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PEWSEY AREA SHADOW COMMUNITY OPERATIONS BOARD (SCOB).

Report to Pewsey Area Board on 6th October 2011

**Report by Mr Robert 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 Wilts Cllr S Wheeler)**

Intro' and Background

The Pewsey SCOB was formed by the Area Board on 9th May and arose from a Wiltshire Council Cabinet policy on 15th February to examine the opportunities of 'localising' some council services as much as possible, and maximising the time-sharing of those facilities. It will be the intention of the SCOB to examine and define which new facilities and services can be provided on the Campus sites, in order to improve the day to day quality of life for our area community. It is freely accepted that any proposals for future capital expenditure by Wiltshire Council arising from these studies must be fully argued and justified by the demonstrable need.

The Pewsey Area already has a modern, fit for the future, library which includes some IT facilities, a personal care facility (i.e. providing washing and changing facilities for disabled people and their carers) and a small secure meeting room. However, this will now be further examined to see what additional beneficial use(s) can be made of the space and facilities available. The Leisure Centre and associated Youth Club (SHAK) on the other hand have lacked investment over the years (with the fitness suite being a notable exception) and are generally considered to be not fit for the future. Moreover, there are many other community 'services' which are currently not available within the Pewsey area.

Following appointment of the SCOB members on 4th July, we had to consider how best to canvass the views of our residents. This report outlines the measures we took to carry out a mass consultation, gives the response, and makes working proposals for the next steps.

The Initial Consultation Process

Bearing in mind the geographical span of our area, primarily from East to West, we decided that a mass meeting was unrealistic in the early stage but that a mass free-post questionnaire to all registered householders was the preferred first step - to allow all individuals to give a personal opinion, backed up by a selective approach to all identified community bodies for their 'group' response.

These groups included all Parish Councils, Churches, surgeries and health-related groups, Youth Groups, schools etc. In all, 6000 free-post questionnaires were circulated together with around 100 groups being separately canvassed. I apologise if you consider that you, or a group you belong to, have not been given the

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opportunity to comment. This was unintentional and if you let us have your contacts we will endeavour to make sure that you are not forgotten in the next round.

In addition, we have used the press and parish magazines to spread the word.

Initial Survey Responses

A total 1063 questionnaires were returned, representing a strike rate of 17.4%. This level of response is considered to be satisfactory for a mass public survey and provides a solid basis for proceeding with a second round of targeted consultations, together with some Campus Open Days across the Board area.

We conclude from the response that people care about the provision of services we are establishing for the future in the Pewsey community area. Listed below is a resume of the initial findings arising from this first round of consultation:

- 71% of the returns favoured a Campus which includes several council services. 14.6% were not sure and 9.5% were not in favour.
- 75% were for a modern Leisure Centre
- 54% were for a public activity space
- 64% were for a library
- 62% were for provision of youth services
- 57% were for provision of outdoor/all-weather facilities
- 54% were for access to council services
- 55% were for other public sector services
- 50% were for internet access
- 47% were for a café
- 37% were for a playgroup
- 34% were for a skateboard park
- 37% were for a creche
- 28% were for a luncheon club

The 3 most important factors that would enable access to these services are; opening times, costs of services and car parking.

Other important considerations in design and travel planning are; car parking on site, convenient bus stops and good bus services, and secure cycle areas.

Include in the body of feedback from the survey is a considerable stream of individual comment, very nearly 600, which we shall have to analyse, group together, and digest for the next round of consultation. In any event, it will all be studied and used.

West Versus East ?

One of the more obvious factors facing us is the East/West divide. A number of respondents have commented on the distance from a Pewsey Campus to the extreme east of our area – Shalbourne, Ham, Buttermere etc – who may consider, for example, Hungerford to be a more convenient portal for Leisure and Youth

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services. Similarly, Burbage, Grafton and the Bedwyns may naturally gravitate towards Marlborough. Whilst we cannot sensibly consider providing a separate leisure centre for them, we may, in the next round, have to consider how best to provide a flexible delivery in community locations possibly using existing space(s) and an appointment system, in terms of other services.

It should be borne in mind that almost exactly one third of our area community lives east of the A338/A346.

Key Findings and Working proposals

It seems obvious at this early stage that a split campus solution is the most beneficial. Whether it be dual-Pewsey, or dual Pewsey/East of Burbage remains to be investigated.

In any event, it is likely that not everything asked for can be provided and there will be a need for some compromise; it will be the SCOB's aim to minimise any negative impact of this. At the end of the day, the SCOB must be able to support a sustainable business plan to present to the Wiltshire Council Cabinet.

Having conducted a preliminary analysis of the initial survey, three broad themes emerge; these are; modern leisure facilities, improved Youth facilities, and services for adults and the elderly. With these in mind, the Pewsey SCOB offers the following working proposals for the Area Board's consideration.

To further explore the potential for a split campus site, comprising:

- A modern Leisure centre at the present location, to include: High quality swimming provision for both able and disabled swimmers.
- A full range of indoor and some outdoor facilities.
- A modern Youth Centre, including skateboard park.
- A community services campus facility located adjacent to the present Leisure Centre and Pewsey Vale School, possibly connecting both, and including flexible space for meetings and use by a wide range of community service partners (social, welfare, support, advisory etc), including Wiltshire Council.
- The possibility of a satellite outstation for the provision of community services to the east of the community area (Burbage, the Bedwyns etc) on a shared basis with the main Pewsey campus.
- The current library, with examination of the potential for further exploitation of the new facilities

Proposed Next Steps.

If these proposals are approved by the Pewsey Area Board, The Pewsey SCOB now intends to:

- carry out a second round of targeted consultations with known bodies and groups,

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- host some 'open days/evenings' in Pewsey and elsewhere during October and November. This will enable the SCOB to discuss with interested parties what we are seeking, and what, in detail, they desire.
- define, with the community, precisely what current services could be beneficially improved for the future, and which new services can be incorporated into the campus sites.
- examine the natural link with Pewsey Vale School as a 'partner' in further developing the campus proposals.

Recommendations to the Area Board

The Area Board is invited to:

- **note this report from the Pewsey SCOB.**
- **approve the working proposals put forward for a split-site campus.**
- **endorse the further steps proposed in the Pewsey SCOB work programme.**
- **approve the holding of a further specially convened AB meeting, when appropriate, to consider detailed proposals from the Pewsey SCOB for campus provisions in the Pewsey Community Area.**