

Decision type: Decision Specifically Delegated to Officers

Decision date: 20 March 2025

Decision maker: Tom Bridgman, Deputy Chief Executive Place

Decision title: Disposal of Northgate Hall, 18 St Michaels Street, Oxford

Summary	
Decision being taken:	To dispose of the freehold of Northgate Hall, St Michaels Street, Oxford on the terms set out in the Confidential Appendix
Key decision:	Yes Issue details - Disposal of the freehold of Northgate Hall, 18 St Michael's Street Oxford City Council
Source of delegation:	Authority delegated by Cabinet in Cabinet meeting of 5 February 2025 to the Deputy Chief Executive Place in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Asset Management and the Director Law, Governance & Strategy and Group Finance Director the agreement of the detailed terms for the sale and to enter into all necessary documentation to effect the disposal on the basis that the terms comply with s.123 of the Local Government Act 1972, where powers are not already delegated within the constitution. Agenda for Cabinet on Wednesday 5 February 2025, 6.00 pm Oxford City Council
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Ed Turner Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Asset Management
Corporate Priority:	Well Run Council
Policy Framework:	Medium Term Financial Plan

The Deputy Chief Executive Place decides as follows:

- To enter into the sale contract and effect the freehold disposal** of Northgate Hall, 18 St Michaels Street, Oxford on the terms set out in the Confidential Appendix.

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Confidential Report	<p>Yes</p> <p>If yes, include the following and then select the reason from the list below</p> <p>This information is exempted from publication under Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 since it is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about someone's finances or business
Appendix 2	Risk Register	No

Introduction and background

1. Oxford City Council owns the freehold interest in Northgate Hall, 18 St Michaels Street. The property is leased to Oxford Evangelical Presbyterian Church (OEPC) on a 35-year lease from January 2023.
2. The lease to OEPC generates an annual income for Oxford City Council of £145,000 pa with the lease expiring in January 2058. The tenant has put forward a proposal to acquire the property and terms have subsequently been negotiated to dispose.
3. The final terms of the disposal are confidential and outlined in Appendix 1.

Reasons for the decision

4. The Council is looking at all options to manage its budget in the Medium-Term Financial Plan, and the disposal of this property will generate a capital receipt that will support the Council's financial position.

Alternative Options Considered

5. The only alternative option is to not dispose of the property and continue with the current lease and income stream. This option does not provide as great a financial return to the Medium-Term Financial Plan and therefore it was rejected.

Equalities Impact

6. The disposal of the property does not give rise to any direct equalities issues and therefore an Equalities Impact Assessment is not necessary.
7. The tenant erected a plaque on the external façade of the property to acknowledge past uses. This will remain in place as a condition of the sale.
8. The financial benefit to the City Council will help provide services, notable in line with the City Council's ambition to create a more equal city.

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Risks

9. The relevant risks are outlined in the risk register attached in Appendix 2. These have been managed through communication with the purchasers commercial advisors and through the legal negotiations on disposal documentation, which is in agreed form and awaiting sealing.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

10. This report does not give rise to any direct carbon or environmental considerations.

Implications of making the decision

Financial implications	By foregoing the annual rental income in favour of realising a capital receipt, the Council will be able to reduce its future borrowing requirements and save an estimated £245,000 per annum. The net impact of this would be a saving of circa £100,000 per annum.	Completed by: Jason Jones – Finance Business Partner Date: 12th March 2025
Legal implications	The terms of the sale have been reviewed by the legal department, including the sale contract and transfer. It is considered that the terms protect the Council's position and are in line with the Council's obligations in s123 Local Government Act 1972. This decision has been taken in consultation with the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy.	Completed by: Kathleen Fraser – Locum Commercial Property Solicitor Date: 12 th March 2025
Other implications	None	Completed by: n/a Date: n/a
Member declared interests	None	Completed by: n/a Date: n/a

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Background Documents
None


Report author	Alex Miller
Job title	Transaction Manager
Service area or department	Corporate Property
Email contact	amiller@oxford.gov.uk

Consultee checklist

Consultees	Name and job title	Date
Senior officer e.g. the relevant service manager / Head of Service where the decision maker is the Chief Executive or an Executive Director.	N/A	
Group Finance Director Where required by the Constitution or conditions of the delegation	Nigel Kennedy, Group Finance Director	13/03/2025
Director Law, Governance & Strategy Where required by the Constitution or conditions of the delegation	Emma Jackman, Director Law, Governance & Strategy	13/03/2025
Cabinet Member(s) Where required by the conditions of the delegation	Cllr Ed Turner, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & Asset Management	13/03/2025
Ward Members Where required by the Constitution or conditions of the delegation	N/A	

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Decision Maker Approval

<i>Name and job title</i>	<i>Date</i>
 Tom Bridgman, Deputy Chief Executive Place	20/03/2025

This form must be completed and sent to Committee and Member Services **on the date that the decision maker signs it. This must be only done once all consultees have given their approval. The decision shall be effective from the date of publication; therefore, it is important that you send to Committee and Member Services as soon as it is completed and dated by the decision maker. Please note that it is not effective until it is published and the call in period has passed.**

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NOTES

The law¹ requires the Council to record executive and non-executive decisions taken by officers under delegated powers and to publish them on the Council's website.

These requirements apply to decisions that would have been taken by Council or the Cabinet if delegated powers had not been given to an officer:

- under an express delegation granted at a meeting of Cabinet, Council or a Committee.
- in accordance with Part 4.4 of the Constitution as follows:
 - Awarding a contract where authority has been specifically delegated to officers by Cabinet or a Cabinet Member (regardless of value)
 - Acquiring or disposing of freeholds or leaseholds granting new leaseholds (excluding assignments and rent reviews) where authority has been specifically delegated to officers by Cabinet or a Cabinet Member (regardless of value)
 - Making a regulatory order which affects a number of people, for example a Public Space Protection Order or a Parking Place Order
 - Where the effect of a decision is to grant a licence or permission or it affects the rights of citizens
 - Discharging any other express delegation from Cabinet or a Cabinet Member a committee or Council.

These requirements **do not** apply to:

- planning and licencing matters where there are established arrangements for recording decisions: or
- decisions which are purely administrative or operational in nature

All other officer decisions should be recorded on an officer decision form but do not need to be published. They must though be stored so as to ensure that they are not lost should an officer leave the authority.

Exempt or Confidential information

Information relating to a delegated officer or single member decision does not have to be made public if it is exempt or confidential. Summary information from this decision

¹ the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012/2089 (Regulation 13(4)) and The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014/2095 (Regulation 7)

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sheet (excluding all exempt or confidential information) will be published on the Council's website.

Key or Non Key Decision

A key decision is an executive decision which is likely to:

- Have a significant effect on people living or working in a least two wards or
- Involve spending, income, or saving a significant amount – whether an amount is significant depends on the Council's total budget for the service involved. For this Council 'significant' in budgetary terms is:
 - Expenditure, income, or savings of £750,000 or greater in the context of the medium term financial strategy,
 - Acquiring or disposing of freeholds with a consideration over £500,000 in the context of the medium term financial strategy except for disposals pursuant to right to buy legislation
 - Acquiring or disposing of leaseholds where either the rental value is in excess of £250,000 per annum and/or the premium is £750,000 except for statutory lease renewals under Part 2 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 and disposals pursuant to right to buy legislation and disposals pursuant to right to buy legislation.
 - Acquiring or disposing of easements with a value over £750,000 and/or rental value over £250,000 each year

A key decision can only be taken and recorded here if notice of it has been published on the Forward Plan for at least 28 clear days. Key decisions taken by officers may be "called in" by any four councillors or the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee within two days of the notice of decision being published.

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