

Corporate Scrutiny Committee – Tuesday, 12 March 2024

Written question from Mr Nicholas Fryett of Freshwater, to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Why did bids for the Yarmouth Primary School site automatically fail stage 1 if relating to part of the site only, and who deemed this appropriate, especially if a combination of bids represented far better value to the taxpayer than the acceptance of one at a considerably lower valuation?

The Council must reasonably explain why it is prepared to accept a lower offer seemingly to get the land sold easily, minimising workload to the taxpayer's detriment. My own bid, combined with the recommended one, would raise significantly more whilst resulting in the same key outcomes. IWC can decide how the site is sold and the recommendation should be to accept the recommended offer excluding the small parcel for which a greater offer has been made (unless the recommended bidder is prepared to exceed this). The current recommendation objectively does not provide best value to the taxpayer from the available options.

Response

The legal framework and the council's approach to the selection of the preferred bidder is set out in the report. As is set out, the council can dispose of property at below best consideration by using a general consent of the Secretary of State.

The difference between the unrestricted value of the property and the disposal consideration must not exceed £2 million and the purpose of the disposal must be likely to contribute to the achievement of the promotion or improvement of economic well-being; the promotion or improvement of social well-being; and/or the promotion or improvement of environmental well-being in its area or for residents in its area.

The bids were considered within this framework and the council's reasons are set out in the report.