



# Hammersmith & Fulham Buildings Consultation

July to September 2010

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contact [buildingsconsultation@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:buildingsconsultation@lbhf.gov.uk)

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## 1. Introduction

Like councils across the country, Hammersmith & Fulham Council is under serious financial pressures as a result of the national budget crisis. Our priority has to be people not buildings.

Therefore, the council is considering the sale of 9 buildings considered surplus to requirements, plus withdrawal from 3 other leased buildings that are no longer needed, and is considering alternative use of a further building.

**This would be the first wave of buildings the council considers for disposal, and further sites are likely to be proposed for disposal later this year.**

The particular buildings that the council is considering at this time are:

- Fulham Town Hall
- The Sands End Community Centre
- The Askham Centre
- Distillery Lane Centre
- Palingswick House
- The Irish Centre
- 58 Bulwer Street
- The Greswell Street Centre
- 50 Commonwealth Avenue

The three properties where the council proposes to discontinue its lease are:

- The Information Centre in Hammersmith Broadway
- Cambridge House
- Barclay House

In addition, the council will consider alternative use can be made of:

- Hammersmith Library

This is not a new approach – the council has disposed of assets in the past that have been deemed surplus to requirements, in order to address the council debt, and to make better use of resources. The programme of moving council services and staff into fewer, more cost-effective sites is well underway. **The council has shrunk its use of space by 40 per cent already with asset sales of £42 million.** Vacated properties include Riverview House offices and Stowe Road depot. Now the council is asking voluntary groups to do the same. While these sales will make a significant contribution to debt repayment, they represent a modest proportion of the council's property portfolio. The council's full property register has been published online in the interests of transparency.

We have concluded that, on balance, the interests of local people are best served by disposing of buildings that are surplus to our requirements, and focusing our resources on investing in our front line services.

## 2. The impact on services

The disposal of some of these buildings may have an impact on the local services available to our residents. However, it is likely that in many cases, this will result in a relocation or reconfiguration of a service, rather than the service no longer being available.

As stated previously, our focus is on people, not buildings, and the council will endeavour to ensure key services are retained for our residents.

## **2a. Impact on a council service**

Where a building accommodates a council service, the council will seek to relocate the service to an alternative site. This may include a reconfiguration of the service to make it work better for our local residents, be more cost effective and deliver better value for money.

This will include the rolling out of “SmartWorking” the council’s solution for maximising the use of space whilst also improving customer service, work/life balance and job satisfaction for council employees. Our SmartWorking approach will result in a significant decrease in the amount of accommodation needed for council staff, through using space more flexibly and creatively.

## **2b. Impact on the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector**

The term “3<sup>rd</sup> Sector” describes community and voluntary groups, registered charities both large and small, foundations, trusts, social enterprises and co-operatives. A number of buildings we are considering for disposal are currently occupied by these types of organisations.

We believe that establishing community hubs in the highest areas of deprivation in the borough will better meet the accommodation needs of the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector now and in years to come. The council is establishing a hub in Edward Woods Estate in the north of the borough, and a hub is being developed in the south of the borough by an external organisation, Fulham NDC.

For those organisations that would be affected by the loss of the buildings being considered for disposal, the Council will endeavour to ensure they are provided with support:

- For those organisations commissioned to deliver essential services, no change will be made until an alternative site has been identified
- For those services funded by the council’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Investment Fund (the council’s main grants programme for the sector), organisations will be given priority for alternative council accommodation that is available
- For all other organisations, the council will seek to ensure appropriate advice and support is available to assist them in identifying alternative premises

## **2c. Developing Community Hubs in Hammersmith and Fulham**

In September 2009, Cabinet agreed the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector Strategy, which set out the council’s approach providing premises for the sector, through the development of Community Hubs, which offer cost effective, accessible and sustainable space.

Hubs will be located in buildings which are unsuitable for disposal and which will support the delivery of services that meet our local priorities and provide positive benefits to local residents. Hubs will offer a range of facilities for the community and for 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations, and will be determined by what else is available in that area. Hubs will include facilities for:

- Office space – both short term leases for new or establishing organisations or longer term leases
- Shared, flexible desk space
- Shared meeting or training space

- Shared activity space
- Postage/internet/IT facilities
- Space for community café

Community Hubs will initially be developed in the borough's highest areas of deprivation:

- North: W11-W12 (a hub is being established on Edward Woods Estate)
- South: North Fulham (a hub is being developed by North Fulham NDC)

Both sites will be fully accessible and have excellent transport links.

### **3. The buildings**

Detailed below is information regarding each of the buildings we are considering for disposal. The information in this document is fairly brief, if you would like more information about any of the particular buildings before responding to our consultation, please contact us at [buildingsconsultation@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:buildingsconsultation@lbhf.gov.uk) or write to us at:

H&F Buildings Consultation  
Hammersmith Town Hall  
London W6 9LJ

### **4. Fulham Town Hall**

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham is unusual in that it has 2 town halls, a legacy left from when the borough configuration was very different, and the two areas were separate boroughs.

Fulham Town Hall is one of two town halls in one of the smallest boroughs in the country. It is very under-used and requires major renovation which the council cannot afford in the current economic climate. Most council services have been moved to other buildings over recent years and the council argues that in this day and age, taxpayers simply cannot afford the luxury of having two town halls in one borough.

The council wishes to see Fulham Town Hall bringing new business and vitality to the heart of Fulham. Retaining its heritage and historical identity will be at the heart of any future proposal – we cannot and would not want to change the fabric or identity of the building.

Services such as registrars currently located here will be relocated to suitable accessible accommodation elsewhere in the borough. Tenants and leaseholders who presently get support and advice from reception services at Fulham TH will continue to be supported through even better local arrangements.

### **5. The Sands End Community Centre**

The Sands End Community Centre is a two storey building close to Wandsworth Bridge Road and the new Imperial Wharf Development Scheme. The building currently houses under-used gym facilities and adult education classes which could be readily re-located to better locations in the area. The centre also houses the local children's centre which could move to better facilities in Townmead Road where there is outside play space, and a local library.

The library at Sands End is the least used of the seven libraries in the borough. It issues only 13 items per hour at a cost of over £5 per visit and its future as a potential community facility elsewhere in the ward will be the subject of a separate consultation this summer.

The future of the Library at the Sands End Centre will be subject to a separate consultation later in the year.

## **6. The Askham Centre**

The Askham Centre is a two storey building located on the western end of the Uxbridge Road, close to the border with LB Ealing. The building occupied by LBHF Children's Services, with some voluntary sector organisations also operating from the building.

In recent years, Council restructuring and market-testing of services has radically reduced the in-house workforce, resulting in a much reduced accommodation requirement. The services currently located at the Askham Centre could be relocated in other council buildings.

## **7. Distillery Lane Centre**

This site has been vacant since early June following the relocation of the after-school and child care service to St Paul's Primary School.

## **8. Palingswick House**

Palingswick House is a three storey building, with a separate annex and coach house located on King Street in Hammersmith. The building provides accommodation to approximately twenty one 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations, providing office space and meeting rooms.

Palingswick House is poor in terms of access - there is no lift to the basement or upper floors, no ramp access to the Annex or Coach House and currently no loop or induction system on the site. Extensive investment would be required to bring the accessibility and general condition of the building up to an acceptable standard, which the council is not in a position to afford. However selling the building could raise a multi-million pound contribution to the debt reduction plan.

With the proposed development of a Community Hub in the north of the borough, and a further being developed in the south by an external partner, there is not a strong business case to also retain Palingswick House for 3<sup>rd</sup> sector premises.

## **9. 58 Bulwer Street**

58 Bulwer Street is a three storey building adjacent to Westfield Shopping Centre and the new Shepherds Bush Library. The building is let under three separate leases:

- Ground floor: The ground floor comprises a large hall with a kitchen and WCs and offices. The space is hired by a range of organisations for sports, dance, religious and social activities.
- 1<sup>st</sup> floor: the first floor comprises a large hall, large kitchen, offices and a treatment room. The space is used to provide the local Children's Centre, which is commissioned by the council.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> floor: the second floor comprises one office and a small IT training room.

There is no disabled access to the first floor where the Children's Centre is located, or to the offices on the second floors. Parents accessing the Children's Centre are currently required to carry pushchairs and buggies up a flight of stairs.

Alternative accommodation will be identified for the Children's Centre and users of the ground floor community hall will be provided with information on alternative sites for hire in the borough. However, with extensive space to be available over the Edward Woods and NDC Hub sites, there is not a strong business case to also retain 58 Bulwer Street for 3<sup>rd</sup> sector premises use.

## **10. The Irish Centre**

The Irish Centre is a large two storey building, situated near Hammersmith Broadway shopping centre. It comprises a large hall (with bar and stage), offices and kitchen on the ground floor, with offices and meeting rooms on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. The building's halls and meeting rooms are widely used by a range of groups, businesses and organisations, and is a popular venue for meetings, culture, arts and social events. The building has good disabled access, with a lift to the upper floor and disabled toilets.

The council is planning to meet with the wider Irish community to discuss options for future funding arrangements for the Irish Centre. Its lease does not expire until 2012, so this will be a long lead in from consultation to any changes that are proposed. There are a number of issues which need to be considered before a final decision can be made on the options for this building, which will be subject to a separate report later in the year.

## **11. 50 Commonwealth Avenue**

50 Commonwealth Avenue is a two storey building on the White City Estate. The building provides day care centre facilities on the ground floor and offices and an IT suite on the first floor. The building is very dilapidated in parts and is in need of renovation. Because of this it is costly to run and offers poor value for money. The building has limited access and there is no disabled access to the 1<sup>st</sup> floor. The occupant of the building is currently commissioned to provide day care services for older people, together with a range of preventative services.

In order to release this building for disposal, alternative accommodation will need to be identified. The service will continue to be delivered from this building until an alternative has been identified, after which, this building will be considered surplus to requirements.

## **12. Greswell Street Centre**

The Greswell Centre is a large single storey building, previously a school, located in Fulham. Although the centre is fully accessible, the building is not ideal in terms of access by public transport which has an impact on the ability of disabled service users to visit the Centre. The current occupants (Hammersmith & Fulham Action on Disability [HAFAD]) are commissioned by Community Services and by Children's Services to provide a range of services for disabled residents.

In order to release this building for disposal, alternative accommodation will need to be identified for HAFADs commissioned services, and it is proposed that this service could be relocated to the White City Collaborative Care centre in 2013.

After that time, the building will be considered for disposal, or may be part of the borough's Building Schools for the Future programme.

### **13. Hammersmith Library**

Hammersmith Library is situated on the west of Shepherd's Bush Road to the north of Hammersmith Town Centre. This two storey example of Victorian architecture is a Grade II listed building.

The current site of Hammersmith Library is a listed building from which it is difficult to run a modern, accessible library. It may be possible for the current library to move to a better site in Hammersmith Broadway. As part of borough-wide plans to expand popular schools, the adjacent Sacred Heart High school is looking for extra space and may be interested in buying the current library site as part of a major investment in redeveloping the school. This proposal will only go ahead following consultation with residents and only if a suitable site for the library in the centre of Hammersmith is secured.

The future of the Hammersmith Library service will be subject to a separate consultation exercise later this year.

### **14 & 15: Barclay House and Cambridge House**

Barclay House and Cambridge House are two buildings leased by the council, and occupied by children's services.

Cambridge House is a 1960's property comprising of 3 interlinking buildings located in Cambridge Grove, Hammersmith. Children's services occupy two suites at Cambridge House under a lease which expires in 2014.

Barclay House is a 6 storey period building in Effie Road, close to Fulham Broadway. The council occupies the entire building under a lease which expires in 2011.

Both of these buildings are no longer needed. Council restructuring and the market-testing of services over the last four years has radically reduced the in-house workforce resulting in a much-reduced accommodation requirement.

### **16. The Information Centre, Hammersmith Broadway**

Unit 20 The Broadway, is a ground floor shop unit situated in Hammersmith Broadway Shopping Centre, leased to a voluntary service who provide a information service to local residents and visitors. The unit comprises one large main space, a small kitchen area and one W.C. The Council leases the unit and is required to pay business rates and a service charge, which it does not recoup through charging a rent.

With Hammersmith Town Hall located only a few minutes away, together with the increased availability of information through the internet, the use of this space for an information centre is not considered best use of this site. With extensive space to be available over the Edward Woods and NDC Hub sites, there is not a strong business case to also retain Unit 20 The Broadway for 3<sup>rd</sup> sector premises use. The council will seek to relinquish its lease on this property. If this is not possible, it will be offered on a new lease at market rent.



## 17. Having your say

We would welcome your comments on the proposals contained in this consultation report. Following the consultation, a report will be presented to Cabinet in 2010 for decision, outlining the proposal and recommendations made by officers, together with consultation feedback.

**The consultation period will run from  
1<sup>st</sup> July 2010 until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2010**

To give us your views, you can:

- A. Fill in an on-line questionnaire available at:**  
[http://www.citizenspace.com/local/lbhf/Buildings\\_Consultation](http://www.citizenspace.com/local/lbhf/Buildings_Consultation)
- B. Send you completed questionnaire by post to:**  
H&F Buildings Consultation  
Hammersmith Town Hall  
London W6 9JU
- C. Email your comments and suggestions to:**  
[Buildingsconsultation@lbhf.gov.uk](mailto:Buildingsconsultation@lbhf.gov.uk)
- D. Drop in to one of our open consultation days detailed below**

**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2010  
10am until 6pm  
The Small Hall, Hammersmith Town Hall**

**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2010  
10am until 6pm  
The Small Hall, Hammersmith Town Hall**