

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET****DATE: 23 FEBRUARY 2021****REPORT OF: MR TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL****LEAD OFFICER: PATRICIA BARRY, DIRECTOR FOR LAND AND PROPERTY****SUBJECT: REPROVISION OF BOOKHAM YOUTH CENTRE AND ASSOCIATED RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**ORGANISATION STRATEGY** Empowering Communities  
**PRIORITY AREA:**

<b>SUMMARY OF ISSUE:</b>
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This paper sets out Surrey County Council's ("the Council") proposal for a replacement of the Youth and Community Centre within Great Bookham in Mole Valley and to provide housing on the existing site (the latter being subject to approval from the Strategic Investment Board).

The re-provision of Bookham Youth Centre will provide an improved multi-purpose community building, invest in a Council owned asset for much needed housing and support the 2030 Community Vision for Surrey.

There are two sites in question:

- Site 1: is located at 164 Lower Road and is in the Council's ownership (existing community centre location)
- Site 2: is the Lower Road recreation ground and is owned by Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) and is offered on a long lease with peppercorn rent

The recreation ground is the preferred location for the new community provision as established by the various local groups and other stakeholders. This is however within the green belt and an outline planning application has been submitted, the outcome of which is awaited.

If the outline planning application for the community facility is successful on the recreation ground, this affords the opportunity to redevelop the whole of Site 1 for 23 residential dwellings. However, if unsuccessful due to the green belt issue, then the community facility can be rebuilt on the existing site (albeit with reduced facilities) and a reduced number (20) of dwelling can be constructed.

Whilst waiting for the outcome of the planning decision, Cabinet Members are requested to approve the capital funding to continue the detailed design work for the alternative schemes. The final scheme will be brought back to Cabinet for approval to enter into a building contract and will depend upon the result of the outline planning application on the Lower Road recreation ground.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Agrees to £2.5m (excl. VAT) of capital funding from the pipeline allocation for Corporate Asset Capital Programme Spend for:
  - Feasibility fees up to detailed planning applications for both developments, and
  - The remaining activities relating to delivery/development of the replacement Bookham Youth and Community Centre.
2. Notes that Strategic Investment Board will make any future decisions required in respect to the residential development on Site 1.

## REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

- The proposals will provide a modern, flexible, and accessible multi-use space to meet local community requirements, including Early Years provision and also accommodation designed for the provision of youth work by an external provider
- The space will enable the use by other external operators providing and promoting active and healthy lifestyles
- Releasing an existing asset for other uses and delivers the Asset and Place Strategy
- Delivers the Greener Future agenda through efficient construction
- Capital receipt from residential sales providing capital investment into Council-owned asset
- Reduces reactive maintenance costs by providing a new modern and compliant facility
- The scheme will deliver much needed residential accommodation
- The proposal will improve the quality of resident's lives and community provisions within Bookham

## DETAILS:

### Overview

1. Bookham Youth Club has been located at 164 Lower Road, Great Bookham, Leatherhead, since the 1950s. The premises, while owned by Surrey County Council, have been leased to an external youth service provider, Bookham Youth and Community Association (BYCA), since 2008. The lease expired in February 2019, however, it was extended for a period of six months until August 2019 to enable the on-going use and provision of a youth and community service within the local area.
2. A new youth and community centre will be an improved community facility for local residents and a safe environment for children and young adults. Although the Council provides the asset, the existing youth provision is run by an external organisation at no cost to the Council and will continue to deliver the service. In addition, the new centre will also accommodate an Early Years (Nursery) to meet local needs.
3. In 2012 Services for Young People removed Council-funded youth work from the centre, however, youth work continued on a voluntary basis from the existing site. An Early Years and Children Services provider also provided commissioned (childcare) places five days a week, via a lease from BYCA. Most recently Early Years have confirmed a need to retain places in the area but could look at alternative locations.

4. In recent years, the centre acted as a hub for a range of activities for young people, as well as a centre for mothers' and toddlers' provision and for health and leisure activities (including Pilates, Reading Clubs, etc.). Several other groups (including Disability Challengers and Barnardo's) used the centre at other times.
5. The building lifespan, of Bookham Youth and Community Centre, is now greatly surpassed by its backlog of maintenance; meaning that it is no longer value for money or financially viable to undertake the works on the existing structure. All major elements are showing signs of end of life, including but not limited to the envelope (roof), ceilings, electrical services (lighting) and windows, and therefore, with the ageing building, the extent of major works required and capital investment needed, the opportunity for a new provision is sought to enable continued operation of BYCA and delivery of an Early Years service.
6. Following the end of the lease in August 2019 and the closure of the site due to its continued physical deterioration, the Council has undertaken a feasibility study of alternative options for re-provision of the centre and the continued delivery of community services within Bookham. This re-provision is not linked to any statutory Council-led service, but of an asset to facilitate essential community services.
7. The objective of this project is to re-provide a modern, fit for purpose, multi-use youth and community facility in Bookham at minimum financial cost to the Council by optimising the potential capital receipt (or revenue stream) through the delivery of residential units on the existing site.
8. If the outline planning application is successful, relocating the former Bookham Youth and Community Centre to the Lower Road Recreation Ground would be beneficial in relation to the following points:
  - Direct access to large green open space (no current provision)
  - Direct access off of Lower Road (currently the centre is located within Eastwick Park Avenue at the end of a cul-de-sac with difficult parking arrangements)
  - Closer to the main school (Howard of Effingham School)
  - A brand-new facility spatially designed to the service users' needs
  - Opportunity to provide space for external community use
  - Brand new facilities for the Bookham Colts football teams, replacing the outdated existing facilities
  - Opportunity to enhance the area immediately surrounding the proposed facility such as landscaping and outdoor use
  - Will generally attract more visitors to both the new centre and to the Recreation ground by generating interest
  - Additional car parking provision
  - A reduction in planned maintenance, and overall running costs reduced by introducing sustainability in design and use of materials

In addition, relocating the Youth and Community Centre will allow the current site to be:

- Redeveloped for residential housing, which will;
- Provide much needed affordable housing numbers in relation to Mole Valley District Council's local plan
- An enhancement of the current site including areas of landscaping
- Improved parking in the area

9. If the application is unsuccessful, then the existing site will accommodate the new community provision but with a reduced number of residential dwellings; 20 instead of 23.
10. Although closed for youth work, the site is currently being used, on an interim basis, to meet local needs as a Covid Response Food Distribution Centre, demonstrating its importance to the local community.
11. Key elements of both proposed development options:

	<b>Option 1 (using recreation ground)</b>	<b>Option 2 (existing site only)</b>
<b>Youth and Community Centre</b>	595 sqm	380 sqm
<b>Residential</b>	23 units	20 units
<b>Outdoor space for youth and community centre</b>	Yes	No
<b>Parking</b>	35	Limited - TBC

### **Future management**

12. As noted above, the Council will sublet the building to BYCA who will then manage the provision and rent out the space to all other occupiers such as Early Years, community groups and third parties.
13. Whilst the Council will finance development of the site it should be noted that the running and maintenance cost should be recovered from BYCA; so, the property is not a revenue cost to the Council. Future building ownership and management will have to be considered along with other legal arrangements. This aspect and nature of the agreement will be managed by Surrey County Councils' Estates Team.
14. If the Lower Road recreation ground is to be developed, the Council will require a head lease with Mole Valley District Council and sublease with BYCA and Bookham Colts. The land is owned by MVDC and currently leased to Bookham Colts.

### **Report on title**

15. The Council's Legal team has been instructed to prepare a report on title for Bookham Recreation Grounds owned by MVDC. The report highlighted a copyright covenant. By a Conveyance dated 13 November 1958, the freehold land is subject to the rights of the Lord of the Manor of Little Bookham reserved by Section 21 of the Copyhold Act 1894. The matter will be passed onto the Council's Estates and Legal Teams to resolve with MVDC.

The risk mitigation measures at this stage would be to indemnify against the risk by taking an insurance policy or a consent from the covenant holder. As MVDC has put three other structures on the ground, the Council's Legal and Estates team will be able to review MVDC approach and solutions in order to overcome the constraint.

### **IMPLICATIONS OF NOT UNDERTAKING THE PROJECT AND ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

16. **OPTION 1 (Preferred option)** – Delivery of new community provision on the Lower Road Recreation Ground Site

## Pros:

- Opportunity to release an asset for alternative use and deliver the Asset and Place Strategy
- Opportunity to deliver the greener futures strategy
- Delivery of community facilities that are fit for purpose enabling cross service collaboration and potential use by other third-party organisations;
- Deliver on the Council's 2030 Community Vision
- Capital Delivery Team resources available for delivery

## Cons:

- Upfront and residual capital investment required
- Requirement for temporary accommodation for decanting services (Football Club) during construction
- Cost of internal resources required to deliver programme
- Amending Legal arrangements with various parties (MVDC, BYCA, Bookham Colts)
- Development on a Green Belt (planning risk)

## 17. OPTION 2 – Provide a new community facility on the current site plus residential accommodation

## Pros:

- No requirement for head lease and other legal arrangements with MVDC and Bookham Colts
- Avoids development on the Green Belt
- One planning application, therefore reduced cost
- Single project and one building contract therefore less internal resources required

## Cons:

- Compromised community facility in size and facilities
- Reduced number of residential units, therefore reduced capital receipt
- Dense development with residential and community centre on one site

## 18. The preferred option is Option 1 for the following reasons:

- The proposal will provide Bookham with a new, purpose-built centre which will improve the quality of residents' lives and community provisions and enhance the local area
- Delivers the Asset and Place Strategy
- Delivers the 2030 Community Vision for Surrey
- Optimizes the development of the residential dwellings

**CONSULTATION:**

## 19. The process of reaching the preferred option in relation to the re-provision of Bookham Youth and Community Centre has included:

- Discussions with the Leader, Tim Oliver
- The previous Cabinet Member for Resources, Mr Mel Few approved this decision. Since 27 January 2021, the Leader, Tim Oliver has incorporated Land and Property into his portfolio.
- Mrs Clare Curran, Divisional Member for Bookham and Fetcham
- Engagement with representatives of the Bookham Youth and Community Association (BYCA) and Bookham Residents Association

- Engagement with Bookham Youth Project
- Engagement with the Council's Land and Property team
- Engagement with Mole Valley District Council (MVDC)

#### **RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:**

20. Development Implication – Should the development go ahead on the Lower Road recreation ground, during the construction of the new centre there will be a seasonal requirement to temporarily relocate Bookham Colts Football Club. The Council will work with the local community and seek suitable alternative locations to enable the redevelopment of the site to be undertaken and Bookham Colts to continue operating.
21. Risk that outline planning permission will be refused on the recreation ground – mitigating actions being taken:
- An alternative option (Option 2) has been considered and is viable
  - Design team have considered the site's green belt status and designed a building complementary to its surroundings. A very special circumstances case has been presented
  - Engagement with the local community and planning authority to listen to local concerns have helped shape plans;
  - Consideration on the close proximity of the neighbouring dwellings has been considered in the design process
22. Copyright registered on title on Lower Road Recreation Grounds – mitigating actions:
- Indemnifying against the risk
  - Considering agreement allowing construction of the centre with the successor of the title
23. Additional risks will be considered through a detailed risk register to be prepared by the consultant team and mitigating actions developed and actioned accordingly.
24. In terms of construction related risks and mitigation measures, a full risk register will be completed prior to starting on site.

#### **FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

25. Funding of £2.5m is requested from the capital pipeline allocation for Corporate Asset Capital Programme spend for:
- Feasibility fees up to detailed planning applications for both developments, and
  - The remaining activities relating to delivery/development of the replacement Bookham Youth and Community Centre
26. The majority of these costs are required to progress the replacement of Bookham Youth and Community Centre irrespective of which site is utilised. There is a risk that a small proportion of these costs will become abortive if the lower recreation site is rejected and these will then need to be charged against revenue budgets.

#### **SUMMARY OF BENEFITS**

27. This project considers local needs and delivery of a community facility in an area of considered need and investment.
28. It includes strategic alignment to:
- Community Vision for 2030

- Asset & Place Strategy 2019-2030
- Corporate Target Operating Model (TOM)

29. Financial and non-financial benefits include:

- Improved outcomes for residents
- Fit for purpose, suitably designed building for community use
- Supports and empowers communities, providing safe spaces
- Utilisation and optimisation of public sector assets
- Improve efficiencies and effectiveness, including outcomes of programs and services
- Flexible accommodation to meet future demand and local needs
- Utilisation of assets by third-party organisations

#### **SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTARY**

30. Although significant progress has been made over the last 12 months to improve the Council's financial position, the medium-term financial outlook beyond 2021/22 remains uncertain. The public health crisis has resulted in increased costs which may not be fully funded. With uncertainty about the ongoing impact of this and no clarity on the extent to which both central and local funding sources might be affected in the medium term, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority in order to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term.

31. As such, the Section 151 Officer supports the use of existing capital funds to deliver a replacement for Bookham Youth and Community Centre. The fees to develop detailed planning applications will enable options for residential provision to be considered by the Strategic Investment Board. Any costs incurred in relation to sites which are not pursued will need to be funded by revenue resources and are not currently included within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. If a pressure does emerge as a result, mitigating actions will need to be taken to ensure revenue costs can be brought within available resources.

#### **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – MONITORING OFFICER**

32. This paper sets out proposals in relation to the re-provision of the Youth and Community Centre in Great Bookham, Mole Valley, which shall include delivery of residential dwellings as part of the two proposals put forward.

33. The preferred option is to relocate community provision onto the Lower Road Recreation Ground site which is owned by Mole Valley District Council, subject to obtaining the required planning permission. The alternative proposal, if planning permission is not obtained, is to remain and develop on the current site, which is owned by Surrey County Council.

34. Both proposed options are viable in that the Council is empowered under legislation to acquire, dispose of and redevelop or develop land. Section 120 of the Local Government Act 1972 empowers the Council to acquire land for the purposes of any of its functions. Under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, local authorities have the power to dispose of land in any manner they wish, subject to the disposal being for the best consideration reasonably obtainable.

35. As proposals are finalised following the feasibility studies and once the planning application is determined, site specific advice on the legal implications can be provided.

#### **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY**

36. It is considered that the proposals do not necessitate the preparation of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) for the following reasons:

- Services, such Youth Support and Early Years, will be provided by third-party organisations and within close proximity of their existing location
- The proposed project provides improved support and improved access to services within the community it serves
- The proposals aim to secure improved and fit for purpose facilities for Surrey residents
- The new building will comply with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) regulations

#### **OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

37. The potential implications for the following Council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

<b>Area assessed:</b>	<b>Direct Implications:</b>
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	The implications for safeguarding vulnerable children are positive in that additional constructive youth work will be enabled, on both an open access and targeted basis
Environmental sustainability	Further details set out below
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

38. An initial Environmental Sustainability Assessment (ESA) has been undertaken (Annex 1) as this matter requires a Cabinet decision.

39. The key points from the ESA are:

- a. Energy use would be a component of the operational phase costs of the new buildings. Design philosophy that has been adopted to create new buildings will support low energy consumption, reduce solar gain and promote natural ventilation. Any proposals will be in line with this policy and any new building will be to the expected standards in the local planning authority's adopted core planning strategy.
- b. Delivery of a new build will involve the usual amounts of travelling for materials and workers. Through the design and procurement phase an updated ESA will be undertaken.

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

40. Stakeholder engagement will be on-going with regular update meetings.

<b>Task</b>	<b>Option 1 (incl. residential)</b>	<b>Option 2 (incl. residential)</b>
<b>Planning submission</b>	Nov 2020	April 2021
<b>Planning committee meeting</b>	3 March 2021	July 2021
<b>Planning consent</b>	March 2021	July 2021
<b>Detailed planning application</b>	Nov 2021	n/a
<b>Legal</b>	Nov 2021	n/a
<b>Appointment of a contractor</b>	Jun 2021	Aug 2021
<b>Start on Site</b>	Aug 2021	Oct 2021
<b>Practical Completion</b>	Aug 2022	Oct 2022

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**Contact Officer:**

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**Consulted:**

- The previous Cabinet Member for Resources, Mr Mel Few. Since 27 January 2021, the Leader, Tim Oliver has incorporated Land and Property into his portfolio.
- Mrs Clare Curran – Divisional Member for Bookham and Fetcham West

**Annexes:**

Annex 1: Environmental Sustainability Assessment (ESA)

Annex 2: Lower Road, Recreation Ground – View

Annex 3: Proposed Site Plan – Rev A

Annex 4: Proposed Block Plan – Rev A

**Sources/background papers:**

- Community Vision for 2030
- Surrey County Council Asset & Place Strategy 2019-2030

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