

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Leisure and Cultural Services	Executive Decision Meeting with the Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well Being	01/08/07

FORMER ST JOHN'S AMBULANCE HALL, ADLINGTON

PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To consider a request for the Council to purchase the former St John's Ambulance Hall in Adlington, with a view to then transferring the facility into community ownership.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- It is recommended that the Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well Being:
 - Does not instruct officers to work the request up to a bid to be considered in the next round of bids for capital projects.
 - Instructs the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services to write to those who have made representations informing them of the Council's grants to village halls and community centres and suggest that they consider making an application under this project.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The Council has received requests to purchase a building previously occupied by St John's Ambulance with a view to transferring the facility to a community group for them to run on a voluntary basis. The Hall is being advertised for offers in excess of £250,000.
- The report considers the Council's wider capital programme and priorities for capital expenditure. It also looks at the number of community centres the Council currently owns and their distribution across the whole of the Borough.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

(If the recommendations are accepted)

- The recommendations ensure officer time is used effectively and provide the possibility of assistance should a local group wish to purchase the Hall.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- An option would have been for the Executive Member to ask officers to do further work in preparing a business case in order to seek approval for the capital resources to purchase the Hall. This was rejected due to higher capital project priorities and Adlington being served by one of the Council's existing five community centres.



CORPORATE PRIORITIES

7. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Put Chorley at the heart of regional economic development in the central Lancashire sub region		Improved access to public services	
Improving equality of opportunity and life chance	3	Develop the character and feel of Chorley as a good place to live	
Involving People in their Communities	3	Ensure Chorley is a performing Organisation	

BACKGROUND

8. The former St John's Ambulance Hall is located on Granville Street, Adlington. The Hall has been the base for St John's Ambulance for a considerable period of time. As well as being the base for St John's Ambulance, it has also been the base for a number of organisations.
9. St John's Ambulance have declared the Hall surplus to their requirements and it has been placed on the open market.
10. The Hall is 227.4 sq metres. The building is of a cavity brick construction under a pitched slate roof. There is a large main Hall with wood panel flooring and suspended tile ceiling, together with kitchen, office, toilets and ancillary storage areas. The Hall is on the market and offers are invited in excess of £250,000.

REQUESTS

11. The Council has received a number of requests asking for the Council to purchase the Hall with a view to transferring its operation into community management. Community management is in operation at Fairview Youth and Community Centre in Adlington and will also be in operation at Tatton Community Centre in September 2007.

ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

12. In order to progress this project further a decision is required from the Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well Being in order to decide whether further officer time is spent on this project.
13. As mentioned previously, the Hall is on the market at offers in excess of £250,000. Whilst the actual price could vary from this figure, the figure of £250,000 seems a prudent figure on which to base any decision whether to proceed or not.
14. The Council's capital programme is fully committed at this stage and members have recently received a report highlighting potential risks with the capital programme that could result in the agreed programme being revised. This project would need to be considered against the existing projects and other projects that the Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well Being may wish to see pursued.
15. At the present moment, the Council owns five community centres. These are Tatton, Eaves Green, Astley Village, Clayton Brook and Fairview, Adlington. Other facilities are planned for the Chorley Moor and Buckshaw areas (at this point in time, it is thought that the Buckshaw facility will not transfer to the Council's ownership). The existing centres do not serve the whole of the Borough and the Executive Member would need to be mindful

that to approve such a request would actually provide two Council-owned facilities in Adlington whilst other areas have no such Council facility.

3. The learning from Fairview and Tatton is that supporting the community to take on assets is very time consuming. If this project were to proceed, it would have implications for the plans to put other centres into community management.
4. If a local group were willing to purchase the Hall, they could apply for a Village Hall/Community Centre grant from the Council. This could provide match funding for a larger bid. However, the timescales involved in such a process would present considerable risks to the group.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

5. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	3	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal			

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

6. As the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services has said, the Capital programme is committed and there are risks that have been reported to Executive Cabinet that could put pressure on the programme. If the Executive Member was minded to support this project a Business Case would need to be prepared by the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services.

JAMIE CARSON
DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND CULTURAL SERVICES

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Jamie Carson	5815	26 July 2007	