

To: Cabinet Scrutiny Committee

From: Des Crilley Director of Communities Cultural Services

Date: 28 March 2011

Subject: This report is to update Cabinet Scrutiny on the progress made to date on the Edenbridge Centre.

Classification: Unrestricted

1. Background

- 1.1 The Eden Valley Secondary School site has political history going back to its closure in 2002. Mindful of the impact this would have on the local community, the then Leader of KCC, Lord Sandy Bruce-Lockhart, promised to make the site available to the people of Edenbridge as a base for local community groups.
- 1.2 Being within the Green Belt the site is directly affected by restrictive general planning policies for the area and this has been a major factor in the considerable delays to the scheme. Following planning consent in July 2009, a revised consent was obtained from Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) on the 15th November 2010 for a 1,400m² Community Centre with 40 residential dwellings by way of enabling development.
- 1.3 The project is included in the current budget funded from capital receipts generated from the enabling development. The previous consented scheme had a financial deficit of some £1.6 - £2.3m and despite the current economic conditions impacting on land values, the deficit has now been resolved through optimising build costs and by attracting internal and external investment.

2. Current position

- 2.2 Working with internal and external partners has secured the necessary investment to make the project viable, while long term revenue costs of the building will be kept low by renting or leasing out spare capacity. An agreement has also been reached for over 100 sqm of photovoltaic's which will ensure energy costs are minimised to the users and any surplus power is sold back to the national grid.
- 2.3 KCC has now entered into contract with Orbit Homes for the sale of the land and the building of the community centre which would be undertaken by Hill Partnerships.
- 2.4 It is envisaged that a not for profit organisation is likely to manage the site and it is hoped that this will ensure it works in tandem with the neighbouring leisure centre to protect the benefits of the local community. Internal users will benefit from any income generated by the centre as these funds will be used to offset costs to partners who have invested capital in the scheme.

- 2.5 The proposed tenure and management framework for the facility can be seen in appendix 1.

3. Future dates

- 3.1 Moving forward the indicative timeline is shown in the following table with possible earlier target dates subject to confirmation from partners.

Action	Target date
Start on site	April 11
Building complete	Spring 12
Building open	Summer 12

4. Finance

- 4.1 Investment from internal and external partners has secured c£1M towards the project being and building costs have now been agreed. The overall project is estimated at £3.2M (construction, demolition, legal and fit out).
- 4.2 The contract is a design and build contract which locks the developer into the scheme regardless of house price fluctuations.

5. Learning points

- 5.1 Using CMY's best practice capital project matrix the summary below sets out some of the core reasons for why the project has progressed thus far to date.

5.2 Project Management

Strong project management requires clear vision and understanding of the deliverables in order to bring forward the final product. The initial promise spoke of delivering "a community facility" and the relatively high degree of freedom project managers have had in determining what form and shape this should take, has ensured that what is currently proposed will meet the needs and aspirations of both KCC and the local community.

In bringing forward a site on Green Belt land with numerous statutory and none statutory consultees, problem solving has been a key part to ensuring that every hurdle was eliminated.

5.3 Leadership

Political leadership from the Cabinet Member for CMY's and the Leader has been decisive in moving the project forward and in ensuring appropriate resources and energies were put into delivering the current proposed outcome. Support from the District and the Town Council has also been essential in acquiring the planning and ensuring the project meets local needs.

5.4 Resources

Adequate resourcing in terms of the project management and the start-up capital needed in order to progress the project has given the scheme the means to be delivered.

5.5 Risks

Formally a school and highly political, the site is located in the Green Belt and considered to be a flood plain. Expected to meet requirements from numerous statutory consultees, planning was the key to delivering the scheme. Despite a falling housing market the risks have been gradually mitigated and removed.

5.6 Partnership & communications

Working in partnership with stakeholders has been a fundamental part of ensuring such a complex project could be brought forward. From building strong political support at the Town and District Council level, to developing a good relationship with planners, open and honest communication has been invaluable in ensuring that the final outcome meets the required needs.

The numerous consultations with community groups internal and external has helped to maximise the number of opportunities to form and shape the final outcome of the building. In addition it has helped to secure much needed investment income into the facility.

5.7 Timing

The current proposed solution recognises that the work and dedication of previous project managers set in place the principals and parameters for the current site. Without this work and determination on their behalf the current solution would be unlikely to be in such an advanced state. While the timeline for the site is to be acknowledged, the diverse requirements of the stakeholders prior to this made a final solution complicated and the current solution has been helped by a sense of apathy from some of these stakeholders to simply see something happen.

A project matrix was developed in response to some of the issues raised above including managing other capital projects. For further detail on the matrix please see appendix 2.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 The Cabinet Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and its appendices.

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Appendix 1 - Management framework
Appendix 2 - Project matrix