



Report of the Director of Development

Executive Board

Date: 18 October 2006

Subject: The proposed relocation of the Stanhope Drive Youth Centre and the North West Area Management Team offices to the former Horsforth Library

Electoral Wards Affected:
Horsforth

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In
(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The report seeks support for the refurbishment of the former Horsforth Library building to facilitate the relocation of the Stanhope Youth Centre to the heart of the town and the relocation of the offices of the North West Area Management Team from its present premises as these will, shortly, no longer be available being required by the main tenant, the Primary Care Trust.

It is proposed that the cost of the refurbishment will be met from the proceeds of the disposal of the Stanhope Drive Centre, the Priority Major Maintenance budget and Prudential Borrowing with the scheme being dependent upon the disposal of that property being sufficient.

The proposal supports the strategic outcome theme of "Our children and young people are healthy, safe and successful" and links with the Efficiency/Value for Money key activity of rationalising the use of assets.

The proposal would maximise the benefit from investment that has already been made in the construction of the new library and the refurbishment of the Mechanics Institute which share the same site.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval from Executive Board, to the marketing of the Stanhope Youth Centre and, subject to the capital receipt that would be generated being sufficient, to use that receipt and other resources already identified in the Capital Programme to fund the refurbishment of the former Horsforth Library to provide accommodation for the relocated Youth Centre and for the North-West Area Management Team.
- 1.2 There is an opportunity to create a vibrant Council and community presence in the heart of Horsforth maximising the benefit from the investment that has already been made in the construction of the new library and the refurbishment of the Mechanics Institute.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 Horsforth Library was built in the 1970's and is adjacent to Horsforth Mechanics Institute. The library was considered to be poor in terms of suitability, particularly as it was split over two floors. It had a high level of backlog maintenance and a general lack of provision for the disabled. A new library was constructed in 2005 and opened to the public in January 2006.
- 2.2 The former library was declared surplus to requirements by the owning department, Learning & Leisure. Initially, it was proposed to dispose of the property and the capital receipt (estimated at £235,000) be used to fund the construction of the new library. However, a review of Council facilities in Horsforth now suggests that retention of the former library building, together with a rationalisation of the portfolio elsewhere in the town, may be the most appropriate way forward. The Asset Management Unit has been reviewing various options for refurbishing the former library building.
- 2.3 One proposal was to provide permanent office accommodation for the North-West Area Management Team and a base for the West Yorkshire Police Force for their local neighbourhood policing team. This proposal, however, did not proceed as the West Yorkshire Police Force was unable to secure funding for their element of the scheme.
- 2.4 North-West Area Management Team has recently been advised by its landlord, the Primary Care Trust, that it will have to vacate its leased accommodation at the end of December 2006. Accordingly, alternative accommodation is required from that date. There are some 12 staff in the team at present but it is anticipated that this could increase at some stage in the future.
- 2.5 An initial Feasibility Study, to RIBA Stage B, has already been undertaken by Architectural Design Services and this suggests that a refurbishment scheme providing for both the Youth Service and North-West Area Management can be achieved for a construction cost, including fees, of £525,000.

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 Discussions have taken place with the Youth Service and the following facilities could be created on the ground floor of the former library building:

- Youth advice area
- A main activity hall
- Kitchen/coffee bar area
- Seating area
- Toilets
- Storage area
- Office and meeting room facilities

3.2 The resulting youth facility would be of far superior quality to that of the existing centre and, being on Town Street, would be much more readily accessible to a larger percentage of the Horsforth community.

3.3 The existing Stanhope Drive Youth Club is a prefabricated concrete building which was constructed in 1948. It was refurbished, extended and re-roofed in 1997. The building is located in a residential area of Horsforth. There is a landscaped area to the South of the building which includes a World War I memorial stone. To the North of the building there is an area of open greenspace.

3.4 It is proposed that the existing Youth Centre will be declared surplus and put forward for disposal. The Youth Service function will then be relocated to the Old Library following its refurbishment.

3.5 Initial planning advice is that the redevelopment of the current Youth Centre site in its entirety would be contrary to planning policy in that there is a presumption against greenfield development, so long as there is an adequate supply of brownfield housing sites. The grassed area to the North of the building has been subject to temporary works by Leeds North West Homes (ALMO) by providing a site compound and car parking area, and should be reinstated to its former use. The fact that the land has been occupied by the ALMO would not be a justification for this part of the site to be redeveloped.

3.6 Planning has also advised that whilst not allocated as protected greenspace (Policy N1), the grassed area performs an important greenspace function with amenity benefit for local residents in the Stanhope Drive area which should be preserved and enhanced rather than being lost through redevelopment. The landscaped area on the South side of the building has local significance with the memorial stone and trees planted to commemorate the First World War and should be protected.

3.7 The balance of the overall site, as shown on the attached plan, is felt to be appropriate for residential development.

3.8 The proposed refurbishment scheme for the former library building is shown on the attached drawing which illustrates the youth centre and office accommodation that can be achieved.

3.9 Temporary accommodation can be found for the Area Management Team in Leeds city centre without the Council incurring additional rental costs. However, this accommodation is not well placed and will itself be surrendered at the earliest opportunity offered by the lease.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

4.1 The proposal links to the Council's strategic outcome theme of "Our children and young people are healthy, safe and successful".

4.2 It also links with the Efficiency/Value for Money key activity of rationalising the use of assets, realising savings on accommodation costs and maximising new flexible working practices.

5.0 Resource Implications

5.1 Members will note from the table below that Neighbourhoods & Housing (Area Management/Youth Services) has resources of £250,000 available for this scheme. There is also avoidance of £40,000 of backlog maintenance at the existing Youth Centre if this proposal is progressed, leaving £235,000 to be provided from the disposals proceeds from Stanhope Drive to complete the funding picture.

5.2 This funding package assumes that the sale of the Stanhope Drive property will take place during the same financial year as refurbishment of the former Horsforth Library, and that there will be no short term borrowing implications.

1	Estimated Capital Costs and Funding (£000's)					
	Estimated Capital Costs	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009 on	Total
	Construction	0	430	19		449
	Furniture & Equipment	0	0	0		0
	Internal Fees	50	24	2		76
	External Fees & Other Costs	0	0	0		0
	Gross Expenditure	50	454	21		525

2	Funding	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009 on	Total
	*A Balance of Capital Receipt following sale of Youth Centre		235			235
	B Backlog Maintenance (PMM 99014)	40	0			40
	C Prudential Borrowing (Scheme 01387 Area Office Accommodation)	10	219	21		250
	Total Funding	50	454	21		525

*'A' above requires a sale value for Stanhope Drive site of £ 470,000 , with the first call of £235.0k to be set aside to fund the existing new Horsforth Library scheme. It is therefore proposed that Stanhope Drive be marketed to establish its exact valuation before any firm commitment is made to progress this proposal.

6.0 Ward Member Consultations

6.1 The initial suggestion to relocate the Youth Service facilities from Stanhope Drive Youth Club to the former Horsforth Library came from the Horsforth Ward Members. Youth Services met with all three Horsforth Ward Members in February 2006 and they are all still supportive of this proposal.

7.0 Links to Departmental Asset Management Plans

- 7.1 The proposals for the refurbishment of the former Horsforth Library links to the Asset Management Plan in terms of making effective use of the Council's existing property portfolio.
- 7.2 The proposal to relocate Youth Services from the Stanhope Drive Youth Centre will ensure that the service operates from premises that are fully fit for purpose and more readily accessible to all Horsforth residents.
- 7.3 The refurbishment proposal will ensure that the building is properly accessible by customers, staff and visitors.

8.0 Risks

- 8.1 There is a risk that the receipt that can be generated through the disposal of the Stanhope Drive Youth Centre may be insufficient to support the implementation of the scheme. This risk will be managed through appropriate marketing. It would be possible not to proceed with the scheme if such a shortfall arises and alternative funding cannot be identified. This would, however, leave Youth Services operating from a building which is rapidly approaching the end of its operational life and leave Asset Management with an unsatisfactory solution to its accommodation issues.
- 8.2 There is a risk that, either during the scheme design or when tenders are received, that the cost of the refurbishment will exceed the current estimate. This risk will be managed by close working between the Asst Management Unit and the Strategic Design Alliance to achieve the maximum economies consistent with providing accommodation that is fully fit for purpose.

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 There is an opportunity to create a vibrant Council and community presence in the heart of Horsforth maximising the benefit from the investment that has already been made in the construction of the new library and the refurbishment of the Mechanics Institute.
- 9.2 The existing youth centre is based in an out-dated building which is no longer fully fit for purpose.
- 9.3 New office accommodation is required for the Area Management Team as current arrangements are coming to an end. This proposal would avoid the need to seek other premises for rental from the private sector through making use of a building that is still within the Council's portfolio.

10.0 Recommendations

- 10.1 That Executive Board supports the proposal to market the site of the Stanhope Drive Youth Centre and that this is considered to be in line with the Ring Fence Policy approved by Executive Board on 23rd March 2005.
- 10.2 Subject to the potential receipt that may be generated being sufficient, Executive Board instructs officers to report back with a Design & Cost Report seeking authority to incur expenditure for the refurbishment works at the former library.