

NORTHUMBERLAND

Northumberland County Council

All Parish and Town Councils

Your Ref:

Our Ref: GD/MA

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Dear Colleague

Market Town's Initiative update

I'm writing to let you know the latest developments in our market towns initiative. From this week the Council is testing the commercial market on a number of key sites across the County; looking to sell land and buildings it no longer requires.

This is an important milestone and part of the council's £360million regeneration for the county.

We have already identified opportunities to generate over £33million in capital income, contribute significantly to economic growth and regeneration and make annual savings in running costs of £3.4million by selling off surplus buildings and ensuring all our remaining properties are fit for purpose.

It makes no sense keeping on buildings and sites which we no longer need and which are in essence costing us money, especially as we are facing a further £58m of Government cuts over the next four years. Our market towns initiative; including the rationalisation of our estate, is vital in protecting frontline services and making it easier for residents to access key frontline services in their local area by providing them under one roof.

We have already made a great deal of progress. The Council has generated almost £12million in income by selling buildings and land it no longer needs including the Pavillion Day Care Centre in Bedlington, Thornbrae in Alnwick, Cramlington Library, Shankhouse Fire Station, The Old Post Office in Alnwick and Blyth Fire Station.

We have also been investing in a range of other properties to help regenerate the market towns; including the refurbishment of Hexham House to become a wedding venue and holiday rentals, McDonald House in Berwick to provide a hub for council workers and Northumberland Hall in Alnwick.

Earlier plans to build four schools and a leisure centre on the current County Hall site will not now go ahead after the Trustees of King Edward VI Foundation (who own the land King Edward VI School is built on) did not wish to progress our proposed redevelopment. The council is continuing to work with Morpeth First School about



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the potential for a new school and is also looking at other possible development opportunities for the County Hall site.

Testing the market will help us to understand the value of a number of sites/buildings which are surplus to requirements - and indicate how much interest there may be from prospective purchasers.

The Council has appointed Bradley Hall, a Chartered Surveying and Estate Agency firm, to carry out this work.

Sites to be marketed include:

Bamburgh:

Land at Ingram Road

Bedlington:

Former Animal Welfare Centre, Millbank Road

Berwick:

Wallace Green offices, council services to be relocated as planned
Sandstell Road Car Park, Spittal
Cemetery Lodge, Cemetery Lane
Tweedmouth Lodge, Cemetery Lane

Blyth:

Civic Centre, with council services relocated as planned
Broadway Circle Shops, shops to be sold as a going concern with existing tenants
St Michael's Avenue Shops, shops to be sold as a going concern with existing tenants

Hexham:

Hadrian House, council services to relocate
2 Gilesgate
Hexham Fire Station, once new fire station has been built
Tyne Mills Depot, once the depot has been relocated

Morpeth:

County Hall site, including Loansdean and Merley Croft
Riverside site, including the library, car park, Willows, Beechfield and Bungalows sites

Best wishes

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Grant Davey". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Grant Davey
Leader of Northumberland County Council