

## **PEWSEY AREA SHADOW COMMUNITY OPERATIONS BOARD (SCOB)**

### **Interim Report to Pewsey Community Area Board (PCAB) on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

By Mr Bob Woodward, Chair of Pewsey Area SCOB.

(On behalf of: Miss R Goff (non-exec), Mr C Haskell, Mr T Hatfield, Mr D line, Mrs C Maddocks, Mrs W Spencer and Wiltshire Cllr S Wheeler)

Reference: SCOB Report to Pewsey Area Board 6<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

At [www.wiltshire.gov.uk/pewseycommunitycampus](http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/pewseycommunitycampus)

#### **Introduction.**

The Pewsey SCOB was formed on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2011, with a brief to engage with the local community and develop proposals for a 'campus' facility to host various community services which have to be affordable and sustainable over the next 25 years minimum. It quickly became apparent that a campus would be largely clustered on the present Leisure Centre site which currently provides leisure and youth facilities, and the new library which has some potential for wider use. This paper follows on from the previous brief for the PCAB, at reference, and picks up the follow-on work which the PCAB mandated.

The purpose of this brief is to update colleagues on the present position, in advance of the formal detailed proposals to the PCAB – probably on 12<sup>th</sup> March. It is then envisaged that our proposal will be considered by WC Cabinet in June 2012.

#### **First Consultation Results.**

##### **Background.**

In the first consultation (August/September), a mass postal canvass was carried out to each registered household in the community area. A return rate of 17.4% was received registering positive support (71%) for the principle of a centralised campus facility for leisure, youth and adult community services in Pewsey. The full results are at reference and can be viewed on-line. The respondents suggested that opening times, costs of services and car parking were all important factors in enabling access. Other travel considerations were; adequate bus services and secure cycle areas.

From the beginning, the SCOB accepted that a campus should add value to the community area and not divert from present facilities. To that end we would not seek to draw effort or custom from the Savernake Community Hospital or from the Bouverie Hall.

## **Key Findings**

Two factors were obvious from the outset; namely that the 3 themes of leisure, youth and community held broad support and that we should proceed along those lines.

Furthermore, outlying districts would probably benefit from some sort of satellite services from the Pewsey campus. This is unlikely in the case of leisure, but could be supported in youth (Gt Bedwyn Youth Club) and community services.

With these caveats in mind, the following working proposals for a split-campus site (including library) were put forward:

- A modern leisure centre with high quality swimming provision for both disabled and disabled swimmers.
- Full range of indoor and some outdoor facilities.
- A modern youth centre, including wheeled-sports park.
- A community services advisory/support facility, including WC (various) and other potential partners.
- Greater use of the current library.
- Satellite services to outlying districts where possible, including youth and community.

## **Phase 2 Mandate**

The PCAB approved the following working steps for phase 2 (October-December):

- Conduct a second round of consultations in the community area
- Host open days/evenings across the community area.
- Define, with the community, precisely what current services could beneficially be improved for the future, and which new services could be incorporated into the 2 proposed main campus sites – 3, including a satellite service.
- Investigate the natural link with Pewsey Vale School (PVS), and others, as on-site partners in further developing these campus proposals.

## **Phase 2 Process.**

A total of 8 open meetings were held across the community area, with varying degrees of interest. It was apparent that evening meetings were not attractive to the public in late Autumn, yet the opportunities for Saturday bookings were severely limited. We did however gain the firm impression that the 'far east' of the community area felt somewhat disconnected from Pewsey; confirming our initial assessment that a satellite service would be required in some areas.

Considerable face to face canvassing was carried out over a period of time at the Pewsey Coop, Pewsey Library and Pewsey Leisure Centre. These were all productive in terms of feedback, especially on leisure services. In addition, detailed discussions took place with leisure centre staff on future needs and options.

We canvassed the Youth Services manager for Pewsey and Gt Bedwyn and this will be progressed further in the coming few months.

We addressed the whole school (300 plus students) at PVS and look forward to a substantial on-line feedback from their IT lessons.

We canvassed two selected elderly residential sites, and the Pewsey Scouts/Guides. We have also sought comment from all community area parish councillors and still await many of these responses.

The Head Teacher at PVS is keen to be an active partner in these next definition phases, as too is the Head Teacher at Pewsey Primary and the Managers at Pewsey Children's Centre and Pewsey SHAK. All of these potential partnerships will be explored further in order to identify areas of mutual benefit; some of which are relatively obvious now and are touched on in the next section of this paper.

The SCOB will continue to examine all inputs and observations over the next few weeks or so, and will try to balance any requirements to the extent possible. It must be accepted, however, that not all specific needs can be met and some measure of compromise may be required from partners and members of the community.

The broad outcome from Phase 2 leads us to the following preliminary conclusions:

## **The Leisure Centre.**

Prior to emergence of the WC Unitary Authority, the Pewsey LC had been underinvested with the result that attendance and membership has fallen back, often in favour of more modern and extensive facilities outside of the immediate community area. This new initiative by WC is the first positive indication of the importance of local services for a good many years.

We must seek to develop an attractive modern and comprehensive facility which offers a good and diverse experience to all sections of the community including ages, disabilities and ethnicity. A future LC must be as flexible in design and space as possible with adequate storage for equipment; it must be capable of responding to future needs and activities and must be fit for purpose for the long term (25 years being currently quoted by WC).

From the results of the consultation it is plain that modern swimming facilities are considered to be an essential high-priority, including a full 25 metre pool (lanes tbd), a small learner (toddlers) pool, disability hoist(s) and 'family-friendly' changing areas. The fitness suite remains popular and it is clear that this single facility has considerable financial potential given significantly more space and a lighter, more airy, environment. Squash is much less popular today than it was 20 years ago and the need for 2 dedicated squash courts has largely been overtaken in the modern world by other emerging activities; One of the squash courts could therefore be re-configured for other purposes such as 'spinning', dance studio etc. Equally, it could form part of a much expanded fitness suite. The Main Hall must remain adaptable for a very wide range of indoor activities.

Externally, an all-weather training area is supported by a majority for a range of sports and activities, both summer and winter. Internally, the LC should be complimented by a café/bar and crèche in support of the whole-family leisure theme.

## **Fit for Purpose?**

Assuming the aim of passing management and governance responsibility to a local level, it will be essential for us to be reassured that what is ultimately provided is affordable and sustainable over the long term. To that end, running costs must be held to an absolute minimum, consistent with modern building technology. We believe that the future LC should be fully insulated against unnecessary heat loss and the plant machinery/heating systems must be replaced with more contemporary and eco-friendly 'generators'. Any potential solutions to these needs should be advised to us by the appropriate specialists at the appropriate time, assuming of course the Area Board

approves the proposals. Therefore we believe that up to date information on the LC fabric, facilities and plant must be provided by to the SCOB by WC, since an assessment of these of these physical attributes will help us to ensure that whatever emerges will be fit for purpose.

In all of this, it is would be interesting and may become of great importance to link with the current studies into taking the hot water excess from the Sharcott Pennings bio-digester to PVS. If this is shown to be viable, then this source of heating should be extended to the LC complex.

As a bare minimum, the roofs of the LC/SHAK must be fully insulated, the plant machinery must be sustainable and low running-cost, and the changing rooms must be modernised, including family-friendly facilities in the wet area. Finally, the fitness suite must be expanded and a general upgrade of wall/floor coverings and wet-area tiling must be undertaken.

### **Youth Services.**

The Pewsey SHAK is co-located in the present LC complex and is therefore subject to the same considerations and concerns on heat-loss and running costs as the LC, It should therefore be embraced by the same fabric assessment suggested above. Gt Bedwyn youth centre is hosted within a small building near the village square.

Youth services received overwhelming support (81%) for modernising, with very strong support for:

Careers advice	66%
Wheeled sports area	63%
Audio centre	60%
Saturday and school holiday clubs	59%
B'fast/lunch/evening facilities (Monday-Friday in term time)	56%
Saturday films	54%
Youth counselling	54%

We shall now engage more closely with the Youth Manager to convert these bald statistics into a convincing narrative of needs at both YC locations.

### **Community Services.**

Strong support was given for direct access to; Wilts Council services, advisory and support services, an employment and volunteer centre, a good

neighbour scheme (LINK), housing association, adult education/extended schools, a meals on wheels centre, carer support, adult counselling, a community day centre, a crèche, and complementary health services. It is possible that some of these could be hosted in the separate discrete area at the rear of the library. Not all will require dedicated space and thus any new area should be adaptable to a variety of the purposes above.

It is accepted that these, mainly adult, support services would require a new-build. Assuming the continued desire by WC for a shared reception and catering facilities,

It would be sensible to envisage the new-build should sensibly link the LC and PVS, to the mutual benefit of all three elements.

The Head teacher of PVS has asked us to not forget the capability of the school kitchen to support external needs and this aspect will be explored further with a view to supporting a senior citizens luncheon club and/or a 'meals on wheels' scheme. The kitchen might also support a LC café? The Head Teacher is enthusiastic to support access to an extended schools/adult education programme. These two considerations argue for the new-build to adjoin the eastern edge of PVS.

We also need to explore crèche facilities for those attending either the LC or PVS for adult learning, and this will be undertaken with the Pewsey Children's Centre.

### **Satellite Services.**

We shall continue to examine the potential for satellite services to outlying districts.

In any event, those providing community services in the new-build will be invited to give a proportion of their time away from the 'hub'. This may be via separate fixed locations or, as has already been suggested, by means of a properly equipped mobile facility with appropriate communications ( i.e. to 'hub' reception or to WC offices etc.) and discrete office space. This option would offer a much more local service to a greater variety of isolated areas and, indeed, could also be available to service communities elsewhere.

### **Preliminary Requirements**

From all of the foregoing, the following areas of work remain before we present our detailed proposals to you, probably on 12<sup>th</sup> March:

1. Up to date information on the fabric, facilities and plant of the present LC/SHAK complex must be provided to the SCOB by WC. This assessment can support us in our further work to ensure that fit for purpose facilities are provided over the long-term.
2. Continue discussions with on-site potential partners (schools, children's centre, SHAK) on matters of mutual support.
3. Open discussions with other partners having the potential to occupy community service outlets in the new-build.
4. Continue, with the Youth Manager, to define more closely our youth needs in both Pewsey and Gt Bedwyn.

Bob Woodward  
6<sup>th</sup> Jan 2012