

Title of Report:	The Former Control Tower, Greenham Common
Report to be considered by:	Executive
Date of Meeting:	19 December 2013
Forward Plan Ref:	EX2732

Purpose of Report:

To consider the sale of the former Control Tower at Greenham Common.

Recommended Action:

Following consideration of the offers as discussed in the Part II section of this report and

- 1. Subject to confirmation of the funding package detailed in Part II that the Control Tower and associated land be offered to Greenham Parish Council, but**
- 2. In the absence of such confirmation by 24 January 2014 then the Control Tower be offered to one of the other bidders.**

It is recommended that:

Officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to be given delegated authority to agree the terms of the sale to the purchaser and to exchange contracts by 31 March 2014

Reason for decision to be taken:

To progress the disposal of the Control Tower and to bring a redundant property back into use.

Other options considered:

That the property be sold to one of the other bidders

Key background documentation:

- Guidelines for Community Right to Bid
- Part II report accompanying this report

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Strategy priorities:

- ☒ **CSP2 – Promoting a vibrant district**
- ☒ **CSP4 – Protecting the environment**

The proposals will also help achieve the following Council Strategy principle:

- ☒ **CSP6 - Living within our means**

The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the above Council Strategy priorities and principle by:

Securing the the long term future of an iconic building with benefits for the local community.

Portfolio Member Details	
Name & Telephone No.:	Councillor Alan Law - Tel (01491) 873614
E-mail Address:	alaw@westberks.gov.uk
Date Portfolio Member agreed report:	10 December 2013

Contact Officer Details	
Name:	Amanda Dennis
Job Title:	Asset Strategy Officer
Tel. No.:	01635 519399
E-mail Address:	adennis@westberks.gov.uk

Implications

Policy:	The property is listed as a property of community value and so the process for community right to bid in the Localism Act 2011 had to be followed. The Council's draft guidelines on community asset transfer apply.
Financial:	The sale will produce a capital receipt but this could be affected by the claw back provisions in favour of Greenham Common Trust
Personnel:	No implications
Legal/Procurement:	Counsel's opinion was received in respect of the claw back provision. The claw back is enforceable and the level of payment depends upon market conditions at the time the claw back is exercised. Following conclusion of negotiations Legal Services will deal with the Transfer of the Site from a conveyancing perspective
Property:	The sale of the Control Tower to include an additional area of land outside the current fence line
Risk Management:	There is a risk that the refurbished building will not be delivered after sale. There is also a risk that the claw back will significantly reduce the capital receipt.

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes	Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:			
• Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
• Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Outcome (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)			
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at www.westberks.gov.uk/eia			<input type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Is this item subject to call-in?	Yes: <input checked="checked" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:</p> <p>The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Item is Urgent Key Decision <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Report is to note only <input type="checkbox"/></p>		

Executive Summary

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Control Tower was successfully listed as an asset of community value under the Community Right to Bid legislation in the Localism Act 2011. Following the moratorium required under the Act the Control Tower was put on the market for sale and seven offers were received.
- 1.2 These offers were considered by the Asset Management Group who short listed three bidders who were invited to present their schemes.
- 1.3 A petition has been received stating that the signatories would like to see the building retained by the community and put to a community use.
- 1.4 The capital receipt may be subject to a claw back in favour of Greenham Common Trust.

2. Proposals

- 2.1 The bids received have been considered and the related Part II report outlines the proposals.
- 2.2 It is proposed that the Control Tower and an additional area outside the current fence be sold.

3. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes

- 3.1 This item is not relevant to equality because it relates to the sale of a vacant property to a third party.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 That the Control Tower is sold to Greenham Parish Council, subject to the conditions stated in the related Part II report. If these conditions are not met then the property be offered to one of the other bidders.

Executive Report

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The former Control Tower at Greenham Common is a Grade 2 listed building owned by West Berkshire Council which has not been used for many years. When it was transferred to WBC there was an aspiration that its future use would include leisure and community activities. The Control Tower was recently offered for sale on the open market. Included with the Control Tower is an additional area of land outside the existing fence. The building and land is shown on the plan at appendix A.
- 1.2 Prior to the property being put on the open market Greenham Parish Council submitted a successful application for the Control Tower to be included on the list of buildings of community value which the Council has to maintain under the Localism Act 2011. One of the consequences of this is that when the property is to be sold a period of 6 months must be allowed for interested community organisations to prepare and make an offer for the purchase of the property and during this 6 month period the building owner is not permitted to sell the building to anyone other than the community organisation. However, after expiry of the 6 months the building owner can sell to whoever they wish. This period expired on 7 September 2013 and the marketing period for the Control Tower was tied into this timescale.
- 1.3 At the closing date of the marketing period seven offers were received. These were shortlisted and three of the bidders were invited to do a presentation of their schemes. Information about the offers and presentations is in the Part II element of this report.
- 1.4 The information obtained from the presentations and that previously supplied was then assessed on the following basis:
 - (1) Capital receipt offered
 - (2) Capital funding secured
 - (3) Funding to run the community offering and strength of business plan
 - (4) Financial covenant strength and track record of applicant
 - (5) Contribution to local economy – e.g. which groups will benefit, use of building by local interest groups, availability of public access.
 - (6) Interaction/consideration with adjoining use of Greenham Common.

2. Petition

- 2.1 At the Council meeting on 19 September 2013 a petition was submitted, signed by 1,292 signatures, which stated:
- 2.2 “WE THE UNDERSIGNED believe that the Control Tower at Greenham Common is the most iconic structure in Greenham and should be in the hands of the community, for the benefit of the community.

2.3 WE CALL UPON West Berkshire Council as current custodians and owners to put community and heritage above market value and do whatever is necessary to guarantee that the Control Tower is held in perpetuity for community use, and is not for private or commercial interests.”

2.4 The views of the local residents as expressed in the petition were taken into account in arriving at the recommendation along with the risks associated with the claw back provisions.

3. Recommendation

3.1 Following consideration of the offers as discussed in the Part II section of this report that:

- (1) Subject to confirmation of the funding package detailed in Part II that the Control Tower and associated land be offered to Greenham Parish Council.
- (2) In the absence of such confirmation by 24 January 2014 then the Control Tower be offered to one of the other bidders.

3.2 It is recommended that:

Officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, are given delegated authority to agree the terms of the sale to the purchaser and to exchange contracts by 31 March 2014.

Appendices

Appendix A - site plan

Consultees

Local Stakeholders: Evidenced by petition

Officers Consulted: Andy Day, John Ashworth, Andy Walker, David Holling, Corporate Board and Asset Management Group

Trade Union: Not consulted