

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

PEOPLE CABINET MEMBER

WILLOUGHBY ROAD PRIMARY – INFANT SITE

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 To declare the Willoughby Road Primary school infant site surplus to People directorate.
- 1.2 The key points of the report are as follows:
- The planned date for the school to vacate the site was 24th July 2013.
 - Relocation of the mobile accommodation.
 - Alternative use of the nursery building.
 - Financial implications of a vacant property.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Riddings Infant and Riddings Junior schools were amalgamated to form Willoughby Road Primary school in September 2011.
- 2.2 The current council capital programme has supported the construction of an extension to the junior site to accommodate all pupils on one site. Construction of the additional class space will be completed by the end of July 2013 and external works will be completed over the school summer holidays.
- 2.3 The main building and annexe on the infant site is in poor condition. The main school hall roof collapsed in December 2010. The hall was subsequently demolished and replaced with mobile accommodation. The nursery building was constructed in 2002 and is in good condition.
- 2.4 The cost of re-locating the mobile accommodation is in the region of £75k - £100k dependant on the cost of utility connections, site access and ground conditions.
- 2.5 The People Cabinet Member supported the increase of £420k in the School Capital investment programme in anticipation of a future capital receipt for the former infant site.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

The options for the site are as follows:-

- 3.1 Option 1. Declare the whole site and buildings surplus to People directorate requirements.

- 3.2 Option 2. Declare the whole site and buildings surplus to People directorate requirements. Utilise the nursery building and associated land to support early years provision in the area in association with the requirement to ensure sufficient places for 2 year olds.

There are further options for re-use of the mobile accommodation as follows:-

- 3.3 Option 3. Relocate the mobile unit to the junior site for use by the school and community.
- 3.4 Option 4. Relocate the mobile unit to another site as part of the LA duty to ensure sufficient early years/day care places.
- 3.5 Option 5. Relocate the mobile accommodation to provide additional school places at other schools to meet the council's statutory responsibility for school places.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Option 1. The following applies to option one.
- 4.1.1 Declaring the property as surplus to requirements will free up a building and site for which the holding service has no use.
- 4.1.2 Places Directorate will then explore the options for the property. The future use will be reported to the Cabinet Member for Asset Management, Culture and Housing as part of the Property Transactions Schedule.
- 4.1.3 If the building/site stays vacant it will be vulnerable to vandalism and public concern about empty buildings.
- 4.1.4 People Directorate will be liable for all holding costs, but it is hoped these will be mitigated as soon as possible by alternative use or disposal of the site.
- 4.2 Option 2. The following applies to option two in addition to the analysis of option one.
- 4.2.1 Places Directorate will explore lease arrangements for the former nursery building and include the building in the Property Transactions Schedule.
- 4.2.2 The nursery building has separate gas and water supplies from the main school but shares an electrical supply. Costs would be incurred to arrange an independent electrical supply.
- 4.2.3 Adaptations would need to be made to the vehicular and pedestrian access routes to the site.
- 4.3 Option 3. The following applies to option three in addition to the analysis of option one.

- 4.3.1 The mobile accommodation does not include welfare facilities so could not be used independently of the main school.
- 4.3.2 There are already community facilities on the Riddings estate at the nearby Community Centre/Library/Youth Centre campus.
- 4.4 Option 4. The following applies to option four in addition to the analysis of option one.
 - 4.4.1 Additional financial resources would be required to provide welfare facilities and create external play provision.
- 4.5 Option 5. The following applies to option five in addition to the analysis of option one.
 - 4.5.1 The local authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure there are sufficient school places. The growth in pupil cohorts in the primary sector is placing pressures in certain areas.
 - 4.5.2 The unit could be adapted to make two classrooms (60 places) on a single school site.

5. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY,IT)**

5.1 Financial

- 5.1.1 Once a building is empty it becomes vulnerable to vandalism and unauthorised access. There has to be a judgement about if and when to board the building up. Costs will be incurred for draining down the heating system.
- 5.1.2 Normally the period of exemption for council tax is 3 months from the date the building is vacated. After this period the council will be liable for full payment of council tax.
- 5.1.3 The council will be liable for the standing charges relating to utilities.
- 5.1.4 There is no budget to meet ongoing costs.
- 5.1.5 The capital costs relating to option 2 could be met from the Early Years (2 year old places) Capital Grant.
- 5.1.6 The cost of re-locating the mobile unit would need to be met from council or external resources as part of the approved capital programme.

5.2 Property and IT

Option 1 releases the property. Places Directorate will then explore the options for the property.

Option 2 releases some of the property for disposal and creates the opportunity to lease the former nursery to the private/voluntary sector.

Options 3-5 make alternative use of a re-locatable unit that is relatively new and in good condition.

5.3 Statutory

Demolition of any existing buildings, change of use of the site and relocation of the mobile unit will all be subject to planning approval.

Sale of the site will require DfE approval.

5.4 Environmental

The building condition is likely to degenerate if left vacant and quickly deteriorate over time.

5.5 Section 17 – Crime and Disorder

The buildings may become a target for vandalism and anti-social behaviour if left vacant.

6. OUTCOMES OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT (IF APPLICABLE)

6.1 Not applicable

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION AND CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARED

7.1 None

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Cabinet Member approves Option 2. The property is declared surplus to the requirements of the service from July 2013. Places Directorate lease the former nursery building to the private/voluntary sector to meet the requirement for sufficient 2 year old places.

8.2 That the Cabinet Member supports the re-location of mobile accommodation and delegates the prioritisation of the location to the Assistant Director (Prevention & Commissioning).

DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE

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Background Papers used in the preparation of this report - None