

Subject: Former Margaret Stancomb School House – General Update

Purpose

1. This paper seeks to update the Trowbridge Area Board on the current position of the former Margaret Stancomb School site.

Background

2. The Margaret Stancomb School site became vacant several years ago as a result of the reorganisation of school places in Trowbridge. Since then, the site has been held by the Council for potential future development of affordable housing.
3. Wiltshire Council Cabinet agreed in 2009 to a proposal from the Wiltshire Rural Music School (WRMS) to transfer the old school house. Detailed discussions subsequently took place between the Council's Property Services team and representatives of the WRMS, but in May 2012 was confirmed that they were no longer interested in the building, largely due to the financial risks inherent in converting the building for their use.

Current position

4. The old school building is now held for development of affordable housing units, in conjunction with the remainder of the site.
5. An existing PFI contract is currently delivering a total of 242 affordable homes across West Wiltshire, of which 73 are within the Trowbridge Community Area. The council is in discussions with its lead partner regarding a second phase of projects that could deliver a further 108 units, of which 50 could be in the Trowbridge Community Area. The Margaret Stancomb Site is identified as one of these potential sites, although other models for the development of the site remain under consideration.
6. It is noted that the redevelopment of the school house represents a more complex challenge than the remainder of the site due to the risks and uncertainties associated with its condition and the constraints of being in a conservation area. Any plans for the old school building will be highly dependent upon the way in which the remainder of the site is developed, favouring a joined up approach to developing the site and the building under a single unified plan.
7. The Council is therefore actively working towards a future development for affordable housing of the site as a whole, including the old school house.

Recommendation

8. Members of the Trowbridge Area Board are asked to confirm their continued support for the site to be developed for the delivery of affordable housing, including the old school house.

Neil Ward

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