

FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

28 November 2008

The meeting commenced at 9.00 a.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Robbie Payne (Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder)

Officers: Graham Frankland, Head of Procurement Property and Public Protection
Emma Dixon, Estates Manager
David Dockree, Temporary Estates Manager
Lynda Igoe, Principal Housing Advice Officer
Sarah Bird, Democratic Services Officer

25. Former Blakelock Road Day Centre *(Head of Procurement, Property and Public Protection)*

Type of Decision

Non key.

Purpose of Report

The report was presented in order to advise the Portfolio Holder about approaches that had recently been made to the Council by external parties wishing to taking on the Blakelock Road Day Centre.

Issues for Consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Head of Procurement, Property and Public Protection reminded the Portfolio Holder that the demolition of the property had been approved at his Portfolio meeting on 23 September 2008 along with the proposal to dispose of the cleared site on the open market. Since that time, the Mayor had made Officers aware that there was a party interested in the building and had called a meeting with Officers from Asset and Property Management, Development Control and Housing Strategy and the interested party to discuss proposals for use of the property. The Mayor had indicated that he was willing to put the demolition of the premises on hold pending an assessment of a business case put forward by the interested party.

The Portfolio Holder was reminded that a decision was required quickly as tenders for the demolition had been received and there was a three

week lead in time for any demolition.

The Council's Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan had identified the need to rationalise the Council's assets and achieve maximum value to contribute to the Council's Capital Programme and its general financial position. The proposed use of the building would require planning change of use consent and the Chief Solicitor had been consulted with regards to the disposal of the property.

The options as to the disposal of the site were outlined.

Members of the public were present at the meeting and handed the Portfolio Holder a petition against the proposed purchase of the Day Centre, 2 letters of objection and an outline of the views of local residents.

The Portfolio Holder asked why he had not been contacted by Officers who were aware of the proposals and was informed that the report had been brought to the meeting so that options could be considered.

The members of the public outlined how accounts of the proposals had been reported in the local press and said that these differed from information obtained from the Mayor's office. The Portfolio Holder expressed his disappointment that residents had been kept in the dark about the proposals. Members of the public outlined their objections to the proposed usage of the Day Centre including fears that the services proposed were already being offered throughout the town and that the Christian fellowship staff may not be as well equipped or qualified to deal with the problem. Fears of elderly residents were passed on as well as concern for young users of the park opposite and the probability that traffic congestion in the area would increase.

The Portfolio Holder apologised to the members of the public for not being able to supply answers and said that he was disappointed that he had not been contacted previously.

Decision

The Portfolio Holder concurred with the views of the residents and re-affirmed his earlier decision of 23 September 2008 that the Blakelock Road site be demolished and the land offered for sale.

26. Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006

Under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraphs below of Part 1 of Schedule

12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006.

Minute 27 – Disposal of Lowthian Road Surestart Children’s Centre (Para 3 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

Minute 28 – The Proposed Occupation of Bovis House on Victoria Road by the Housing Options Team (Para 3 - information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

27. Disposal of Lowthian Road Surestart Children’s Centre *(Head of Procurement, Property and Public Protection)*

Purpose of Report

The report was presented to advise the Portfolio Holder about an expression of interest shown in the Lowthian Road Surestart Children’s Centre.

Type of Report

Non key.

Issues for Consideration by Portfolio Holder

The report contained reference to the previous report on the disposal of the centre with a brief description of the recent interest shown in the property and an outline of the legislation which covered such a transaction.

Decision

The decision was outlined in the exempt section of the minutes.

28. The Proposed Occupation of Bovis House on Victoria Road by the Housing Options Team *(Head of Procurement, Property and Public Protection)*

Purpose of Report

The report was given in order to update the Portfolio Holder on proposals for the establishment of the Housing Options Centre and to seek the approval to the terms and conditions of occupation of the proposed premises.

Type of Decision

Non key.

Issues for Consideration

The report outlined the need for premises for a Housing Options Centre.

Decision

The decision was outlined in the exempt section of the minutes

The meeting concluded at 9.30 am.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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