

STOURBRIDGE AREA COMMITTEE

4TH NOVEMBER 2003

REQUEST TO LEASE LAND

**LOCATION: LAND FORMERLEY KNOWN AS 9-12 HILL ROAD LYE
STOURBRIDGE**

(As shown outlined in black on the plan attached)

BACKGROUND

Sure Start is a government funded initiative to provide a wide range of support to the under fours and their families, and the National Children's Home is acting as the lead agency in the delivery of the programme working closely in partnership with several Directorates of the Council. The Sure Start Project forms one of the Key Themes and Objectives of the Lye District Action Plan.

The Lye, Rufford & Wollescote Sure Start Project have been looking for a suitable site in the Lye area for some time, and have now identified the land formerly known as 9-12 Hill Road Lye as being in the right location, and of sufficient size to accommodate a centre, car parking and play area, and have therefore submitted an application to the Council to lease this land.

This site is under the control of the Directorate of the Urban Environment and was purchased in 1965 for the purposes of the Highways Act 1959.

As the land is currently held for the purposes of the Highways Act 1959, an appropriation would be required to enable the land to be held for the purposes of Section 19 of the Local Government Act (Miscellaneous Provisions) 1976 before any lease is granted for the Sure Start Project.

COMMENTS

All of the relevant Council Directorates have been consulted, and whilst no objections to the use of the land for the Sure Start Project have been received, the Directorate of Law & Property advise that the Worcester Diocesan Board of Finance has the benefit of a restrictive covenant which states that no house or building other than a private dwelling house with ancillary buildings is to be erected upon the land.

The Directorate of Law & Propriety also advise that whilst they have no objection to the proposed use of the land in the long term, the land has the potential for temporary car parking whilst the proposed retail store is developed on the Orchard Lane/Johnson Street Car Park. Any disposal should be subject to planning consent being obtained.

The Directorate of the Urban Environment have also advised that the land was originally purchased in respect of the Lye Gyratory Scheme, and that the

Policy Committee on 30 October 2000 resolved that income from surplus land acquired for the Scheme should be used to fund the overspend. The Directorate of the Urban Environment would therefore object to the appropriation/leasing of the land, but would have no objection to the sale of the land to facilitate the Sure Start Project.

The Directorate of Social Services advise that the Lye, Rufford & Sure Start Project has a funding deficit and will be relying on capital funds from the Children's Centre Fund to break even. The Project therefore has no funds available to purchase the land. If the application to lease the land is refused, then this will delay the project whilst a further site is located, and government targets, which the Council has agreed to, will not be met.

Confirmation has recently been received that the Lye, Rufford & Sure Start Project has been nominated as a Children's Centre, which is a government initiative building on previous programmes such as Sure Start Projects, Neighbourhood Nurseries and Early Excellence Centres. The initiative is aimed at improving outcomes for young children under 5 in disadvantaged areas.

The Authority has been allocated funding which will be available in the Early Years & Childcare Grant from November 2003. Targets linked to the funding are as follows:

7001 children reached by 2010
4551 children reached by 2006
304 childcare places created between 2004-2006

PROPOSAL

1. That the Area Committee consider whether the land at 9-12 Hill Road Lye should be sold or leased to the Lye, Rufford & Wollescote Sure Start Project, subject to planning consent being obtained, the requirement for temporary car parking for the proposed retail store on Orchard Lane/Johnson Street Car Park, and upon terms and conditions to be negotiated and agreed by the Director of Law & Property.
2. That the Area Committee considers its recommendation to the Lead Member for Transportation.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Correspondence with applicant
Emails and Memos from Council Directorates

Contact Officer: Janice Rogers Property Manager Ext 5321