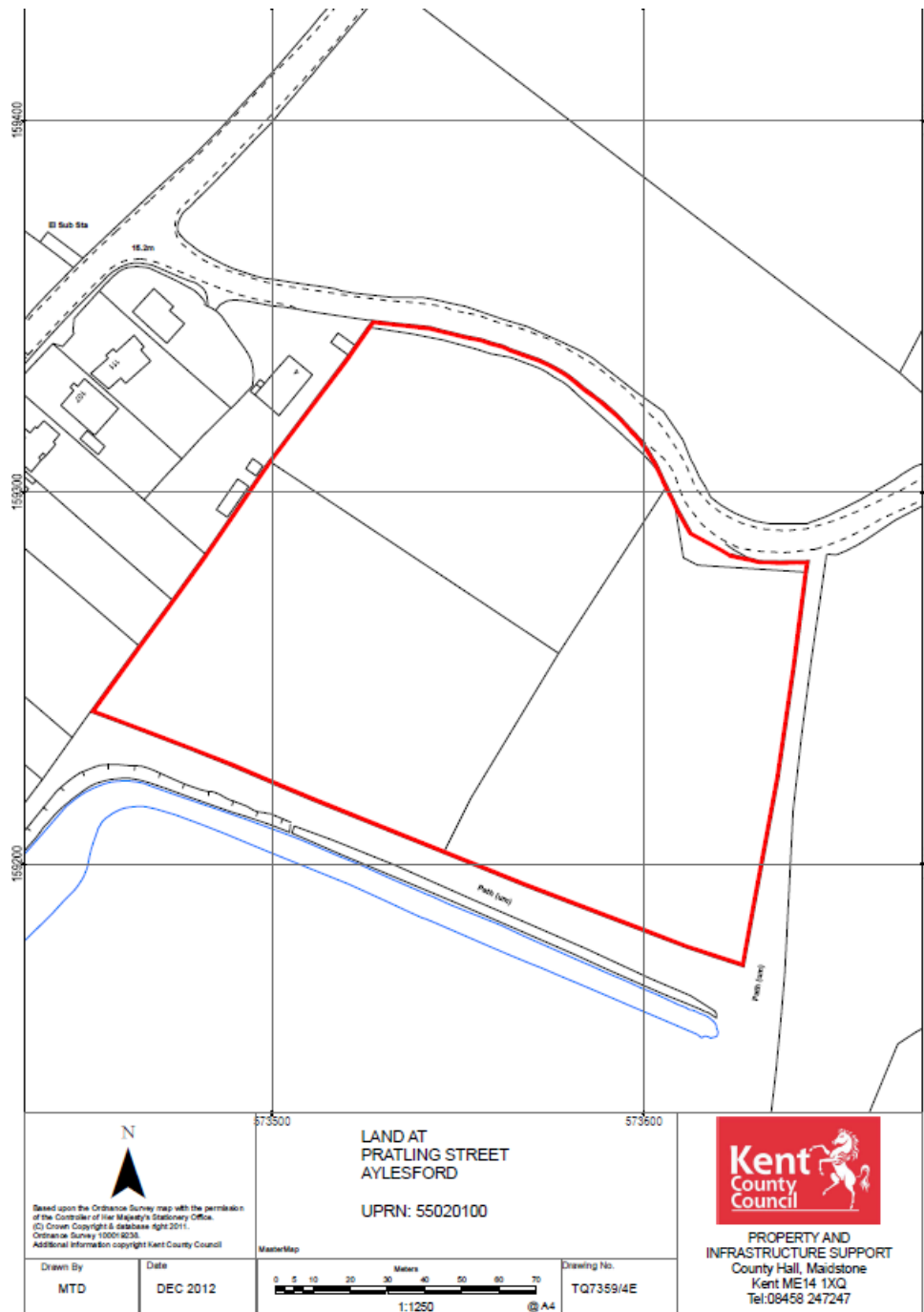
The Policy and Resources Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse or make recommendations to the Deputy Leader on the proposed decision to agree to:

1. the disposal of Land at Pratling Street, Aylesford; 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 considers the Council's intention to sell the Land to the South of Pratling Street, Aylesford.
- 1.2 The property is located to the south of Pratling Street, approximately 100m west of Forstal Road Industrial Estate, a well-established industrial location approximately 1.5 miles from Junction 5 of the M20 Motorway. Maidstone town centre is approximately 3 miles to the south east.
- 1.3 To the west of the site is Aylesford Village, featuring numerous residential dwellings on Rochester Road and the surrounding roads. Adjoining the site's southern boundary is an area of woodland.

1.4 Site plan below shows redline boundary for the proposed disposal, attached at Appendix B.





- 1.5 Exempt Appendix A includes a full analysis of options with financials included. This information is commercially sensitive.

2. Background

- 2.1 The property which extends to approximately 4.75 acres is currently used for the grazing of horses, situated to the south of Pratling Street, approximately 100m west of Forstal Road Industrial Estate. The property has been declared surplus by the Council in November 2024, as it is no longer required for educational purposes.
- 2.2 KCC are the freeholders of the property Title Number K562706.
- 2.3 The site has been subject to a number of historic planning applications relating to the construction of a primary school on the site. Permission was initially granted in 1978, followed by a series of applications to renew the permission, however, the school was never built on the site and in September 2024, Education confirmed that this site was no longer required to be held for educational purposes. There are no other known KCC requirements that would require the use of this site, and it is therefore surplus to KCC requirements and is therefore being released for disposal.
- 2.4 The property currently has a tenant who occupies the site under a grazing license until December 2027.
- 2.5 The site has been submitted to Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council in the “call for sites” to inform different options for development in March 2025.
- 2.6 Pre-planning advice was sought in May 2025 to obtain advice on the principle of residential development comprising 49 new dwellings.

2.7 It is proposed to dispose of the site on the open market, on an 'all enquiries' basis and any bids will be assessed against KCC's disposal policy and financial requirements.

2.8 The disposal value is in excess of £1m and therefore a Key Decision will be required. Therefore, to avoid unexpected delays in the disposal process, a Key Decision is being sought in advance of marketing.

3. Options considered and dismissed, and associated risk

3.1 **Reuse the site:** KCC has no operational requirement for the site.

3.2 **Continue to hold the site subject to the existing license in case of a future requirement:** Whilst there is minimal ongoing costs and the income is currently £1,500 per annum, the option for holding as an investment has been discounted as the capital receipts generated are significantly higher in the event of planning consent being granted for development and sale. KCC has no ongoing requirement to hold the property.

3.3 **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 as set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan and supports the delivery of the Council's statutory obligations.

3.4 **Recommended option:** A freehold disposal is the preferred option for the site, seeking offers on an 'all enquiries' basis to ensure all potential interest is explored in line with the Council's statutory duties and policies.

4. Marketing

4.1 Subject to the necessary approvals being forthcoming, KCC will appoint a suitably qualified agent in accordance with KCC's procurement processes to openly market the site in Q4 2025 on an 'all enquiries' basis to allow any interested parties to submit a bid for the site.

4.2 A marketing campaign to advertise the site through various media channels will be undertaken to ensure a wide audience is reached; appropriate due diligence will be undertaken on any bidders by KCC and its agent.

4.3 Bids will be appraised in line with the Council's legislative and fiduciary duties, and in compliance with KCC Freehold Asset Disposal Policy and any other relevant Council policies.

4.4 Following the formal submission of bids, these will be assessed considering:

- Ability for the purchaser to complete within the proposed timescales
- Overall price, any pricing caveats or exclusions
- Any conditionality on the proposals and the deliverability of these
- Deliverability of the proposals submitted, if they are reliant on the planning process.
- Funding security
- Any benefit cost that may be relevant

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The sale of the property will result in a capital receipt which will be reinvested back into the Council's Capital Programme.
- 5.2 Currently there are no holding costs associated other than KCC administration with this site with a small income (£1500 per annum) received from the current tenant.
- 5.3 The disposal of the site will remove management costs and liabilities associated with holding this site.
- 5.4 Further financial information is set out in the exempt appendix A.
- 5.5 The property is currently subject to a grazing license and generates a small income to KCC of £1500. There are no holding costs.

6. Legal implications

- 6.1 The Council has an overarching duty under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to secure not less than best consideration in respect of property disposals. It also has a fiduciary duty to the residents of Kent.
- 6.2 External legal advisors will be appointed in consultation with General Counsel.

7. Equalities implications

- 7.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been undertaken and identified no direct equalities implications arising from the disposal of the site.

8. Data Protection Implications

- 8.1 As part of this approval process and in the handling of marketing/conveyancing of the site Data Protection regulations will be observed. No data or records are stored on site.
- 8.2 A Data Protection Implication Assessment (DPIA) screener has confirmed that there are no DPIA implications and that a further DPIA assessment is not required in respect of this decision.

9. Other corporate implications

- 9.1 This decision will not have any impact on other areas of the Council's work.

10. Governance

- 10.1 A Key Decision is being sought in line with the constitution and the Council's governance processes.
- 10.2 The views of the local Member in accordance with the property management protocol will be sought and will be reported to the Cabinet Member taking the decision.

- 10.3 Delegated authority is to be given to the Director of Infrastructure, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, to finalise the terms of any disposal and execution of all necessary or desirable documentation required to implement a decision to affect a disposal.
- 10.4 The Government has announced plans for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), aiming to abolish two-tier government by 2028. At present, KCC has not received specific guidance from Central Government about how LGR will be implemented in Kent and Medway; further details are expected between May and August 2026. Until directed otherwise, KCC remains responsible for making decisions in the best interests of Kent taxpayers and disposing of assets it no longer requires.
- 10.5 When the exchange of contracts is approaching, the Director of Infrastructure will consider all relevant factors including financial considerations, any pending LGR decisions, and applicable legislation before finalising any contract agreements.

11. Next Steps and Conclusions

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

Stage	Timescale
Marketing	Q4 2025
Bid Appraisal	Q1 2026
Exchange of contracts	Q2 2026
Completion of sale assuming unconditional sale	Q4 2026
Completion of sale assuming conditional sale	Q4 2028

- 11.2 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.

12. Conclusions

- 12.1 KCC has no operational requirement to retain the site.
- 12.2 The sale of the property will result in a capital receipt which will be reinvested back into the Council's Capital Programme.
- 12.3 The disposal of the property will remove holding costs associated with the property easing pressure on revenue budgets.

Recommendations:

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

1. the disposal of Land at Pratling Street, Aylesford; 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.
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13. Appendices / Background Documents

- 13.1 Appendix A – Exempt Appendix A
- 13.2 Appendix B – Site Plan
- 13.3 Appendix C – Proposed Record of Decision
- 13.4 Appendix D – Equalities Impact Assessment

14. Contact details

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