

AGENDA ITEM NO. 11

Corsham Shadow Community Operations Board

REPORT TO THE AREA BOARD

Thursday 22nd March 2012

Planning Application

The development of the Corsham Community Campus at Springfield has now reached a significant milestone, with the submission of a planning application to the Strategic Planning Committee of Wiltshire Council by the Community Operations Board (COB).

The application follows an intense period of work involving not only the COB but also officers from Wiltshire Council responsible for the services that will be run through the Campus.

Subject to a successful planning application, the indicative phasing plan suggests that initial ground works would take place from June with construction itself beginning in August. All of this of course will be dependent on conditions on the ground. The aim is to develop the new Community facilities prior to demolition of the existing Community Centre to secure continuity of service, an important strategic principle established by the COB from the outset, at the explicit request of the community.

The process for determining the Campus, what it should and could be, is considerably further advanced in Corsham than it is elsewhere. Each area will inevitably have its own ambitions and its own distinctive requirements, a principle of the Campus development projects across the County. As a result the Corsham Campus is coming under increasingly close scrutiny. But much more than the building itself, the questions are about the process.

The Next Stages

The next steps for the COB fall into two quite distinct categories. One will be increasingly detailed planning for the building itself; the other, in many ways more complex, will be to do with its success once it is up and running and the work that needs to be undertaken to secure this success from day one.

The latter tasks will necessarily need to engage the community at large and the COB is exploring how this can be achieved. It is the COB's intention to put into place plans for the overall operating vision of the Campus, which will in turn be informed by how it will be managed through the Governance arrangements, Engagement and Capacity-building, Staffing, Partnerships, Facilities Management, and Access & Travel.

In each of these areas the COB will have to be in close touch with the Community, and in discussion with Wiltshire Council. There is, for example, a great deal of work

being undertaken by Wiltshire Council, looking at the appropriate model for financing the Campuses once they are operational. The Corsham Shadow COB has to take account of this thinking as it emerges, rather than working to a set of rules prescribed by the Council. This makes the task of the COB both more challenging and more rewarding, in equal measure.

Increasingly, the COB will establish Working Groups to look at the detail of specific aspects of the Campus. We hope to engage local expertise and interest.

We are also looking to benefit from the insight of external organisations who are themselves exploring how to engage and empower communities.

All of this work will increasingly become the focus of attention for other Campus projects throughout Wiltshire.

The Leader of Wiltshire Council has established a meeting at which the Chairs of the various COBs can share experience and this is likely to provide valuable information as each of the many projects moves forward.

Corsham Community Area is therefore going to be very much in the spotlight over the coming months.

www.springfieldccc.com

The website that the COB is developing is intended to share information and to attract comment. This dialogue across the Community Area is important.

If your organisation is able to create a web link to this site then it will reach more and more people. Already this link has been established with The Corsham School and the Town Council.

Although not all comments will necessarily be published, it is important that as many views are shared for consideration and discussion. Only then can the COB make decisions that will be to the benefit of the Community Area as a whole.

The Shadow Community Operations Board and the Area Board

The Shadow COB was appointed by the Area Board to represent the Community's interests with members drawn from the Corsham Community Area Network (CCAN), Leisure Centre users, Community Centre users, the local Town and Parishes, Transition Community Corsham (TransCoCo) and the Area Board itself.

The COB would like to thank the Area Board for its support over the last 12 months. Progress could not have been made so rapidly without it, and it will be increasingly important over the next stages as the discussions move from the bricks and mortar to the planning that will need to go into making the Campus a core component of a successful, connected and sustainable Community Area.