

Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well-Being

Wednesday, 1 August 2007

Present: Councillor Mark Perks (Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well-Being)

Also Present: Councillor Rosemary Russell (Lead Member for Health and Older People)

Officers: Jamie Carson (Director of Leisure and Cultural Services) and Tony Uren (Democratic Services Officer)

07.05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well-Being had no reason to declare an interest in any of the items on the meeting's agenda.

07.06 ASTLEY HALL - FORWARD PLAN/ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL POLICY

The Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well-Being considered a report of the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services seeking approval to a Forward Plan and an Acquisition/Disposal Policy in relation to Astley Hall.

The Council aimed to submit an application for Museum Accreditation of Astley Hall which would enable the submission of bids for grant assistance from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other external sources. The funding bid would be dependent on the Council's prior adoption of both a Forward Plan for Astley Hall and an Acquisition and Disposal Policy.

The Forward Plan, which included a Statement of Purpose, key aims and objectives and spending proposals, set out the development plans for the Hall in terms of the standards of service and engagement with the local community. The Acquisitions/Disposal Policy gave guidance on the types and nature of items that the Hall should accept as gifts or bequests, considering the finite storage space available, together with relevant guidelines on the rationalisation of collections, whenever necessary.

Decision made under delegated power:

That the Forward Plan and the Acquisition/Disposal Policy in relation to Astley Hall, as now presented, be approved to accompany the submission for Museum Accreditation.

Reason for decision:

The application for Museum Accreditation is reliant upon the prior adoption of a Forward Plan and an acceptable Acquisition/Disposal Policy.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

Failure to produce a Forward Plan and an Acquisition/Disposals Policy would expose the Council to the following risks:

- if Accreditation or Provisional Accreditation are not achieved, Astley Hall would not be eligible for streams of external funding;
- the museum/art gallery would be unable to loan exhibitions or objects from other museums;

- the reputation of the Hall may also suffer as a result of not gaining accreditation, as this status demonstrates that the Council maintains basic standards within the Museum.

07.07 FORMER ST JOHN'S AMULANCE HALL, ADLINGTON - REQUEST TO PURCHASE AND TRANSFER TO COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

The Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well-Being considered a report of the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services seeking the Executive Member's instructions on requests for the Council to purchase the former St John's Ambulance Hall in Adlington, with a view to the facility being subsequently transferred into community ownership.

The report highlighted the issues and potential implications for the Council that would need to be addressed when considering the requests.

The Council's current capital programme was fully committed and the request would need to be assessed against existing and other possible projects in the light of the extant potential risks. The Executive Member was also reminded of the fact that the Borough Council already owned a Community Centre at Fairview, Adlington and was requested to take account of the likely impact of any plans to acquire the former Ambulance Hall on proposals to transfer other Centres into community management.

Decisions made under delegated power:

(1) That the request for the Council's Officers to work up an application for the purchase of the former St John's Ambulance Hall at Adlington, for consideration in the next round of bids for capital projects, be not acceded to.

(2) That the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services be requested to contact the groups having made representations on the former Ambulance Hall suggesting that they consider the submission of an application for financial assistance under the Council's scheme of grants to Village Halls and Community Centres to bring the Hall into community use.

Reason for decisions:

The decision would ensure that Officer time was used effectively in promoting available assistance for any local group expressing an interest in purchasing the former Ambulance Hall.

Alternative option(s) considered and rejected:

The option to request Officers to prepare a business case to seek approval for the capital resources to purchase the former Ambulance Hall was rejected in the light of higher capital project priorities and the fact that Adlington was already served by one of the Council's existing five community centres.

Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well-Being