

AGENDA ITEM: 7 Page nos. 38 – 43

Meeting Cabinet Resources Committee

Date 17 March 2005

Subject **Totteridge library**

Report of Cabinet Member for Resources
Cabinet Member for Performance, Partnerships
and Best Value

Summary To report the outcome of the tender invitation and to seek
approval to direct negotiations with a potential developer.

Officer Contributors David Stephens, Chief Valuer and Development Manager

Status (public or exempt) Public

Wards affected Totteridge

Enclosures Appendix A

For decision by Committee

Function of Executive

Reason for urgency /
exemption from call-in (if
appropriate) N/A

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1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the results of the tender process be noted and it be agreed that the appropriate Chief Officer continue discussions with a local developer and report the outcome to a future meeting of the committee.**

2. RELEVANT PREVIOUS DECISIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet, 19th February 2004 and Council 2nd March 2004 resolved to close Totteridge Library but subject to possible purchasers/developers being invited to submit proposals for a re-provision of library facilities as part of a refurbishment or redevelopment of the site.
- 2.2 Cabinet Resources Committee 18th March 2004 – resolved that the former Totteridge Library be offered for freehold sale by non-binding tender with potential purchasers being invited to put forward proposals for the re-provision of a library facility.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan commits the Council to plan and manage land use and development in Barnet to enhance the quality of life and provide tangible benefits for the community. The purpose of the tendering process was to achieve offers to include a new library facility. The suggested discussions with a single developer will be directed towards the same achievement.
- 3.2 The Corporate Plan commits the Council to “modernise and reposition libraries in the heart of the community”. The replacement of Totteridge Library facility will contribute to this target being achieved.
- 3.3 The Library Service contributes to the Council’s key priorities of delivering a first class education service and supporting the vulnerable in our community.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

- 4.1 The tender process has failed to produce any proposals which meet the Council’s criteria. Direct negotiations may produce the same result. In the meantime the property remains vacant and liable to acts of vandalism and burglary. It is important therefore that these negotiations are progressed as quickly as possible and an early decision made regarding the future of the premises and a replacement library facility.

5. FINANCIAL, STAFFING, ICT AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no staffing or ICT issues at this stage. The financial implications are set out in the exempt report.
- 5.2 The property issues are set out below.

6. LEGAL ISSUES

- 6.1 None.

7. CONSTITUTIONAL POWERS

- 7.1 Constitution – Part 3 - Responsibility for Functions – Section 3.6 Functions delegated to the Cabinet Resources committee – All matters relating to land and buildings owned, rented or proposed to be acquired or disposed of by the Council.

8. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 8.1 In accordance with the decision of this committee, the property was widely marketed, inviting interested parties to submit proposals for the provision of a new library facility and to make a financial offer for the acquisition of the existing building.
- 8.2 In relation to the new library facility, tenderers were invited to use their skills and innovation to provide a facility of a gross floor area of approximately 400 sq m. The space should be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act with the public area being open plan and having flexibility of use. Tenderers were asked to submit plans and drawings of the proposed facility, build and fit-out costs, a programme of works, the tenure to be offered to the Council and, if applicable, the service charge.
- 8.3 By the closing date 8 submissions had been received – one included 21 options and one was a late bid. The detail of the submissions and comments thereon are set out in Appendix A and in the exempt report.
- 8.4 There are a range of redevelopment proposals and a wider range of offers. Some schemes are clearly unacceptable from a planning view-point and others failed to meet the Council's development criteria. Similarly, some of the financial offers, particularly those aspects dealing with the lease-back to the Council and the rent payable therefore do not present a good deal for the Council.
- 8.5 As indicated in the exempt report, officers have been contacted by a developer with interest in local properties who believes he can work up a scheme to meet the Council's requirements. It is recommended that this developer be given up to 10 weeks to prepare a scheme and financial proposals with the outcome being reported to a future meeting of the committee.

8. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None.

BS: SM

BT: CM

APPENDIX A

Bid No.	TENDERER	PROPOSAL	LIBRARY FACILITY	PLANNING COMMENT	OTHER COMMENT
1	Landmark Property Investments and Developments	No scheme proposals submitted. Offer is a capital payment subject only to site and structural survey.	None	N/A	This offer is not compliant with the tender invitation
2	Turnhold Properties plc	No scheme proposals submitted. Offer is a capital payment subject only to site and structural survey.	None	N/A	This offer is not compliant with the tender invitation.
3	Andreas Christoforou,	Only basic plans submitted – no scheme description. A new library facility building in the rear garden is shown. It is assumed from the plans that the existing building is to be refurbished to turn it back into a single residence.	An octagonal, two storey building – the first floor being in the roof space. Providing a total floor area of 390 sq m. No tenure details given.	Concerns about the accessibility of the first floor of the new library facility due to the octagonal design of the building, the use of roof space and the size of the lift. Concerns about the location of the library in the existing rear garden, and the impact this will have upon adjoining occupiers. The proposal would fail the UDP standard for back to back distance as a result of the tandem development. No off-street parking	No delivery programme given. The tenderer has been asked to provide further information as to the likely tenure of the replacement library facility, together with the proposed level of rent or service charge but the tenderer has declined to submit further information

4	Artistcharm Limited	Redevelopment of the existing building to provide 4 X 2 bed flats and 2 X 1 bed flats. Separate library facility building.	To be built to shell finish only with the Council having to pay for the fitting out. A separate 400 sq m single storey building in the rear garden area. A pre-fabricated structure manufactured off-site and delivered for on-site assembly. The freehold of the library facility site will be retained by the Council.	The proposal would result in a tandem development and provides no off-street parking. The proposal would additionally bring the front building line forward of the adjoining properties. There are in-principle concerns about the provision of a block of flats in an area characterised by large houses, especially given that the proposed materials and design are out of character with the existing street scene	The library facility to be provided within three months – but this is the shell only.
5	Hetton Properties Limited	No scheme proposals submitted. Offer is a capital payment only.	None	N/A	This offer is not compliant with the tender invitation
6	Paragon Homes (London) Limited	A redevelopment to provide a mixed use scheme – library facility on the ground floor with three floors of residential over – 12 X 2 bed flats	405 sq m of floor space fully finished and fitted out. 999 year lease to be granted to the Council.	The size, height and bulk of the building would be visually dominant and out of character. The proposal would result in edge to edge development because of the density of the scheme, and a sub-basement would be out of character with the surrounding properties. The scheme would result in a loss of trees and screening	Expected delivery within a year of exchanging contracts

7	Simon Music, MHS Projects	<p>There are two basic options – Option 1 has a single building on site providing a library facility and 7 flats – Option 2 proposes a residential development on the existing site plus a library facility and further residential development on the Whetstone Stray site (land opposite Totteridge and Whetstone Underground station). Option 1 has six variations and Option 2 provides 15 variations</p>	<p>Option 1 - this could either be a separate building in the rear garden of the existing site or incorporated into a single new building on the site.</p> <p>Option 2 - proposes a neo-Georgian building on the Whetstone Stray site with a 405 sq m library facility on the ground floor with luxury flats over.</p> <p>It is assumed that a leasehold interest will be offered to the Council at an annual ground rent.</p>	<p>A sympathetic conversion of the existing building subject to compliance with UDP standards, as proposed in option 1, would probably be favourably considered. However, there is a concern about the relocation of the library to the rear garden area as this could impact negatively upon the adjoining occupiers. It is unclear as to how parking would be provided. The block of flats put forward in option 1b would be completely out of character with the street scene in terms of design, scale and bulk.</p>	<p>18 months from the grant of planning permission – maybe 24 months from exchange of contracts</p>
8	Sherm Properties Limited	<p>Not clear but it is assumed that the tenderer proposes to refurbish the whole property as a new library with a playground in the garden.</p>	<p>25 year lease</p>	<p>The sympathetic refurbishment of the library as a community/library facility would be supported. However, in general it would appear that the proposal is trying to accommodate too much on the site.</p>	<p>This was a late bid</p>