

A report and recommendation by the Shadow Corsham Community Operations Board for consideration by the Corsham Area Board.

Introduction

The Corsham Shadow Community Operations Board (COB), formerly appointed by the Area Board earlier this year, has been working closely with Wiltshire Council's Campus Operational and Estate Management Team to develop a range of development options open to Corsham for the proposed Community Campus at Springfield.

Meetings have been held at least monthly, and recently fortnightly, to ensure that the many aspects of the development, from briefing architects to developing travel plans and undertaking Equalities Impact Assessments are conducted to timescales that feed in to the indicative plans outlined by the Council.

At its last meeting on 8 August, the COB reviewed the feasibility and options study drawn up by Wiltshire Council's appointed architects for the development of the Campus. From the three substantive options presented, and two optional variations, the COB has weighed the pros and cons of each, at length, to determine the option that best satisfies the strategic principles that they set out, causing minimal disruption to users of both the Leisure Centre and the Community Centre during the development period itself.

We would now like to propose that the Area Board approves the choice made by the COB, and recommend its choice to the Cabinet of Wiltshire Council in order to begin the detailed architectural designs and development process that will deliver a successful Community Campus at the heart of the Community Area.

Process

Taking into account the results of the extensive consultation undertaken before and after Christmas, the COB submitted a set of strategic principles to Architects appointed by Wiltshire Council to undertake a Feasibility and Options Study for the site.

The strategic principles reflect the requirements expressed by the community at large and the existing Leisure and Community Centre users. The architects have also taken account of the service delivery principles supported by Wiltshire Council, the Police and other organisations and groups who foresee the potential for extending their scope and influence into the community.

The feasibility study also took account of the specific Corsham requirements to incorporate a new library and youth facilities, refurbishment of the existing Leisure

Centre and the development of new community facilities to replace the existing Community Centre.

As well as the 'bricks and mortar' components of the site, the strategic principles captured an ambition for the site's success as a vital part of the Community Area and identified a need to create as little disruption to existing services during the development process itself.

The appointed architects have undertaken initial site surveys to further understand the opportunities, and constraints, of the site. This has included the implications of the existing subterranean infrastructure, water disposal and power distribution.

The three options presented by the Architects, with minor optional variations, have formed the basis of a full meeting of the COB. (Monday 8 August)

The COB also had access, under the terms of a signed Non-Disclosure Agreement, to confidential commercial estimates of each development option, so that it could come to an informed decision based not just on location but also on cost.

The COB recognises that getting this development right is of importance to adjacent organisations, institutions and individuals within the immediate area; the Town and the Community Area as a whole. It has therefore been rigorous in its analysis of the proposed options and the debate has been robust, with extremely honest exchanges of view.

Options

Option 1 proposed development to the South East of the existing Leisure Centre.

Whilst this option satisfied many of the strategic principles, it was unanimously felt that the pressure created on the roads and school access in an already busy area was unacceptable.

It also does little to improve the visual aspect of the site on arrival.

Option 2 Proposed development to the North of the existing Leisure Centre. This satisfied the requirement to improve the visual aspect of the site on arrival but cramped the site onto the two access roads, as well as requiring the immediate dismantling of the existing Community Centre. This would not satisfy the principle that, where possible, we support continuity of service during the development process itself.

In the view of the COB, a decision reached unanimously at its meeting on 8 August, **Option 3 B** satisfies the majority of the requirements of the strategic principles, makes best use of the site and will deliver the best Community Campus for the Corsham Community Area. The development would take place to the West and North of the existing Leisure Centre.

This configuration sits the newly developed campus in a balanced way across the site, served by a single access point that is accessible from adjacent car parking and within easy reach of the road. There is scope for some improvement of the façade of the building.

In particular, the development would allow for the longest possible continuity of service at the existing community centre

We would therefore commend this option to the Area Board for referral to the Cabinet of Wiltshire Council for approval.

Considerations

All of the options presented are indicative of the footprint of the proposed developments. They should not be regarded as architectural designs. The COB recognises, as should the Area Board, that there will need to be detailed architectural drawings before the exact location of facility within a given footprint will be accurate. This would follow approval by the Cabinet.

The COB will continue to explore every avenue to secure the optimum development created by this opportunity to pilot the concept of the Community Campus in Wiltshire.

Allan Bosley, Chair

Shadow Corsham Community Operations Board

10 August 2011