



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

**COUNCIL CABINET**  
**16 March 2004**

Report of the Directors of Corporate Services and Education

## St Helen's House

### RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To authorise the Director of Corporate Services to arrange for the preparation of a Development and Conservation Brief as the first step in the marketing of St Helen's House site for disposal
- 1.2 To note the proposals for the relocation of Adult Learning Services currently being delivered from St Helen's House, pending its closure at the end of this academic year.

### REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.2 The buildings on the site need extensive repair and refurbishment. The Council has no sustainable use for the buildings. To ensure that they are brought back into beneficial use, the property should be marketed on the basis of a Development and Conservation Brief.
- 2.3 The proposals for relocating Adult Learning Services will make better use of existing under-used facilities and meet the needs of service users.

### SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The need to carry out an option appraisal on St Helen's House's future was identified in the Council's July 2003 Asset Management Plan.
- 3.2 The cost of refurbishing the buildings, including providing access for disabled people, was estimated at £5 million in a study carried out by consultant architects in 2001. Repairs to St Helen's House itself are estimated at £1.9 million, excluding improvement work such as providing access for disabled people. Currently, a number of rooms have been closed for safety reasons, a temporary boiler has been installed following failure of the boiler and the building is suffering from accelerating deterioration of its major elements. The building is on English Heritage's Buildings at Risk Register.
- 3.3 Adult Education currently occupies the buildings. Alternative accommodation is being sought for this service pending the closure of St Helen's House at the end of the current academic year. The possibility of accommodating some of the evening provision on two evenings a week at St Benedict Catholic School and Performing Arts College has been explored and will be arranged subject to budgetary

considerations. There is also potential to absorb more of the evening programme within existing Adult Learning provision in other schools.

- 3.4 Some of the adult learning classes run at St Helen's House are focused on meetings the needs of people with learning difficulties who are provided with transport to St Helen's House. These programmes will transfer to the Adult Learning Service's new learning centre in the former Allen Park School.
- 3.5 However, the loss of St Helen's House presents the need to accommodate a daytime programme for those people who either live locally or prefer to travel into the city centre. The Education Service and the Social Services Department are working together to negotiate the potential use of the Rycote Centre for this purpose. This proposal would result in a new range of courses and activities becoming available at the Rycote Centre from September 2004, which Rycote Centre users and members of the public would access together. The Adult Learning Service already provides support staff to help disabled people access learning, so it is well placed to further develop inclusive learning for adults.
- 3.6 A group of Members and officers met in February this year to carry out an option appraisal with the objective of determining whether the Council has a sustainable use for the buildings. The group considered:
- all buildings on the site (six)
  - service needs in relation to Council objectives
  - capital investment needed and sources of funding
  - revenue costs for running a service and maintaining a building
- 3.7 The Group concluded that the Council had no sustainable use for the buildings and therefore the buildings/site should be disposed of. To ensure that the heritage of St Helen's House is protected, the group proposed that a Development and Conservation Brief be prepared for the site. Details of options considered are given in Appendix 2.

## OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4. See Appendix 2.

<b>For more information contact:</b>	Chris Edwards 01332 255070 e-mail <a href="mailto:chris.edwards@derby.gov.uk">chris.edwards@derby.gov.uk</a> .
<b>Background papers:</b>	Presentation and Minutes from Option Appraisal Meeting 11 February 2001
<b>List of appendices:</b>	Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – Options for use considered

## IMPLICATIONS

### Financial

- 1.1 The cost of the Development and Conservation Brief is anticipated to be £10,000. This can be funded from the Pump Priming fund, repayment being made from any receipt received for the site/buildings.
- 1.2 It is not possible to estimate, until a development and conservation brief has been written and possible uses agreed, the level of capital receipt that may be received.

### Legal

2. Any marketing exercise will need to ensure that the Council receives the best price reasonably obtainable in accordance with the requirements of Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

### Personnel

3. None.

### Corporate Objectives and Priorities for Change

- 4.1 The disposal of the building/site is intended to provide the means of refurbishing St Helen's House, an important Grade 1 listed building, thereby contributing to the Council's objective of **making Derby a city of shops, commercial and leisure activities.**
- 4.2 The relocation of Adult Education Services will support the Council's objective of **making Derby a city of education.**

## OPTIONS FOR USE CONSIDERED

	Proposal	Reason for Rejection
1	Continued use for adult education, in full/part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not sufficient funding available for high cost of repairs/refurbishment.</li> <li>• Lack of suitability even after repair/refurbishment.</li> <li>• Significant period of closure for repair/refurbishment.</li> <li>• Change in direction of adult education in particular to ensure suitable courses are provided in suitable premises.</li> <li>• In addition, for partial use – additional revenue costs required.</li> </ul>
2	Museum/art gallery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitability – size of rooms/environment.</li> <li>• Lack of capital funding - any available directed towards World Heritage Site.</li> <li>• Depletion of main museum/gallery if some exhibits removed leading to reduced attraction/use</li> <li>• No required revenue funding available.</li> </ul>
3	Register Office/conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internal arrangement and room sizes not suitable.</li> <li>• Location not sufficiently central.</li> <li>• No identified demand for conference facilities.</li> <li>• Not sufficient funding for high cost of repair/refurbishment.</li> <li>• Length of time for repair/refurbishment to be completed.</li> </ul>
4	Civic purposes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No capital or revenue funding.</li> <li>• No identified need.</li> </ul>
5	Pupil referral unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not suitable use.</li> <li>• Not sufficient funding for high cost of repair/refurbishment.</li> </ul>