

Minutes



Meeting STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF PROPERTY SUB-COMMITTEE

Date Monday, 29 September 2004 (commencing at 10.30 am)

membership

Persons absent are marked with `A`

COUNCILLORS

Darrell Pulk (Chair)
David Taylor (Vice-Chair)

A	Sue Bennett	Bruce Laughton
	Andy Freeman	Jim Napier
A	Graham Jackson	Rita Sharpe

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Councillor Mrs K L Cutts
Mr I Rennie

MINUTES

The Minutes of the last meeting held on 19th July 2004 having been circulated were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:-

Councillor Sue Bennett
“ Graham Jackson
Professor A Lovell

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest by Members or Officers.

EXTENDED USE OF SCHOOLS

A report prepared on behalf of the Director of Education had been circulated. Jas Hundal, Deputy Director of Environment and Review Manager, drew attention to the uncertain implications of Government policy. Councillor Pulk agreed that the key question related to which services could not be delivered from an appropriately located school site. Councillor Napier believed that the

layout and location of a school building were important. He pointed out that schools were often criticised in relation to transport and parking. He felt that the policy on extended use of schools should be flexible.

Councillor Pulk expressed the view that the first option should be the possibility, for example, of a health centre being located at a school, with practical considerations to follow. Councillor Sharpe emphasised the need to consult the local community. She observed that extended use could worsen existing traffic problems. Councillor Pulk agreed on the need to involve the community. Mr Hundal emphasised that any proposals would be specific to the location, and focus on services to the local community.

SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT: PROPERTY PRIORITIES AND ISSUES

Councillor Pulk commented that the report showed the gap between needs and the budgets available. Mr Hundal agreed, and referred to the need to optimise the use of space, as had been achieved at Meadow House. Richard Hanson, Assistant Director (Strategic Property) referred to the additional costs of a Meadow House arrangement, and to the difficulty in applying such an arrangement to every office building. Councillor Mrs Cutts believed that fundamental questions about the need for premises should be asked. Councillor Pulk pointed out that the earlier seminar at Holme Pierrepont had addressed these issues.

Mr Hundal pointed out that the review did take account of the needs of services, and was not questioning the underlying policies on services. However Chief Officers needed to adopt the review's themes about different ways of working. He offered to provide more information on how the evaluation of Social Services properties had been carried out. There was discussion about whether the increasing numbers of staff and range of services could be considered as drivers.

EMERGING VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF PUBLIC SERVICES

The report by Mr Hundal drew together themes identified during the review so far, and suggested an emerging vision for public services and the County Council's property strategy. Mr Rennie observed that undertaking a property strategy was a difficult task, as it dealt with a fixed commodity, while rapid technological change meant buildings became rapidly out of date. He referred to the need for buildings to be adaptable, and cited Meadow House as an excellent example. Councillor Sharpe supported the concept of a library operating from a school, and partnerships with other service providers. She pointed out that all possible sources of funding should be used in property developments. Councillor Freeman emphasised the importance of setting up new services before shutting down the old ones, as some people regarded any change of service as a cut. Councillor Pulk referred to the schools at Gilthill and Gotham, where local people were keen to retain quaint and unsuitable buildings.

Councillor Napier asked whether there was consideration of sustainable energy provision. Mr Rennie commented that it was easier for a new building to be energy efficient and even incorporate some power generation. Councillor Napier wondered about the capacity of schools to cope with any future energy crisis. Councillor Pulk observed that the County Council had energy targets which perhaps ought to be included in the final report. Councillor Mrs Cutts believed that property management should be centralised. She felt that some buildings were worth preserving, but not by the County Council. Councillor Pulk circulated two additional recommendations, which would allow for the review findings to contribute to planning the forthcoming budget.

It was agreed that:-

- (1) The issues raised in the report and comments made in the meeting be used to help prioritise a vision for the future provision of public services.
- (2) That a further report be brought to the Sub-Committee following further consideration as part of the Best Value Review of Corporate Property.
- (3) The emerging view of the future of public services being incorporated into the final report of the Sub-Committee.
- (4) The Cabinet Member for Finance and Property consider the implications of the review findings in the formulation of capital programme priorities as part of the budget process for 2005/06 and onwards.

PROPERTY BENCHMARKING REPORT BY PRICEWATERHOUSE-COOPERS

It was agreed to defer this item to the next meeting.

FUTURE OPTIONS FOR WEST BRIDGFORD LIBRARY

Mr Hundal circulated concept drawings of what West Bridgford Library might look like if a number of services were delivered from the premises.

UPDATES FROM STUDY GROUPS

The progress report from the study group on occupancy costs and benchmarking was noted.

The meeting closed at 11.45 am.

CHAIR