

Redevelopment of Chislehurst Library

Request to call decision in

Summary of reasons for call in:

- Inadequate evidence that the disposal of this land to the chosen bidder (for less than the highest bid) complies with the legal requirement on the Council to deliver the best possible return for sale of its assets.
- Lack of scrutiny and transparency

Best value

The Council is required to obtain the best possible value when disposing of its land and property. The 'winning' bid in this instance is for less than the highest bid. The report provides no adequate or proportionate justification for this large loss of potential capital receipt.

Transparency/scrutiny

Options for Chislehurst Library were first discussed in September 2014, culminating in a decision in November 2016 to grant the lease to Milngate for redevelopment of the site, to include retail and housing provision. Officers were instructed and delegated to agree the lease thereafter.

This issue did not appear again before any committee until 2 September 2020; the imminence of this decision had not been reflected in the council's Forward Plan, as is required by the Council's own procedures. No committee papers were available to the public until after RR&H PDS had met and made its recommendations on 2nd September.

Furthermore, numerous issues arise from the Part Two report presented to RR&H PDS on 2 September, namely:

1. No explanation is provided as to why the instructions to officers made in November 2016 has not been implemented
2. There is no record of the PfH or members authorising Cushman & Wakefield to go to the market again in 2019/20; on whose authority did they do so?
3. There is no adequate explanation why Cushman & Wakefield recommended a shortlist of 8 bidders should be reduced "to 5 or less" and why only 3 bidders are named in the report

4. The report makes reference to “further questions need to be asked of ... future provision of medical facilities and whether this may [well] be seen as an essential function” (para 3.24). No responses to this question have been provided

5. Para 3.25 makes reference to [the proposal for medical facilities requiring] “CCG support”. No such evidence is provided in the report.