

22 February 2016

Agenda Item: 13b

REPORT OF SERVICE DIRECTOR ENVIRONMENT, PROPERTY & TRANSPORT

TOOT HILL YOUNG PEOPLE'S CENTRE, BINGHAM

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek a decision on the future use of the former Toot Hill Young People's Centre, Bingham.

Information and Advice

2. Some information relating to this report is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Having regard to the circumstances, on balance the public interest in disclosing the information does not outweigh the reason for exemption because divulging the information would significantly damage the Council's commercial position. The exempt information is set out in exempt appendix.
3. The Young People's Centre in Bingham is located on the Toot Hill School site. The property was built in 1966 and is a CLASP Mark 4a construction.
4. Toot Hill School obtained foundation status on 1st September 2009. This means that unlike Academy status where the land is leased for 125 years, foundation schools are granted a freehold interest in their sites. The School subsequently became an Academy and retained its freehold interest.
5. The Young Peoples Centre is an integral part of the school buildings, attached to the Joint Use Leisure Centre and shares utilities with this building.
6. To protect the ongoing service provision the transfer was subject to a 125 year lease of the Young People's Centre (shown hatched on the attached plan) to the County Council on a full repairing and insuring basis, together with associated rights of access and car parking was agreed, and at a peppercorn rent.
7. The Young Peoples Centre has been used for many years by the local Scouts and this has been allowed to continue as an interim measure whilst the future of the building is being decided. Bingham Young People's Centre has now been identified as part of the County Council budget savings process and has subsequently closed. The local Scout group will now require alternative accommodation. The Young People's Centre has been offered to the community for any appropriately qualified group to come forward to take up the running of the centre, however, no group has been found who are capable of taking on the liability of the full repairing and insuring lease.

8. The building left vacant for any length of time represents a very high insurance risk both in terms of fire, which carries an excess, and public liability. The Insurers have a requirement that empty properties are regularly inspected which presents another ongoing commitment to the County Council.
9. The School have currently got no definite plans for the building but have indicated they will incorporate the building into the general school use. The School have also offered to make available alternative accommodation for the Scouts if this is required.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

10. The Council have no immediate use for the property which has a use clause as a Youth & Community Centre, no party has come forward to take on the provision of Young Peoples Services and keeping the building vacant whilst waiting for a solution presents ongoing risks and liabilities.
11. The recommended approach is in line with the Councils repair and maintenance strategy which seeks to reduce the number of buildings for which the Council has a repairing liability.
12. Keeping an unused building in the middle of a school site has a negative impact on the built environment.
13. The lease prohibits underletting the whole of the property and it requires landlord consent to underlet any part or parts of the property. Currently the landlord has not granted consent.

Statutory and Policy Implications

14. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (Public Health only), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That approval be given for the surrender of the lease on the terms contained in the exempt appendix.

Jas Hundal

Service Director – Environment, Property & Transport

For any enquiries about this report please contact: Gerry McKeown 0115 977 3617

Constitutional Comments (CEH 26.01.16)

15. The recommendation falls within the remit of the Finance and Property Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (GB 01.02.16)

16. The financial implications are set out within the report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

17. None.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

18. Ward(s): Bingham
Member(s): Councillor Martin Suthers OBE

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Properties affected: 01818 - Toot Hill School
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