

REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE		Report No. 12
Date of Meeting	19 June 2008	
Title of Report	Disposal of Former Fire & Ambulance Station and adjacent Public Conveniences in Calne to the Town Council	
Portfolio	Policy – Asset Management	
Link to Corporate Priorities	Community – Culture/healthy lifestyles – creating opportunities to encourage people of all ages to get involved in leisure activities. Community – Economy – support a diverse and thriving economy.	
Key Decision	Yes	
Executive Workplan Ref	N/A	
Public Report	Yes	

Summary of Report

Members are asked to consider the disposal of the former Calne Fire & Ambulance Station, together with adjacent (closed) public conveniences to the Town Council for a nominal consideration so that they may be put to community use.

Officer Recommendations

- 1. Subject to the presentation by the Town Council of a sound Business Plan indicating the extent of community use and how the facility would be managed and maintained, authority be given for the disposal of the freehold of the former Fire & Ambulance Station and public conveniences on terms to be agreed by the Assets, Design and Regeneration Manager in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, Legal Services Manager and County Council representative.**
- 2. If the Town Council are unable to produce a sound Business Plan within 3 months of this Executive meeting the offer of the freehold shall be withdrawn and the Council's retained valuer shall be instructed to market the properties to obtain a capital receipt.**

Other than those implications agreed with the relevant Officers and referred to below, there are no other implications associated with this report.

Financial Implications	Legal Implications	Community & Environmental Implications	Human Resources Implications	Equality & Diversity Implications
Yes	Yes	Yes	None	Yes

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The old Fire & Ambulance station, a listed building located to the rear of the Town Hall in Patford Street, Calne, has been used for non-commercial storage for a number of years. The buildings are in poor physical condition having received little maintenance whilst its fate has been undecided. Its disposal was recommended in 2004, when the redundant public conveniences were included into the offer. A site plan is attached at Appendix 1. Marketing the site was deferred as community interest in the facility was expressed by various local groups including Calne Community Partnership. No tangible proposals came forward and the Executive confirmed disposal at market value at its meeting on 12 July. The Town Council has consistently felt the buildings are naturally part of the Town Hall precinct and have offered a nominal "peppercorn" on several occasions. The Executive concluded that the Town Council was to be given "first refusal" at market value before the site was to be offered more generally.
- 1.2 Any asset disposal will need Wiltshire County Council approval under the transitional arrangements prior to Vesting Day

2. Options and Options Appraisal

- 2.1 Option 1: Dispose of the surplus buildings to the Town Council, for £1, subject to a sound business case indicating future community use and management of the property.
- 2.2 Option 2: Dispose of the site at market value to secure a capital receipt.
- 2.2 Option 3: Delay disposal to give the opportunity for the Unitary Authority to consider the future of the property as part of its Corporate Asset Strategy.

3. Background Information

- 3.1 At its meeting of 12 July 2007 the Executive **Resolved** that
- 1) Authority be given for the disposal of surplus land and buildings at Biddestone, Box, Calne, Chippenham, and Wootton Bassett as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report on terms to be agreed by the Assets, Design and Regeneration Team Leader in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, the Legal Services Team Leader and the Council's Retained Valuer.
 - 2) The disposal of the surplus land and buildings at Biddestone and Calne, detailed in Appendix 1 to the report be deferred until Biddestone Parish Council have been given a further opportunity to acquire the land and buildings on the terms previously offered and **Calne Town Council have been given a further opportunity to acquire the land and buildings at market value.**

- 3.2 Pursuant to Resolution 2.) above, the Town Council were invited to make an offer at or near market value. After consideration of correspondence and meetings, the Town Council's offer at 2 April 2008 was to take the building (for a peppercorn) and spend up to £20,000 to make the building weathertight; to consider re-opening the public conveniences; then to conduct a public consultation exercise and then produce a business plan.
- 3.3 Without a business plan to indicate community need the District Council would find it difficult to justify an undervalue transfer both under the General Disposal Consent 2003 or the transitional arrangements prompted by the Unitary Authority proposal. It is therefore recommended that proof of need is provided before any transfer takes place.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 In April 2004 the Council's retained valuer estimated that with a planning consent for office or residential use the site would have a value of £50,000 – £75,000. At the time of the July 2007 Executive meeting the upper value could have been £100,000 but was not tested. Current trends indicate that high a figure may not be achieved but there is still a significant market value with the appropriate planning permission.
- 4.2 A "Criteria and Checklist for acquisition/disposal of property" form taken from the Asset Management Plan is attached at Appendix 2

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Any disposal will be subject to Wiltshire County Council approval under the transitional arrangements in place until Vesting Day. (Attachment at Appendix 3)
- 5.2 Whilst the Council has a duty to dispose of its assets for the best consideration reasonably obtainable, there is provision in the Local Government Act 1972 "General Disposal Consent (England)2003" for Local Authorities to dispose at an undervalue if will help secure the environmental, economic or social well-being of the area, and the undervalue is less than £2M. If the Town Council can prove a community need, there would be a justification for less than market valuation

6. Community & Environmental Implications

- 6.1 The former Fire & Ambulance Station is a listed building. It is part of Calne's built heritage and needs to find a new use if it is to remain part of the towns historic fabric.

7. Equality & Diversity Implications

- 7.1 Any business plan submitted by the Town Council should identify how widespread would be the community use it envisages for the site and confirm that there will be no barriers (physical or emotional) to access by the whole community.

8. Risk Analysis

- 8.1 If the Town Council can not provide a sound justification for transferring the buildings to them, Members will have to consider whether to review Options 2 or 3 as the criteria for an undervalue transfer would not be satisfied.
- 8.2 For these buildings to continue in their current state invites criticism of the Council as steward of its assets
- 8.3 If the need is justified, disposal other than to the Town Council could see the loss of a community asset before its potential is realised.

Appendices:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Site Plan2. Criteria and Checklist for acquisition/disposal of property (Asset Management Plan document)3. Wiltshire County Council comment
Background Documents Used in the Preparation of this Report:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Previous committee reports and correspondence files

Previous Decisions Connected with this Report

Report	Committee & Date	Minute Reference
No 23	Exec. 6 Nov. 2003	E133
No 20	Exec.8 Jan. 2004	E186
No 23	Exec 29 April 2004	E281
No 18	Exec 12 July 2007	E42