

Committee: Finance and Administration Committee

Agenda Item

Date: 15 November 2007

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Title: Wicken House, Wicken Bonhunt

Author: Alasdair Bovaird, Chief Executive

Item for
decision

Summary

This report seeks members views in response to an enquiry from the agents seeking to dispose of Wicken House

Recommendations

1. That the committee advise the Chief Executive on how they wish to respond to the enquiry received from the County Council's agents for the disposal of Wicken House.

Background Papers

Correspondence received from Lambert Smith Hampton by the Chief Executive.

Impact

Communication/Consultation	None – the decision to close and dispose of Wicken House rests with Essex County Council
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Finance	Were the District Council to seek to acquire Wicken House, it would need to be assured that the finances were available. The value of the building and the associated estate would be significant and may be in excess of £1 million.
Human Rights	None
Legal implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

1. Members will be aware that the County Council has taken the decision to close Wicken House and to dispose of the property. In accordance with

the County Council's established policy, their agents (Lambert Smith Hampton) have written to the council enquiring whether we would have any interest in acquiring the property before it is advertised on the open market.

2. It is believed that they have written in similar terms to Wicken Bonhunt Parish.
3. Officers can identify no need that the district council might have for such a facility. Nor does it seem likely to officers that the council would have the resources necessary for its acquisition. However, given that the closure has been the subject of some local controversy, it was felt appropriate to allow members the opportunity to reach a view on this matter.
4. The Director of Development will be considering what advice might be required on the planning policies that might apply to these premises and will be contacting both the agency and the County Council with the relevant information.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the council acquire premises which it does not require, and which it cannot afford.	Low	High	If the premises are not required, they should not be purchased.