



Coventry City Council

4

Briefing Note

Report to
Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee

14th July 2010

Report of
Director of City Services and Development

Title
Proposed new Salvation Army residential centre, Harnall Lane West. – Call in
(Foleshill Ward)

1. Purpose of the Report:

- 1.1 This report responds to the call in made by Councillors Ridley, Foster and Smith "What are the reasons that officers did not explore a further option in section 5 of the report the Salvation Army to the Old Council Depot on the Foleshill Road."

2. Consideration of the Call in:

- 2.1 Within the report to Cabinet member on the 17th June, paragraph 5.3 Option 3 Develop the new centre on another site confirmed that other sites had been considered and the conclusion reached was that the Harnall lane site was considered to be the only suitable Council owned site however it did not specify which other sites had been considered.
- 2.2 The files indicate that the criteria being used to assess the suitability of potential sites included:-
- **Availability and deliverability of the development site.**
As the Salvation Army were required to make a funding bid this was a fundamental in order to provide credibility to the grant funding party that the scheme would be able to proceed and the grant would be spent.
 - **A Freehold site**
 - **Within close proximity of existing facility**
Several reasons behind this which included better links on foot to the city centre, local medical facilities and due to the training function the new facility is proposing there were anticipated links to the new city college buildings. It was also an established use in the area.
 - **Near to main bus routes**
 - **Ideally in a discreet location not as currently on a main road frontage**

- **New build preferred, No listed buildings**

Conversion of a listed building to provide the specific facilities required by the Salvation would prove difficult and expensive

2.3 Due to the criteria identified and specifically the key issue of the availability and deliverability of development land the site options were reduced with to those which were specifically considered being :-

Coventry & Warwickshire hospital land

- Ambulance Centre
- Lincoln Street Hospital car park

Coventry City Council

- Harnall lane West

2.4 When the criteria of the site search identified in para 2.2 is applied to the Councils former depot site it becomes clear why the depot site was considered and discounted as it did not meet the criteria.

2.4.1 The costs of delivering the hostel development on the depot site would substantially increase due to the infrastructure requirements of servicing part of a larger site. This assumed that these infrastructure works including estate roads and mains services e.g. gas, electricity and water would need to be incurred by the Salvation Army's scheme ahead of providing infrastructure for the remaining residential element of the site. Additionally due to the fact that the access into the depot site would be coming off a main road, the cost of the work required to survey and design the solution, the amount of land which would be required to accommodate it and physically to construct the access would be much greater proportionally as a result than for a site where the access was off a lower classified road. There were also no guarantees available as to when the residential element of the depot site could be delivered to assist with these increased infrastructure costs.

2.4.2 The location of the hostel on the depot site would affect the design of any housing scheme by having to create a discreet location for the hostel to sit within. It would result in a reduction of the net developable area. If consideration was given to placing the Hostel on the road frontage to reduce the infrastructure costs it would restrict the access to the depot site.

2.4.3 The Swanswell masterplan allocated the former depot site as a housing development site. This is reflected in the emerging City Centre Area Action Plan which also allocates the site as housing. As such a residential institution would require a change of use is to class C2 of the use classes order. Residential dwelling houses would require a change of use to be secured

2.4.4 The value of the remaining residential land would be reduced as developers would be concerned about the saleability of the housing produced with the hostel as a neighbour.

2.5 The adjacent Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital sites were also quickly discounted as not in the Councils control this land and it was indicated by the PCT who owned by the land that they were not in a position at the time to be able to consider the disposal of any PCT land.

2.6 Due the deliverability of site options the options available were quickly reduced to Harnall Lane West as it was held for development purposes.

3. Background information

3.1 In **2004** the Harnall Lane car park was laid out by the Coventry Primary Care Trust on land owned by the Council.

3.2 Planning consent for the temporary use of the land in Harnall lane west as a car park was granted to the Primary Car trust on the **10/11/2003**. The consent required the use to cease no later than **31/03/2008** and explained the reason for this condition was that ' The use of the site on a long term basis as a public car park following the relocation of the Coventry & Warwickshire hospital would be contrary Policy CC45 of the Coventry Development plan 2001, which seeks the long term use of the site for NHS or other mixed use development'.

3.3 The provision of temporary car park was also part of the agreement between the Council and the PCT as part of their purchase the Council's nearby Russell St car park for inclusion in their new city centre health centre LIFT project. As there was a delay in commencing the health centre project, which is now on site and due to complete in February 2012, this is why the condition on the temporary consent was not enforced. Planning committee in July 2009 also required as part of granting their health centre consent alternative public parking was to be provided on the former Coventry & Warwickshire hospital site.

3.4 In **Feb 2007** the Salvation Army approached the Council advising that their current Lincoln Street Hostel was at the end of its economic life and not fit for purpose going forward. Their aspiration was to develop a new residential centre and wanted to work with the Council to consider the options open to them in Coventry.

3.5 On the **14th January 2010** Planning Committee granted consent for the Salvation Army's residential centre scheme. The local community presented petitions against the development to planning committee.

3.6 At the Cabinet Member (City Development) briefing also held on the **14th January 2010** authorisation was given to officers to enter into negotiations with the Salvation Army for a freehold land exchange deal, subject to reporting back on alternative parking provision.

3.6.1 Subsequently conditional terms for a land exchange have been agreed. Any exchange is conditional on the formal closure of the car park. The valuations of the two interests which are to be exchanged have been independently assessed by The Valuation Office Agency an executive agency of HM Revenue & Customs. As the values of the two interests are comparable, under the Councils constitution the approval of the land exchange terms falls within officer delegated powers.

- 3.7 On the **18th February 2010** Cabinet Member (City Development) approved the commencement of the statutory process for the closure of the Harnall Lane West long stay surface car park in order to facilitate the development.
- 3.8 On the **4th March 2010**, the formal notice was placed in the Coventry Evening Telegraph, providing a 21 day period for any objections to the closure. Objections were received and therefore under the closure procedure it was required to go back to Cabinet Member (City Development) to hear these objections.
- 3.9 Due to the timing of the objection period closing at the end of March it was hoped that the report to consider any objections would go before Cabinet Member in April during purdah ahead of the elections in May. This wasn't possible and the report was held over until after the elections which lead to the latest report going to Cabinet Member on the **17th June 2010**, to consider the objections. At that meeting after hearing the objectors and being satisfied that additional alternative car parking was available the recommendation to vary the car park order was accepted by Cabinet Member