



Knaphill Library

Local Committee for Woking 12 June 2003

KEY ISSUE:

Knaphill library is recognised to be in need of replacement. Officers are seeking an appropriate and affordable solution, following consideration of the issue by the Local Committee for Woking on 13 November 2002.

SUMMARY:

Discussions have taken place between officers of Surrey County Council, Woking Borough Council and other interested parties. The route most likely to provide an appropriate and affordable solution is considered to be to take a lease on a local shop. Officers are pursuing this option.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

None – this report is for information.

Introduction and background

1. The Local Committee for Woking received a report on Knaphill Library on 13 November 2002, together with supporting information. The Committee identified the only three options worth exploring. In order of preference, these were:
 - a) a development on the same site
 - b) a local shop
 - c) a new development next to the Vyne.
2. Officers have been investigating the feasibility of these options for a replacement library which is appropriate to the context and affordable.
3. All three options are under active consideration, and none have been ruled out. However, experience in other parts of Surrey e.g. Stoneleigh and Horsley indicates that shop premises form an ideal base for a community library. There is always a certain amount of turnover, and it is necessary to await the right opportunity for a lease on suitable premises to become available.
4. Officers anticipate being in a position to report progress on this search to the July meeting of the Local Committee.

Ethnic Minority implications

5. Libraries ensure that appropriate materials and information are available to meet the needs of ethnic minority populations.

Consultations

6. The Local Committee for Woking, together with officers of the County Council met with members of the Knaphill Community Library Association (KCLA) on 02/12/02 to affirm the County Council's commitment to seeking a replacement for the library, and to hear the concerns of the KCLA.
7. Discussions have taken place with individual elected members and with a local property developer.

Financial implications

8. A lease on a shop will require approximately £100,000 – £120,000 for fit out, depending on the size, configuration and condition of the premises.
9. If a suitable lease can be negotiated, an additional revenue budget may be required, although building maintenance expenditure will be reduced.

10. The disposal of the current library site will produce a capital receipt which will cover fit-out costs and go some way towards meeting additional revenue costs.

Self-reliance implications

11. It has been agreed that Knaphill library fulfils an important role in enabling access to information and reading materials to people who might otherwise be excluded, for example those who would find travel to Woking difficult.

Conclusions and reasons for recommendations

12. A lease on a local shop is likely to form the basis for a replacement library in Knaphill. There is a certain amount of turnover in the local shops, and officers are actively pursuing a number of possibilities.

Report by: Chris Norris, Head of Libraries

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICER: Chris Norris/Rose Wilson

TELEPHONE NUMBER: 0208 541 7771/01932 794178

BACKGROUND PAPERS: Report to Woking Local Committee, 13 November 2002

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