

## **Derriads Barn Community Hall**

### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The report is essentially the same as the report submitted to Executive on 14 April 2005, setting out the current position regarding the project, together with additional information requested by Executive, comprising of revised 'Current Situation' and hence revised 'Options' and 'Recommendations'.
- 1.2 For the Executive to consider the options available for the future use of the building.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 **To note that the Boundary Commission met the Council on 2 June to discuss the Commission's review of the district boundary as well as the Council's proposed review of the Chippenham boundary. No decisions were made and the Boundary Commission is to come back to the Council on whether the Chippenham boundary review can go ahead.**
- 2.2 **To note that the only way of ascertaining if the buildings could be demolished is to submit a listed building consent application to the Secretary of State.**
- 2.3 **To note that there are no suitable alternative sites for a purpose built facility in the locality.**
- 2.4 **To note that it is highly unlikely that an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund will be successful.**
- 2.5 **In the light of the above, the only feasible solution is demolition (subject to listed building consent approval by the Secretary of State) and retaining the site for open space for a future community building funded by the local community or parish council.**

### **3.0 Links to the corporate/business area objectives**

#### **3.1. Corporate Aims:**

- 1. Safeguard and enhance the assets and resources of North Wiltshire and the wider community.

#### **3.2. Business area priorities:**

- 1. **Asset Management:** Manage the Council's landholdings and properties to obtain the maximum returns.
- 2. **Maximise funding potential:** To maximise and improve on the level of external funding available to the Council, Community Groups and partners.
- 3. **Regeneration - urban and rural:** Work with community groups and partner organisations to respond to those needs.

#### 4. Background

- 4.1 The farmland on which these listed buildings were sited was subject to a planning application. As a result of negotiations, in May 1995 a Section 106 agreement was made whereby the Council had an option to buy these redundant buildings from the developer before the end of May 1997, for a token consideration of £1.00, provided the buildings were used for community use.
- 4.2 In May 1997 the Council bought the buildings, subject to them being used for a community facility and the facility being provided within two years (the latter requirement was subsequently removed).
- 4.3 A public meeting was held in November 1997 at which initial community consultations carried out by the University of Bath were presented.
- 4.4 In December 1997 a Special Arts and Leisure Sub-Committee agreed that there was a need for a community facility in the locality and that these buildings should be used to provide that facility. Further it was agreed that a Heritage Lottery Fund application should be made and that the District Council should provide 30% partner funding for the conversion costs.
- 4.5 The project was the subject of a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, which was submitted in October 1998 but this was rejected in May 1999. The Council's allocated money was subsequently reallocated as the project had not attracted HLF funding and the project could not proceed.
- 4.6 A further public meeting was held in October 1999, which was supported by the District Council, Chippenham Without Parish Council, Chippenham Town Council and Community First. As a result in early 2000 a Trust was formed, composed of local residents and guided by Council Officers, with the objective of establishing local community wishes and raising funds in order to progress the project.
- 4.7 At the meeting of 24 October 2000, the Executive authorised the implementation of works to secure the buildings from vandalism and ensure that they were stable and weatherproof. The works were carried out in June 2001.
- 4.8 Since the carrying out of the building works further costs have been incurred in additional security works.
- 4.9 During 2003 a number of members of the Trust resigned. The Trust reformed in 2004 and since then it has been endeavouring to ascertain changes to the local community wishes and also to pursue funding.
- 4.10 At the Executive meeting of 14 April 2005, it was resolved that:

**A decision in this matter be deferred for a maximum of two committee cycles for further information to be obtained in respect of:**

- 1 The timing of the Boundary Review.**
- 2 Planning issues in relation to de-listing and demolition.**
- 3 Options for a purpose built facility in the locality.**
- 4 The likelihood of an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund being successful.**

**5. Current Situation**

- 5.1 The Boundary Commission met the Council on 2 June to discuss the Commission's review of the district boundary, which is carried out on existing parish boundaries. However, the Commission was unaware that the Council had progressed the review of the Chippenham parish boundary. As the Council cannot carry out the Chippenham parish boundary review during the period of the Commission's review, the Commission is considering the situation.
- 5.2 In considering options, officers have investigated the possibility of demolishing the structures and building a new facility. However in order for demolition to be considered by the Secretary of State, under Planning Policy Guidance 15, he would assess any application for demolition on the following:
- 1 that an appraisal was carried out on the cost of repairing and maintaining the buildings, in relationship to their importance.
  - 2 That there had been real efforts to find alternative uses for the buildings or that the buildings had been put on the open market as an unrestricted freehold property.
  - 3 The merits of alternative proposals for the site.
- 5.3 As the Derriads site was provided by the original developers on the basis that it would be used as a local community facility, the requirements of PPG15 cannot be complied with, and therefore English Heritage's advice is being sought.
- 5.4 There does not appear to be any other local site suitable for development into a local community centre.
- 5.5 The Trust is still endeavouring to make a Heritage Lottery Fund application. Officers of this Council have established that for an HLF bid to be successful there must be a heritage context, not just the provision of a facility utilising an historic building. HLF have no record of any conversations between HLF officers and the Trust discussing the viability of this project as eligible for an HLF grant. However in its current format, the project is unlikely to be successful in gaining grant funding.
- 5.6 The buildings remain empty and derelict. The building is suffering significant decay, which is being rapidly accelerated as a result of vandalism.
- 5.7 If it is not possible to proceed with the project in the relatively near future it is likely that the buildings will have deteriorated beyond the point at which reinstatement would be a practical proposition.

**6. Options**

- 6.1 The condition of these buildings is such that a decision will soon have to be made on what action to take. Possible actions are:
1. Continue to support the Trust in their efforts to raise funding. As a part of this action, consider whether the project should be part-funded by the Council and whether a bid should be put forward for the next financial year.

2. Continue to support the Trust in their efforts to raise funds, continue to maintain the buildings in their current state and await the outcome of the boundary review.
3. Apply to Secretary of State to demolish the buildings and retain the site as an open space facility and also for a potential local community facility, funded by the local community or parish council.
4. Return the site to the developer for redevelopment.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 This is not an identified capital project. The cost of repair and conversion is estimated to be in the region of £880,000. The Trust intends to apply to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £580,000, which is 65% of the total, leaving a sum of £300,000 to be raised from other sources.
- 7.2 Currently officers are using limited resources to assist the Trust in their objectives and also monitoring the buildings for structural stability, weatherproofing and health and safety issues.
- 7.3 The buildings are continuing to deteriorate and costs are being incurred on maintaining these buildings in a safe condition.
- 7.4 All of the future options for consideration under clause 5.3 have some financial implication.

## **8. Human Resources and Equal Opportunities implications**

- 8.1 The current Design and Estates Team workload has not allocated any significant input for this project. If the project gained funding from any source, it would need to include for additional human resources either within the Design and Estates Team or for external consultants.

## **9. Community and Environmental Implications**

- 9.1 Although there is new development around the site, these buildings maintain their setting and association with the farmhouse.
- 9.2 The buildings are important as the agricultural heritage of the area and an important factor in the local scene. However their current condition detracts from the area and is the subject of public criticism.
- 9.3 Whilst the buildings have had works carried out to resolve health and safety issues, they continue to be a potential hazard and therefore a risk for the Council.

## **REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC MANAGER COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT TO THE EXECUTIVE – 16<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2005**

Report Author: Mike Jackson  
Principal Historic Buildings Officer  
Tel: 01249 706506  
mjackson@northwilts.gov.uk