






**Report of: Business Manager, Financial and Asset Management**
**To: Executive Board,**
**Date: 13 August, 2007**
**Item No:**
**Title of Report : Minchery Farm Employment Site, Proposed disposal.**

 **Summary and Recommendations**


 **Purpose of report:** To propose marketing of the site, under Contract Rule 20.20 (b)


 **decision:** Yes 


**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Campbell

 **Scrutiny Responsibility:** Finance



**Ward(s) affected:** Littlemore

 **Report Approved by:** Councillor Campbell  
Sarah Fogden/Penny Gardner – Finance  
Jeremy Thomas- Legal

 **Policy Framework:** Oxford Local Plan 2001-16 (Policies DS 60, HE2)  
Asset Management Plan – Appendix 4

 **Recommendation(s):** To authorise the Asset Manager to proceed with the marketing of the site, and to report back with details of the proposed purchaser(s), and recommended terms for a freehold disposal., as required under Contract Rule 20.20 ( c ):

**INTRODUCTION**

-  1. The site is shown hatched/cross hatched on the plan. The undeveloped western part has an area of 2.2 hectares (5.43 acres) and includes a site of Local interest for Nature Conservation (SLINC) of 0.92 ha (2,27a), leaving a developable area (shown cross hatched) of 1.28 ha (3.16 ac). The Priory Public House and its car park to the east of the footpath/cycle route comprise a further 0.58 ha (1.43ac)
-  2. Policy DS 60 of the adopted Oxford Local Plan indicates that planning consent will be granted for a development for a use similar to those on the adjoining Science Park, subject to satisfactory arrangements for the retention and future management of the SLINC. There are also known to be archaeological remains of the former Priory complex beneath the surface of the site. Local Plan policy HE2 sets out the likely planning requirements in respect of excavation and retention of these remains.

A preliminary archaeological survey has indicated the nature and position of the remains which may further limit the developable area of the currently undeveloped part of the site. The 'Priory' is a listed building (Grade II), and the tenant has obtained planning consent to construct a hotel next to it, partly on the land which it holds on lease (see below)

### CONTRACT RULE 20.20(b) REQUIREMENTS

3. (a) The undeveloped part of the site has been unoccupied since February 1989. Prior to that date it had been let for agricultural purposes. The 'Priory' and adjoining land are currently let on a lease to Firoka (Oxford Leisure) Ltd until 2062 at a total current ground rent of £1650 per annum, subject to occasional review  
(b) In view of the Local Plan requirements and site constraints, the site is not considered suitable for use by the City Council.  
(c) A purchaser is likely to use the site for science and technology based industry in accordance with Local Plan policy DS 60.  
(d) The total estimated receipt is. between £1.2m and £2.2m, dependent to a degree on the eventual purchaser and the interest they may have in adjoining sites  
(e) It is recommended that external agents are appointed to sell the site(s), either separately or as a package, by informal tender, or (if appropriate) by negotiation, with a view to achieving best value, The buyer is to meet the Councils agents and legal costs incurred in the sale

### LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4. None

### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5. It is recommended that the site is sold freehold, (subject to the existing lease) to release a capital receipt, for General Fund use
6. It is also recommended that the site is marketed at the earliest opportunity, on the basis shown in para 3(e) above, a further report on proposed disposal terms to be made in due course, in accordance with Contract rule 20.20(c)

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**Background papers: Archaeological evaluation, October 2006**



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