

AGENDA ITEM NO: 10

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: HOUSING COMMITTEE - 25th JANUARY, 2000

SUBJECT: DISPOSAL OF PROPERTY - 2 NEWBOLD STREET, LEAMINGTON SPA

FROM : HOUSING

1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 To request members' approval for the disposal of property to extend the facility for people leaving care.

2. **Background**

2.1 2 Newbold Street is a Council owned property that is in need of extensive renovation, estimated to cost £30,000. When considering the options for refurbishment, the proposal came forward that it could be better used for specialist accommodation in the form of provision for young people leaving care.

2.2 Consequently, a joint proposal has been developed between the Council, Christian Alliance Housing Association and Social Services that, it is intended, will be funded by the Housing Corporation - similar to the current scheme at Warford Lodge.

3. **Property**

3.1 This is a large, detached corner property on three floors plus a basement. The ground floor flat is two bed roomed, self contained and has the benefit of the garden. This flat is tenanted but the tenant would be happy to transfer to a two bed roomed house.

3.2 The maisonette occupying the first and second floors became vacant and, on inspection, was found to be in a very poor state. The cost of refurbishment could be found from within existing budgets, but it is felt a more radical approach to the property is desired that would give better value for money.

4. **Proposals**

4.1 In view of the type of property and the prohibitive cost of refurbishment, it was decided that alternative uses would be investigated.

4.2 Members may recall that Warford Lodge, 79 Radford Road, Leamington Spa has proved to be a very successful project offering four placements for young people leaving care. Government proposals indicate that Social Services Departments will become responsible for accommodation and costs for all under 18 year-olds who have been in their care, as they will no longer be eligible for Housing Benefit,

4.3 It is proposed that the Warford Lodge project be transferred to 2 Newbold Street to increase the accommodation provision to 8 or 9 bedrooms, depending on refurbishment designs.

4.4 Should this be agreed, it is envisaged that Warford Lodge should be utilised for the provision of a Mother and Baby Unit. Again it would seem that Central Government are moving towards restricting access to Council tenancies for single parents under 18 years of age and therefore this provision would be essential in discharging duty under the provisions of the homeless legislation.

5. **Joint Working With Statutory and Voluntary Agencies**

5.1 Christian Alliance Housing Association have leased, and managed the Warford Lodge project for the past three years and have been looking at extending their work in this district.

5.2 Social Services have viewed 2 Newbold Street and consider that it would be an ideal location for this facility.

5.3 Funding for the scheme is currently being considered by the Housing Corporation and as long as they are satisfied on rents, it is anticipated that Social Housing Grant will be given.

6 **Disposal**

6.1 The value of the property has been given as £180,000. In order to facilitate the proposal, and extend Social Housing Grant much further, it is proposed that the property be sold to Christian Alliance Housing Association at nil value in accordance with the Housing Strategy.

6.2 This will have a knock on effect in terms of housing revenue, but this could be regarded as marginal, bearing in mind the enormous benefits that would be created.

7. **Key Issues Strategy**

7.1 It is envisaged that this proposal would help enhance equality of opportunity, reduce Social Exclusion for young people leaving care and promote joint working.

8. **Recommendations**

8.1 That 2 Newbold Street be sold to Christian Alliance Housing Association at net value, the value representing the Council's contribution to Social Housing Grant.

DERRICK DYAS SHEILA FRANCIS
HEAD OF HOUSING HOUSING NEEDS MANAGER

Background Papers

House File
Warford Lodge
LGA Circulars

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Area(s) In District Affected:

All