

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET MEMBER FOR ASSETS AND REGENERATION PROGRAMMES**



**DATE: 22 NOVEMBER 2012**

**REPORT OF: JOHN STEBBINGS, CHIEF PROPERTY OFFICER**

**SUBJECT: RELOCATION OF PHAB FROM LINTON'S YOUTH CENTRE TO THE NORTH EAST SURREY COLLEGE OF TECHNOLOGY, (NESCOT), EPSOM**

**KEY ISSUE/DECISION:**

1. This report asks the Cabinet Member to make a decision to approve in principle the capital expenditure on building adaptation works to the student refectory at North East Surrey College of Technology (NESCOT), Epsom, and to approve the creation of a new single multi use games area of 780 square metres in order to permanently relocate Phab from Lintons Lane, Epsom. The commencement of these works as soon as possible is imperative if Phab are to be successfully relocated from Lintons Lane by 31 December 2013. No alternative venue has been identified where Phab can successfully relocate to other than this solution identified at NESCOT.

**DETAILS:**

**Business Case**

2. On 20 December 2011 the Cabinet made a decision to dispose of the Lintons Youth Centre in Epsom, and to seek to re-provide youth and community facilities in locations to be identified, off-site. On 21 February 2012, the Investment Panel approved capital budget provision in the Medium Term Financial Programme (MTFP) for re-provision of youth and community organisation facilities in Epsom and Ewell, to replace those which will be lost when the Linton's Lane centre closes.
3. Following the Cabinet's decision, the Linton's Lane Working Group, chaired by SCC's Assistant Chief Executive and including representatives of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, SCC officers, and the two main community organisations at Lintons, Phab and Disability Challengers, have been working to identify and appraise suitable alternative venues for the two community groups. At the same time, Property Services and Services for Young People (SYP) officers have been working together to identify and appraise possible alternative property solutions for the core SYP functions at Lintons.
4. Since December 2011, Property Services officers have also been in extensive negotiations with both the freeholder and the purchaser to attempt to secure an extension of the earliest date by which the developer can obtain vacant possession of Lintons, in order to allow additional time for relocation of the

current occupiers. These negotiations successfully resulted in the deadline for vacant possession being extended by one year to 31 December 2013.

5. On 30 July 2012 the Cabinet Member for Assets and Regeneration and the Cabinet Member for Community Safety received a paper from the Assistant Chief Executive Susie Kemp, detailing progress of the task group up to that date in identifying alternative premises for all the users of Linton's Youth Centre. The paper (attached at Appendix A in the Annex to be presented as Part 2 item 5), concluded that all reasonable steps were being taken to help ensure service continuity for the community groups from 31 December 2013. Unconditional exchange of contracts took place on 19 October 2012 for the sale of SCC's long leasehold interest, thus enabling a capital receipt upon completion in March 2013, with SCC and the current occupiers being able to remain in occupation if required until 31 December 2013.
6. A brief summary of progress in identifying and procuring alternative property solutions for each of the three main occupiers at Lintons Youth Centre is provided below, together with the approval now being sought from Cabinet Member in respect of capital expenditure on building works at the North East Surrey College of Technology (NESCOT), Ewell, in order to provide Phab with a new permanent base from which to carry out their community activities.

#### **The wider context:**

#### **Services for Young People (Leasehold acquisition)**

7. Following an extensive property search, and elimination of other identified options, a building in Epsom has been identified as being potentially suitable for SYP's requirements. A separate report has been submitted to the Cabinet Member seeking approval for the acquisition of a 10 year lease and for approval to carry out building adaptation works to this property.
8. Full details, including a budget costing, and programme of works, are provided in the separate report relating to the acquisition of this leasehold property. Therefore, the estimated date for completion of all works enabling a permanent move for SYP from Lintons will be 24 June 2013.

#### **Disability Challengers (proposed move to The Edge Youth Centre, West Ewell)**

9. Following a search which commenced with a long-list of 57 properties, The Edge Youth Centre in West Ewell has been identified as a building which would, with the benefit of internal adaptations, provide a suitable venue for Disability Challengers (DC) upon their relocation from Lintons Youth Centre.
10. The Edge is a relatively new SCC youth centre with a sports hall, office and activity space, on-site parking, and an outside multi use games area (MUGA). SCC hold a long ground lease (virtual freehold) expiring in 2095, which permitted the construction of a youth centre in accordance with a specific planning consent. SCC built the centre in 1989. The freehold reversion is owned by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.
11. As DC have on average 10 young people and 8 staff members attending their sessions every Saturday from 9am to 5pm, plus daily from Monday to

Saturdays during school holidays and half term (again from 9am to 5pm), certain adaptations and improvements would be necessary to The Edge and its grounds to render it safe and suitable for DC's purposes. These comprise

- New ramped access to main front and rear entrances
  - New entrance lobby with widened entrance doors
  - New fencing and gates to secure rear car parking area
  - Small rear extension to create new disabled WC and changing area
  - Provide accessible WC, hoist, and accessible changing bed and alarm
  - New segregated corridor access from rear of building
  - New partitioning to create storage cupboard with full height shelving
  - Refurbish existing music studio within reduced area
12. Discussions between SYP officers, the youth centre's external operator (the YMCA) and Disability Challengers have resulted in recent changes to the plans which are currently being costed by building surveyors. When a mutually acceptable scheme has been signed off by SYP, a separate business case will be submitted to IP to seek approval for the relevant capital expenditure, together with a detailed programme of works. Therefore no decision is being sought from the Cabinet Member on the proposals relating to The Edge at this time.
13. Officers and Disability Challengers are now also currently exploring with NESCOL the possibility of DC sharing the space at NESCOL which it is proposed would be adapted in order to be used by Phab. The college could prove to be a more cost effective solution for SCC and a preferable solution for DC than The Edge, as minimal additional adaptation works would be required. A verbal update will be provided at the Cabinet Member's meeting on 22 November.

### **Phab relocation to North East Surrey College of Technology (NESCOL), Epsom**

#### **Background**

14. Phab is a national charity, established in 1957, dedicated to the integration of people with and without physical disabilities in the community. A link to Phab's main website is provided at the foot of this report.
15. Phab has a network of around 200 integrated junior, youth and adult clubs throughout England. Activities range from sailing, sports and orienteering to theatre visits and quiz evenings.
16. Phab currently use the entire internal area of Lintons Youth Centre for 2 – 3 hours every Friday evening plus an external area comprising three floodlit games courts and a large grassed area. Current membership of Epsom Phab is 120, with on average 70 members attending the Friday session at Lintons.

## Options Considered

17. Following a search commencing with a long list of 57 properties, officers working in partnership with Phab inspected and reviewed all possible relocation opportunities, resulting in NESCOL being identified as the preferred option.
  
18. An initial long-list of 57 sites were originally identified and discussed, which was then narrowed down to a long list of 19 venues, which were subsequently moderated by PHAB, and Services for Young People ("SYP") against 18 different characteristics. From this long list, the more appropriate sites were identified and the first site visit took place on the 12<sup>th</sup> March 2012. SCC Property Services appointed architects and building surveyors at the beginning of April 2012 to enable more detailed analysis of several sites. SCC officers from Property Services and SYP, members of the user groups and the architects carried out various assessments from March through to June 2012.

## NESCOT

19. Following site visits, Phab highlighted The Harrier's Centre and NESCOL as their most promising alternatives to Lintons Lane. The Task Group meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> May explored NESCOL in more detail as a long-term option depending upon securing funding from the Department of Education. In July NESCOL received confirmation that they had been awarded a £1.3 million grant to carry out building works to the college specifically intended to improve facilities for young people with learning difficulties and disabilities.
  
20. Meetings between Phab and NESCOL, facilitated and attended by SCC officers, were held to ascertain whether the proposed new facilities could also be used by Phab. NESCOL were willing to allow Phab to have exclusive secure use of the area on Friday evenings, which is Phab's usual meeting time. However, following careful consideration of NESCOL's offer, Phab decided that the area would not be suitable for their purposes, largely because of the distance (approx 200 metres) from the nearest outside area for sports, which would have caused monitoring and safeguarding difficulties.
  
21. At the site visit to NESCOL on the evening of 4 September 2012, attended by the Vice-Principal of the college and SCC officers, Phab were offered use of an alternative area (the refectory) at NESCOL, which was tentatively accepted by Phab if workable building solutions could be found which would:

- a. Provide Phab with a safe access for their members to and from the refectory and the external location of their proposed new external area for games.
  - b. Provide Phab with use of new accessible toilet facilities, in a location to be agreed with NESCOL (with direct access from the refectory).
  - c. Accommodate and integrate Phab's requirements alongside those of NESCOL, which has longer term business plans to carry out its own works to the area around the refectory.
22. Following further meetings between Phab, Nescot, and SCC officers, a layout for adaptation works to the student refectory was agreed on 25 October between Phab and Nescot (subject to the agreement of Phab's trustees at their next meeting on 14 November).
23. However, it must be noted that Phab, whilst welcoming the Council's proposal of a single MUGA as announced by the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Youth at Cabinet on 24 July 2012, are looking for more extensive space. Council officers have costed the options that Phab put forward and each one is more expensive than the cost of the single MUGA. These are summarised below, and the estimated costs of each will be reported to the Cabinet Member within the confidential annexe to be submitted as a Part 2 item. (item 5)
24. Phab will be encouraged to work with NESCOL and to use their own funding raising abilities to fund wider outdoor amenities over and above those funded by SCC.

#### Internal Adaptation Works (Refectory)

25. The adaptations (which will also be widely available for use by the college students and the public, outside of Phab's hours of use, with NESCOL's consent) to the refectory area are shown on the plans to be tabled at the Cabinet Member's meeting and in summary comprise:
- Installation of a heavy duty folding retractable partition to divide the refectory into two areas of equal size. This will allow use of the refectory for both 'quiet' activities such as arts and crafts and noisier and more active indoor sports and games at the same time. Attendance at Phab's events averages around 70 individuals, therefore the ability to carry out various different activities at the same time is important to the group.
  - Provision of 1.8m high soft partitions on casters to enable further flexible sub-division of the refectory into smaller areas for different activities at the same time.

- Adaptations to electrics, lighting, and existing floor to receive the folding partition.
- Construction of a single storey toilet block by way of an extension in the courtyard adjacent to (but accessed from) the refectory, to provide one male, one female WC and an accessible WC with hoist and changing area.
- Provision of sturdy, weatherproof, secure, storage facilities for Phab's equipment in the courtyard area adjacent to the refectory, together with use of a separate secure internal store within the refectory area.
- Fencing to allow secure access between the refectory and the external games area.

### External Games Area

26. Lintons is the largest of all the Surrey youth centres (excluding outdoor education centres) with three floodlit games courts (2,000 square metres) and a large grassed area in good weather (approximately 4,000 square metres).

27. At the Cabinet Meeting on 24 July, the Cabinet Member for Community Safety made a statement (attached as Annex A). This confirmed that SCC would fund an outdoor Multi-Use Games Area ("MUGA") upto a cost of £125k. The area has been identified at NESOT comprising of 780 square metres providing a good quality games area, surfaced, floodlit, fenced and marked out for games. This MUGA is for wider community use but can be used exclusively by Phab at their Friday evening sessions.

28. Phab have identified further options which have been costed and these costings are detailed in the Part II papers. Due to the other youth provision which will need to be funded by SCC on the vacation of Lintons, the options that have been identified by Phab are not affordable by SCC.

29. The outline of the options identified by Phab are:

- One larger outdoor enclosed and floodlit games area, (2,340 square metres) but constructed to a lower specification than a MUGA. The space would be fully marked out for games, divided and fenced.
- One MUGA (780 square metres) together with an outdoor surfaced games area (total 2,340 square metres).
- Three MUGA's (total 2,340 square metres).
- A surfaced, fenced, floodlit games area of 1,560 square metres (a smaller version of option B above) divided into two equal sections with access gates between them

## Budget Cost Estimates

30. The total estimated budget cost of the internal adaptation works and the single MUGA are provided in Appendix B within the confidential annexe presented as Part 2 item 5.

## **Consultation**

31. The Cabinet Member for Community Safety has been consulted on the progress to date in securing alternative accommodation for the three users of Linton's Youth Centre.
  
32. The local Members, Mr Colin Taylor and Mrs Jan Mason have been involved in the discussions with the user groups and discussions with the task group. Mr Eber Kington, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Epsom and Ewell Local Committee has also been kept informed. Mrs Frances Rutter, CEO of Epsom and Ewell and her colleague Mr Andrew Eperson, Head of Policy and Partnerships, have also been actively involved.

## **Financial and value for money implications**

33. The capital costs of the proposed works at NESOCOT to accommodate Phab will be reported in the confidential annexe (Appendix B) to be presented as Part 2 item 5. There are no ongoing revenue costs for SCC, although it is proposed that SCC meets NESOCOT and Phab's reasonable legal fees (as detailed in paragraph 38).

## **Equalities implications**

34. The equalities implications of the sale were addressed within the report to Cabinet dated 20 December 2011. Since that Cabinet decision, officers and Members have worked to understand exactly how each group functions, their individual requirements and needs, and have worked with them to agree the precise criteria for assessing the suitability of alternative premises.

35. The adaptation works to NESCOL will provide modern fit for purpose facilities which will be well used by Phab members and by NESCOL students and the wider community alike. Assuming Phab are prepared to commit to a relocation to NESCOL as soon as possible, this will enable the proposed adaptation works to proceed, thus ensuring that Phab continues to thrive as an important local resource for disabled and non-disabled young people, with a minimum of disruption and no loss of service continuity.

### **Risk management implications**

36. Officers have mitigated the risks of failing to secure alternative accommodation for Phab by setting up a Linton's relocation Working Group. This is supported and sponsored by the Assistant Director of Services for Young People and met regularly at Linton's Youth Centre. It is chaired by Assistant Chief Executive and comprises Borough Council Member representation as well as that of Epsom and Ewell BC's Chief Executive, Property Services, and SYP officers with SCC Member representation, to ensure a focussed cross-service approach to finalising accommodation requirements and delivering a value for money, sustainable solution within budget and timescales. If Phab does not accept this proposal there is no alternative solution which can be delivered in time for the vacant possession of Lintons Lane by 31 December 2013. This risk has been identified and has been mitigated by the extensive trawl of alternative locations and solutions.

### **Climate change/carbon emissions implications**

37. The County Council attaches great importance to being environmentally aware and wishes to show leadership in cutting carbon emissions and tackling climate change.

### **Legal implications/legislative requirements**

38. Prior to the commencement of works and in order to safeguard SCC's capital investment in this facility SCC will enter into a formal 'Agreement for Works' with NESCOL.
39. Upon completion of the works NESCOL and Phab will be required to enter into a formal licence, in a form approved by SCC, which guarantees Phab's long term use of the facility during their normal hours of use (three hours each Friday evening).

### **Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children implications**

40. There are no corporate parenting or looked after children implications in this proposal.



## **Section 151 Officer commentary**

41. The Section 151 Officer (Head of Finance) confirms that all material, financial and business issues and risks have been considered/addressed.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

42. The Cabinet Member is therefore requested to approve in principle the capital expenditure relating to internal adaptation works and the creation of a single Multi Use Games Area at NESCOL (subject to receipt of competitive quotations) as detailed in the schedule of works.
43. That the works are not commenced until Nescot has entered into an Agreement For Works with SCC and NESCOL and Phab have entered into a formal Licence, the terms of which meet with SCC's approval, and which guarantees Phab's use and enjoyment of the new facilities for a minimum period of 20 years.
44. Approval of the final costs, when quotations have been procured, to be delegated to the Chief Property Officer, (Property Services) in consultation with SCC Procurement.
45. SCC will meet NESCOL's reasonable legal fees incurred in drawing up and agreeing with SCC an Agreement for Works, as well as Phab's and NESCOL's reasonable legal costs incurred in agreeing a formal long term licence to safeguard Phab's future use of the completed facilities. The fees are not expected to exceed £10,000.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

46. To ensure the valuable services to the community offered by Epsom Phab continue to be available to young local people following the closure of Lintons Youth Centre, with a minimum of disruption to that organisation. The proposal represents an opportunity for Phab to move from an outdated, unsustainable property to one which has been specifically adapted for their use.
47. Officers are making these recommendations on the following grounds:
- It provides a MUGA built to Sports England's standards, marked out for more than one type of game, securely fenced and floodlit for year round use.

- The area within which the MUGA is to be constructed has been identified by NESCOL, within their master-plan for improvements at the college, as a possible future location for the provision of further external games facilities. Therefore, there is a strong possibility that Phab could, with NESCOL's approval, carry out fundraising or make grant applications with a view to securing funding for the construction of additional games facilities alongside the proposed MUGA in the future. Alternatively, there could be opportunities for Phab to share the use of any new outside sports facilities in that location which might be provided by NESCOL as part of the college's own future improvement plans.

#### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

48. If the Cabinet Member approves the proposal set out in this report, SCC will continue discussions with Phab with the intention of securing their approval to the works specified. Once their approval has been provided, and an acceptable Licence agreed between Phab and NESCOL, SCC will obtain competitive quotations for the approved works, seek to obtain all relevant planning consents, and a building contract will be procured to complete the works by the end of September 2013 in accordance with the provisional programme attached in the confidential annexe at Appendix C.

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**Contact Officer: Keith Barker (Asset Strategy Partner) 020 8541 9744**

**Consulted:** The Cabinet Member for Community Safety has been consulted on the progress to date in securing alternative accommodation for the three users of Linton's Youth Centre.

The local Members Mr Colin Taylor and Mrs Jan Mason, together with the Borough Councillor Mr Neil Dallen have been involved in the discussions with the user groups and discussions and the task group.

**Informed:** Mr Eber Kington, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Epsom and Ewell Local Committee has also been kept informed. Ms Frances Rutter, CEO of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and her colleague Mr Andrew Eperson, Head of Policy and Partnerships, have also been actively involved.

**Sources/background papers:** Phab's website <http://www.phab.org/>

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