

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CABINET

MONDAY 24 MARCH 2003 AT 2:00 P.M.

Agenda item
No.

14

TRING: DUNSLEY BUNGALOW, COW LANE

Report of the Corporate Director (People and Property)

Author: Alan Haines Tel: 01992 588120

Executive Member: David Beatty

Local Member: Stan Mills

1.0 Purpose of Report

To consider a proposal that the County Council should dispose of Dunsley Bungalow, Cow Lane, Tring

2.0 Summary

2.1 The County Council owns Dunsley Bungalow – comprising a small house and a paddock/orchard – which, for town planning purposes, is within the urban area of Tring. Planning permission is available for house building on neighbouring land and Dunsley Bungalow may, therefore, now be regarded as having become “ripe for development”

2.2 The estimated capital receipt from disposal is above the £1m threshold specified in the Scheme of Delegation to Officers

3.0 Conclusions

3.1 The Cabinet is asked to agree that the property should be sold and that the sale decision should be delegated to the Corporate Director (People and Property) in consultation with the Executive Member (Resources)

4.0 Background

- 4.1 The County Council owns Dunsley Bungalow in Cow Lane, Tring. The property comprises a small house and garden behind which lies a paddock/orchard. The overall site measures approximately 0.8 hectare/1.98 acres and, in shape, it is a long rectangle (narrow side fronting Cow Lane)
- 4.2 For town planning purposes the property is situated within the urban area of Tring and it is therefore, prima facie, developable. The Local Plan identifies the Grove Road/Cow Lane locality as offering opportunities for plot amalgamation and it also contains some area-specific principles relating to proposed housing developments – for example, large detached houses at a low density are considered to be appropriate
- 4.3 Under the Master Plan for the Rural Estate the property is not identified as being a “Priority Holding”; and, indeed, it has previously been identified, under the “Herts Connect Programme”, as being potentially surplus to requirements and available for disposal as and when circumstances become propitious
- 4.4 Having regard to housing developments which have occurred in the vicinity in recent years and the fact that towards the end of last year Dacorum Borough Council resolved to grant planning permission for a housing scheme on the gardens of immediately-neighbouring properties Dunsley Bungalow may now be regarded as having become “ripe for development”. An enquiry has been received from the developer of the adjoining site about the potential availability of Dunsley Bungalow
- 4.5 The house and garden are included in the County’s lease to Aldwyck Housing Association. The house is set up so as to provide shared accommodation for two individual tenants. At present one room is vacant. The County Council should be able to obtain possession [from the single occupier] on 2 months notice. The occupier has been offered rehousing in the locality
- 4.6 The paddock/orchard are let on a farm business tenancy – to the same person who currently lives in the house. The County Council should be able to obtain possession on 3 – 6 months notice. The tenant is not entitled to any compensation (either statutorily or under the specific terms of his tenancy)
- 4.7 Although the paddock/orchard is listed as a County Wildlife Site an assessment last summer by a firm of independent specialist ecological consultants concluded that it does not meet the government’s guidance for such designation and its status as a CWS is therefore unwarranted. The consultants make specific reference to Para 18 of PPG9 – which states that: “They [local planning authorities] should only apply local

designations to sites of substantive nature conservation value, and take care to avoid unnecessary constraints on development.”

- 4.8 The consultants assessment would, though, be open to challenge via the town planning process when an application for planning permission is made; and it may be that a planning permission for development with housing would be granted subject to conditions relating to “mitigation” measures. For example, it might be required that certain plants/trees be either translocated to or replaced at another property
- 4.9 It has been suggested that the existing house is of some historic/cultural interest and might be moved to an alternative location. It is not listed and although it is an example of a particular timber-framed smallholdings design from the 1920’s the County Council does have other such houses on the Rural Estate (at Kings Langley which is also in Dacorum). If the property was to be sold the County Council would have no use for the house elsewhere

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The capital receipt arising would be credited to the general pool
- 5.2 In the event of disposal Environment Department’s base budget would need to be adjusted to allow for the loss of net income (approximately £3,000)