

Appendix 2d - Palingswick House



Summary of H&F Buildings Consultation responses regarding Palingswick House

Key themes:

Relocation issues
Impact on local residents
Financial / property issues
Consultation document and process

From response	LBHF rebuttal/comments
Relocation issues	
1. Where would residents of LBHF get community transport?	The council will work with the Community Transport Project to try to identify a suitable alternative location. The majority of CTP service is a collection based service – rather than residents travelling to Palingswick House, therefore it is considered possible for the service to move to another location relatively easily.
2. LBHF must retain a central hub for community organisations, whether based at Palingswick House or elsewhere in Central Hammersmith.	The council's priority is to establish hubs in areas of highest deprivation – primarily the north of the borough, and north Fulham. The council will explore every opportunity to establish a hub location in the centre of the borough. However, Palingswick House does not meet the council's criteria as a suitable venue for a hub location.
Impact on local residents	
3. There would be severe impact on local services and therefore local residents due to the significant number of organisations that are based there.	The equalities impact assessment has not identified any particular significant negative impact should this building no longer be available. In fact, a positive impact could be delivered should services relocate closer to areas of deprivation, where need is likely to be higher.
Financial / property issues	
4. What are the legal aspects of this proposal? The building should be left for the community of Hammersmith and Fulham.	The council has undertaken a title check on this property and there are no restrictive covenants that would adversely affect a sale of this property.
5. Could it not be turned into the hub for LBHF?	Palingswick House does not meet the council's criteria for a community hub; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not a sustainable or cost-effective environment to run • It is not a fully accessible or flexible space - the cost of the necessary improvements is prohibitive • It is a property that could potentially achieve a sale - reducing the council's level of debt is a key issue and buildings that would not otherwise obtain a sale would be a priority for hubs

From response	LBHF rebuttal/comments
6. Palingswick House should not be sold without assisting the organisations to find alternative accessible and affordable premises and identifying accessible and affordable meeting venues in central Hammersmith.	The council will ensure that assistance is provided to help groups identify alternative premises. The council will also provide details of halls and meeting spaces available in the borough.
7. It is appalling to hear about the lamentable state of the council's buildings, and cannot understand how this situation has come to be so extreme that renovations may cost multimillion pounds. This is clearly very bad administration and no one should let community buildings rot.	Under the terms of their lease, the tenant is responsible for the internal repairs and maintenance of the building. However, this is a fairly old building that requires substantial renovation to bring it up to an acceptable standard of access.
8. What sources of funding have been investigated to resolve this problem?	The council does not have resources available to invest in the renovation of this building. The tenant would have been able to apply for external capital funding to undertake renovations and repairs, but to our knowledge has not done so.
9. Sale of the property on the open market will not achieve the sort of return the council is seeking in the current economic crisis. The tenants of the building should have the opportunity to take it over. What happened to the promised 'community right-to-buy' for local organisations?	Community based organisations are able to purchase properties that the council is selling. However, the council is bound by S123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to achieve best consideration reasonably obtainable when disposing of its properties unless specific or general consent of the SoS is obtained for disposal at an undervalue. The council has taken property advice on the sale of this property and believes it can obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable for this property within a reasonable period of time. If the property is placed on the open market community based organisations are able to bid for the property. However, in order to raise sufficient funds to pay off council debt the council will be selling the site at full market value.
Consultation document and process	
10. Further we request that a separate consultation is held for each of the buildings being considered for sale and from which voluntary organisations are currently providing services.	The council did not consider it efficient to undertake a separate consultation on each building included in the report. By grouping buildings under one consultation, residents were able to understand the broader context and overall approach of the council, plus to choose to respond to questions about those buildings they are interested in.
11. How does the council consider a building surplus to requirements? Palingswick House is used 7 days a week by a great number of charities and community services.	The availability of alternative buildings, halls and venues for hire across the borough has been used to determine which buildings are surplus to the council's requirements.