

To: Cabinet
Date: 18th March 2026
Report of: Director of Property and Assets
Title of Report: Disposal of City Centre property

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	Brief: to approve the disposal of the freehold titles of Floyds Row and Old Mortuary in Oxford.
Key decision:	Yes – Issue details - Disposal of City Centre Property Oxford City Council
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Ed Turner, Deputy Leader (Statutory) – Finance and Asset Management
Corporate Priority:	Strong, fair economy
Policy Framework:	Asset Management Strategy

Recommendation(s):
That Cabinet resolves to:
<p>1. Delegate authority to the Directory of Property and Assets, in consultation with the Director of Law, Governance and Strategy and the Group Finance Director and Lead Member for Finance and Asset Management to agree the final sale terms and enter into the final agreement and any other documents necessary to effect the transfer of the freehold titles of Floyds Row and Old Mortuary. The delegation will be on the basis that the sale will meet the requirements of s123 of the Local Government Act 1972 (which states that a council shall not dispose of land otherwise than by way of a short tenancy, for a consideration less than the best that can reasonable be obtained).</p>

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Exempt Appendix 1 – Sale terms and financial implications	<p>Yes</p> <p>This information is exempted from publication under Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about individuals

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about someone's finances or business
Appendix 2	Exempt Appendix 2 – Risk Register	<p>Yes</p> <p>This information is exempted from publication under Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 on the following basis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information about individuals <p>Information about someone's finances or business</p>

Introduction and background

1. Oxford City Council owns the freehold of 1 Floyds Row and Old Mortuary adjacent ("the Properties"). 1 Floyds Row is currently being used for file storage to support the Archive Scanning Project until Spring 2027. The Old Mortuary is leased to Oxfordshire Council for Voluntary Action on a 25 year lease expiring in January 2027. The Properties are held for investment purposes.
2. 1 Floyds Row was previously used to provide short term emergency shelter – Somewhere Safe to Stay - for people sleeping rough or at risk of rough sleeping, from winter 2020 to spring 2024. The development of the Somewhere Safe to Stay service at Floyds Row was backed by government funding (Rough Sleeping Initiative). Following the covid-19 pandemic, the government is no longer supportive of provisions of bed/sleeping arrangements in communal spaces for persons experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping. Therefore, the City Council worked with Oxfordshire Homeless Alliance (Alliance) partners to develop a new model, that was welcomed and approved by government, and the service was relocated in April 2024. The new service model costs less to deliver than the service delivered from Floyds Row. Since relocation in April 2024, the Somewhere Safe to Stay Service has been delivered effectively through the Alliance from other locations in the city.
3. In anticipation of the Archive Scanning Project ending in Spring 2027 and 1 Floyds Row becoming vacant, options have been considered against the objective of maximising the return to the City Council as soon as possible. Details are in attached confidential Appendix 1. After an off market approach some market testing was done to understand the likely market interest. A number of parties showed interest and a best bids process was run in January 2026 in order to capitalise on strong initial interest.
4. An attractive offer has been received and details are in the attached Exempt Appendix 1. It is recommended that the City Council accepts the offer and proceeds with the sale of the Properties.

Alternative Options Considered

5. Please see Exempt Appendix 1 – Not for Publication.

Financial implications

6. The disposal of the Properties will generate a capital receipt that can be used towards funding the City Council’s capital programme. Subsequently, the City Council will save an amount equivalent to the cost of interest and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) on the reduction in borrowing requirement. Please see Exempt Appendix 1 – (Not for Publication) for more details.

Legal issues

7. The documents necessary for the disposal will be completed subject to Cabinet approval of the disposal. The sale would meet the requirements of s123 of the Local Government Act 1972 (which states that a council shall not dispose of land under this section, otherwise than by way of a short tenancy, for a consideration less than the best that can reasonable be obtained).

Level of risk

8. See Exempt Appendix 2 – Risk Register.

Equalities impact

9. The financial benefits to the City Council will help provide services, notably those in line with the council’s ambition to create a strong, fair economy and well-run council.
The disposal of the freehold does not give rise to any direct equalities issues. Therefore, an equalities impact assessment is not necessary.

Carbon and Environmental Considerations

10. This report does not give rise to any direct carbon or environmental considerations, but a sale of the Properties will ensure that the City Council will not be paying the utilities bills for the Properties and will therefore not need to invest in zero carbon technology by 2030.

Conclusion

11. It is recommended that approval is granted to allow the City Council to dispose of the freehold titles of the Properties. Not only will this provide a capital receipt to the City Council but will also provide landscaping and external realm improvements to the area, contributing positively to the surrounding townscape.

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Background Papers: None.

