

Committee: Resources
Date: 20 November 2003
Agenda Item No: 18
Title: Dunmow Offices and Depot
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Summary

- 1 This report provides further information regarding the Depot and offices site in Great Dunmow as requested by the Resources Committee on 18 September. The report relates to land use and value and seeks Members' guidance as to the way forward.

Site Value

- 2 So as to provide a base line starting point, officers have taken advice to establish a possible maximum figure for site value. This assumes the whole of the site is utilised for residential accommodation. For convenience the site has been divided into three zones, as follows:

(a) the existing listed building fronting the High Street converted to residential use	Site value 400,000
(b) the modern office extension demolished – site redeveloped – site value	Site value 250,000
(c) The depot demolished with the site redeveloped	Site value 750,000
Total site value	£1,400,000

This potential value is offset by the costs associated with relocating the depot (land and buildings) and maintaining a UDC presence in Great Dunmow.

Relocating the Depot

- 3 Members will be aware that a site has been identified and agreed with Essex County Council at Chelmsford Road, Great Dunmow. There is an expectation that this site will become available during the early part of 2006. Building works would follow resulting in a transfer away from the current site towards the end of 2006.

Maintaining a presence in Great Dunmow

- 4 Two options are feasible within the site – the refurbishment of the existing listed building or the building of a new facility:
 - (a) The refurbishment option – Members will be aware of the current use by UDC and the voluntary sector through the Information Centre, UDC

office use the CAB and Uttlesford Voluntary Sector Training. Members may not be aware that 700sq ft is under utilised because of access difficulties and floor loading problems. Refurbishment will make this space available for letting or voluntary sector use. A further 360 sq ft will become available as staff transfer to the new depot facility. Commercial letting rates for such accommodation would be in the order of between £10/£12 per sq ft.

If refurbishment were to be the preferred option then the total site value would need to be appropriately adjusted downwards and the costs of the necessary comprehensive refurbishment to bring the building up to modern office standards would need to be taken into account.

- (b) A new facility – if such were to be provided the resultant building would match requirements both in size and in the provision of appropriate standards without compromise. If this were the preferred option then total site value would reduce by the value of the area taken up by the new building and the cost of providing a new building would have to be taken into account.

In both options Members would need to take a view on the support provided by UDC to the voluntary sector.

Funding

- 5 There is an expectation that whichever direction is preferred there will be sufficient capital arising out of the site value outlined above. This includes for the relocation of the depot.

Further representations

- 6 The Great Dunmow Town Council have written to express a strong view that public car parking should feature in any future development of the site.

RECOMMENDED that Members indicate their preferences as to the way forward.

Background Papers: Previous report to Resources – 18 September 2003.