

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/101/2007-08.
Date of meeting: 4 February 2008.



Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.

Subject: Possible Purchase - Buckhurst Hill Ambulance Station, Knighton Lane.

Officer contact for further information: Michael Shorten (01992-564124).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992-564470).

Recommendation:

To advise the London Ambulance Service NHS Trust that the District Council has no operational requirement for this site and declines the opportunity to purchase.

Report:

1. The London Ambulance Service NHS Trust has resolved to relocate its Buckhurst Hill Ambulance Station to a more appropriate location. A suitable site has been found and the current site at Knighton Lane will become surplus to requirements.
2. In accordance with its land sales protocol, the property is now being offered to 'priority purchasers', including local councils, before placing the site for sale on the open market.
3. The site extends to some 0.71 acre/0.29 hectare with an ambulance station having a gross external area of 10,220 sq.ft/950 sq.metres, constructed in the mid-50's of steel lattice/portal frame and brick/block construction with a flat roof to the accommodation areas and a shallow pitched roof to the garage. It is situated in a mainly residential area on the edge of Epping Forest in the position shown on the Ordnance Survey plan attached at Appendix 1.
4. Outline planning consent has been granted for the demolition of the existing building structure and the construction of 16 two-bedroomed flats in a two or three storey development with 24 on-site car parking spaces.
5. Service Directors have been made aware of the availability of this site to establish whether it meets any current operational requirements. That consultation exercise did not produce any firm interest in using the premises. However, the Director of Housing requested that the Council's four Preferred Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) partners be considered as 'priority purchasers' for a mix of private and affordable housing. In response, the Trust advised that it was not prepared to treat the RSLs as 'priority purchasers' but agreed to provide details of the RSLs to its selling agent to send the sales particulars to each of them. Further, the Trust mentioned that any bids received from RSLs will be in competition with each other, private developers and any other interested parties submitting bids.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

6. The District Council has no operational requirement for these premises and therefore declines the opportunity to purchase.

Options for action:

7. Other options are not considered appropriate.

Consultation undertaken:

8. The NHS Trust offers the site for sale to 'priority purchasers', including local councils, in accordance with its surplus land and property sales protocol.

9. As reported, the Council's Service Directors have been consulted on the availability of these premises to purchase.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: None.

Personnel: Valuation and Estate Management Service.

Land: Buckhurst Hill Ambulance Station, Knighton Lane.

Community Plan/BVPP reference: N/A.

Relevant statutory powers: N/A.

Background papers: Property file EV/1144.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: None.

Key Decision reference (if required): N/A.