

HALESOWEN AREA COMMITTEE

DATE: 10TH MARCH 2004

FORMER HALESOWEN ESTATES OFFICE

LOCATION: ANDREW ROAD HALESOWEN

(As shown hatched black on the plan attached)

BACKGROUND

The former Housing estate office at Andrew Road Halesowen forms the ground floor accommodation of Block 11 Andrew Road Halesowen which was built as part of the flats complex in the area and is controlled by the Directorate of Housing. A floor plan of the accommodation is attached to this report.

The estate office has now closed and the property is surplus to the requirements of the Directorate of Housing.

The Lighthouse Project occupy parts of accommodation on the first and second floors of the block and are interested in taking of the ground floor accommodation also. There is no formal rental agreement in place for the occupation of the current first floor accommodation.

Due to the future redevelopment of the Halesowen Bus station site, the Queensway Centre for the Elderly group will lose their current accommodation that is leased to them by the Council, as it will be demolished. It is therefore considered that the former estate office may also be utilised to provide them with alternative accommodation.

There is CCTV equipment located within the ground floor accommodation that serves the local area which is linked to the Council CCTV control centre and secure and authorised access to this equipment must be maintained for both relevant Council staff and the Police.

The Police currently occupy another former flat on this estate and consider that if they could have secure use of the CCTV room, they would be able to release the current flat for reuse as housing stock.

COMMENTS

The relevant Council Directorates have been consulted regarding the future of this accommodation and no operational use has been identified.

It is therefore considered that the ground floor accommodation should be leased to the Lighthouse Project on a temporary basis until such time as the Queensway centre is demolished. The accommodation can then be offered to the Queensway Centre as an alternative location.

The CCTV room could be retained in the building and it would be preferable for it to be secured with a separate access from the outside if funds were available. It is proposed

that this room could be shared with the Dudley Crime Prevention Partnership and the Police instead of the current flat that they occupy.

The Neighbourhood Manager for the area would also wish to have an office base at the property.

As the accommodation is part of a Housing Block of flats it is considered that it is not suitable to appropriate part of the building. It could however remain in the control of the Housing Directorate as it is possible to grant a concessionary rental of the accommodation to a non profit making community group under the General Consent for the Disposal of Houses and Land 1999.

It is considered that the Council should take this opportunity to also regularise the occupation of the existing first floor accommodation currently used by the Lighthouse Project.

PROPOSAL

That the Area Committee advise the Lead Member for Housing to authorise:

- 1) that a concessionary lease of the property be offered to the Lighthouse Project on a temporary basis
- 2) that a concessionary lease be offered to the Queensway Centre for the Elderly when the bus station redevelopment takes place
- 3) that the CCTV room is retained at this location and that the police consider giving up the use of the existing flat in the area
- 4) that the occupation of the first floor accommodation by the Lighthouse Project be regularised
on terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law and Property.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Letter(s) from the applicant.
2. E-mails and memos from the Council Directorates.

Contact Officer:

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