

Chair:
Councillor George Meehan

Deputy Chair:
Councillor Lorna Reith

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report covers matters considered by the Cabinet at our special meeting on 28 July 2008.
- 1.2 We trust that this Report will be helpful to Members in their representative role and facilitate a fruitful dialogue between the Cabinet and all groups of Councillors. These reports are a welcome opportunity for the Cabinet on a regular basis to present the priorities and achievements of the Cabinet to Council colleagues for consideration and comment. The Cabinet values and encourages the input of fellow members.

ITEM OF REPORT

Resources

2. FUTURE ACCOMMODATION FOR CIVIC AND CEREMONIAL FUNCTIONS

- 2.1 The Council agreed an Accommodation Strategy in May 2003 to improve customer focus by integrating customer access points, improve facilities for democratic and civic functions and modernise work spaces for employees. As part of the strategy a number of options were considered for the future of the Civic Centre site. It was decided to refurbish the Council Chamber and associated facilities for democratic and civic functions and to dispose of the remainder of the site no longer required for administrative functions including the car park. The refurbishment, which at the time was estimated at £2.5million, was to be funded from the proceeds of the sale of the North Wing and car park.
- 2.2 We considered a report which set out the strategic case for developing the Civic Centre at Woodside House in preference to refurbishing the existing Civic Centre or acquisition/development within the Wood Green Hub. Key issues to be considered in the relocation of the Civic Centre to Woodside included the social, economic and environmental regeneration opportunities arising from both the current Civic Centre site and the Woodside House proposed Civic Centre site.
- 2.3 The relocation to Woodside House would bring tangible benefits to the community through an improved setting for the buildings in the park, enhanced facilities for marriage and other life events and a Civic Centre that was modern, attractive and welcoming to encourage participation by all in civic and democratic activities. The release of the current site would provide enhanced physical regeneration for the area and additional residential accommodation. If approved this would contribute to better use of the Council's resources, improved value for money in operating costs and improved facilities for Members, employees, visitors and service users.
- 2.4 During the course of our deliberations it was acknowledged that careful consideration would need to be given to the timing of the disposal of the existing Civic Centre and we noted that the proposal was in line with the accommodation strategy and provided value for money. Alternative options to Woodside House have been explored and had been

rejected. We noted that all the existing users of Woodside House, including the drop in provision would be found alternative accommodation in the area and their services re-provided. A number of options were being considered and current users would be kept fully informed. Their concerns regarding consultation and provision of information to the users of Woodside House were noted, together with those of a leaseholder of a building in the Park. Contact had been made with relevant groups and individuals by officers and further contact would be made to provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to engage and express views on the proposals during the pre-planning consultation planned for the end of August and beginning of September 2008.

- 2.5 In response to a number of other concerns raised we were advised that these too could be aired during the pre-consultation period referred to above. The proposed refurbishment of Woodside House would offer value for money and would provide a new civic amenity with facilities and a suitable ambience for meetings and excellent registrar facilities. The proposals had also been embedded in the Council's accommodation strategy for a considerable period. With regard to the relocation of existing users of Woodside House, we indicated that the alternative accommodation should be suitable to users and near to good transport links.
- 2.6 We report, for information, that having considered the options for the future provision of democratic and civic functions as outlined in the report together with the accompanying feasibility study we approved the refurbishment and extension of Woodside House to establish it as the new Civic Centre for Haringey. In so doing we noted that the relocation would enable the disposal of the existing Civic Centre site.
- 2.7 We also approved Option 4 (double curve) as set out in the report as the design for the Council Chamber to enable this to be developed during the next design stage. We noted that relocation options for all current users at Woodside House had been considered in conjunction with the services concerned and alternative accommodation would be arranged so that relocation could take place by December 2008 and having noted further that stakeholder engagement had been carried out as part of the Feasibility Report, we approved further consultations, including public exhibitions, to be undertaken between July and September 2008.
- 2.8 We agreed a total capital budget of £12 million to include the cost of constructing the new Civic Centre at Woodside House to relocate the Council Chamber, Committee Rooms, Registrar's Services and ancillary facilities from the existing Civic Centre site and the Council's costs for managing the project, re-provision of services at Woodside House, achieving vacant possession and other associated investment required as a result of this development. We also agreed the appointment of Capita Symonds in accordance with the Council's Procurement Framework to continue the design and project management services to enable the next stages of the project to be completed (RIBA stages C and D).
- 2.9 We authorised the Director of Corporate Resources to approve the final Design Reports (Stage D plus) scheduled for completion in November to enable a planning application for the scheme to be submitted by the Head of Corporate Property and noted that approval would be sought from our Procurement

Committee in October 2008, following submission of the planning application but prior to consent being granted, to appoint a contractor in accordance with the Council's Procurement Framework to enable early engagement in the design process and carry out enabling works.