

Background Research and Stakeholder Identification

My name is George Hayles and I am Chairman of the Marlborough COB, which is comprised of a committee of 7-including the Wiltshire Council Officer and the Area Board Member. We have been working together for just over a year, although the full COB was not appointed until May 2014. As a general rule the regular 'working committee' numbers 4 plus the WC Officer.

We took our brief from the documentation issued by Wiltshire Council-Community Campus Core Specification. Operational Delivery Programme, Timetable Cabinet Papers etc and, of course from our WC officer who managed our meetings. Briefly we understand a Campus to comprise Sports & leisure facilities, Library, community space, meeting rooms, Neighbourhood Police Team (NPT), WC staff hot desks, café facilities. Whereas a Hub is much smaller with meeting rooms, WC staff hot desks, some community facilities and possibly a Police presence.

Initially we focused on identification of stakeholders and the drawing up of full lists and classifications of those who might be affected. We have over 100 listed- across schools, voluntary organisations, business, the arts, national and local charitable groups, volunteer groups, local WC services. These cover most age groups and socio-demographic descriptions and represent many thousands of occupants of Marlborough and local village communities.

We were guided to this approach, ie to look at what the stakeholders might ask for, rather than first starting with an investigation into the potential sites which might be suitable for a Campus-either by adaptation or for a new building. We examined some of the surveys and other material which other campuses had used/were using and during this process we realised that we couldn't go 'to the people' before we had built up a picture of what might be possible, both in terms of the existing WC property assets in Marlborough and what services we might be able to offer. Thus it was a few months down the line before we began visiting existing WC facilities and looking at other potential sites which might be useful.

Potential Locations

Even as we began the process of visiting existing WC buildings we had already started to question whether there would be any prospect for a new Campus in Marlborough. Such a concept would require a very significant footprint close enough to the town centre to be accessible to all. It would need to be accessed by foot and car and most importantly by public transport (particularly relevant to the surrounding villages). All this would involve infrastructure expenditure (roads, carparks) and of course, a considerable site area. We thus were conscious that the Hub solution was the more likely option.

We visited The Leisure Centre, Library, Police Station, Community/Youth Centre (St Margaret's Mead), Postern House, Old Gas works site (Kelham Gdns), St Peters School (drive-by) and Fire Station.

The Leisure Centre is in fairly good condition, is being used to capacity and has plans to make some changes to improve their service offering which will utilise 100% of their capacity. Because of the complicated ownership of the land it sits on (which is owned by Marlborough College-who also have a usage agreement in place for the Leisure Centre) there is little scope for extension to a Campus. It was felt that it should stay as it is, delivering a really good and well used service to Marlborough and environs.

The Library is an old building in a prime site at the end of the High Street. Again the library delivers an effective and very well used service to the town and surrounding communities. There are a range of additional offerings (health related, Registrar's Office, Children's Centre, a range of educational based activities). These and the core Library service are very well used, and very popular. The building has little scope to be extended/adapted to incorporate campus or Hub elements and the Library would not relish losing their High Street presence (neither would the public be happy about it!)

Police Station we have had a number of meetings with Matt Armstrong the local Police Inspector and toured the station itself. He is keen and helpful and is amenable to sharing facilities with a Campus/Hub. If it were not to be the existing site then his main priority would be the location so that the NPT are close enough to the high Street and that there is sufficient storage/parking for the not inconsiderable amount of 'kit' that even a small local unit has to have on hand.

The station itself is in a good location and apart from the normal policing facilities, it was built as a regional terrorist response unit and has additional space and specialist holding cells. Currently the additional space houses a murder response team. There is a fair amount of outside space and parking facilities, but the configuration is unusual (because of the holding cells) and any change to the building would be expensive because of its specialist construction. The COB have not taken discussions further because of the potential costs of adapting the building to create a Hub. We have no idea if there are plans for a budget to be made available?-nor do we know if local WC asset disposals would result in a proportion of proceeds being allocated to benefit the local community?

Community/Youth Centre currently partly used as a day centre for adults with learning disabilities (9-5, 5 days a week). There is a main activity room, office space, meeting rooms, a lift from basement to first floor, kitchen facilities disabled toilets. There is an area to the side of the building currently unused (possible extension) and next to it is parking for approx 25 cars. Our understanding is that this building is owned by WC, although it is surrounded by an area of grassland comprising a skate park, children's playground and football pitch owned by the Town Council.

Its location, being close to The Five Stiles area of town which has a higher than average proportion of social housing and potentially a higher proportion of potential users of a Hub and only 5-10 minutes walk from the town centre makes it look the most promising and the most relevant.

Postern House is currently partially occupied by an NHS unit and the rest is boarded up. We understand the NHS unit is scheduled to move to the Savernake Hospital site at some stage in the future. The site is owned by WC but has been long since unused. It is too far from the town to be

good location for a Hub and again we understand that it is to be sold as a site for redevelopment into housing. This site, close by to the new development planned for Crown Estate land on the Salisbury Road (which should bring S106 money into the area) is ideal for such a purpose and its sale will raise significant funds....would some proportion be allocated for the benefit of the local community in creating a Hub?

Old Gas Works this site represents several complications both in multiple ownership-WC and National Grid and a private owner of an old workshop, and in access and sheer practicality-it would be a new build on ground not ideally suited and expensive to make clean (decontamination from the old gas storage).

St Peters School we are aware of the plans to move St Peters School to a site to the rear of the Police Station and practicalities of access meant that we only did a 'drive by'. It is a good location and its size could be adequate. However it seems a prime target for sale as a housing development (although again, maybe proceeds could be shared with the Town?) and more significantly, there may also be a Covenant(s) on the land on which it sits, which restrict its usage.

We also dropped into the Fire Station to look at their meeting room, which is a good facility but could not be more than that.

Potential Services

The COB is very aware that there are few WC facilities delivered direct within Marlborough and also that several WC services struggle to find appropriate venues for meetings and liaison with clients and their WC colleagues. This seems to be the case for some adult and children's services-such as fostering meetings. The Youth Service is now closed so they too would benefit from facilities. It is in the areas of Social Services (Adult Social Care, Care for Children and Young Families, Fostering and Adoption and Support for Carers). Community (Young People) that more and better facilities are needed. There are conflicting priorities across all services but in Marlborough, we do seem to be pretty light in these areas.

Conclusion

The COB came to the conclusion that a Campus was unrealistic about the same time that we were informed that the £74.068m+ budget for Campus's had been soaked up by the 7 approved sites (and overspent by £2.78m) and therefore there are no further funds to create any more. Instead local communities would be encouraged to look at ways of creating Hubs from existing facilities with possible 'add-ons'.....but these would have to be self- funding? And before anything could proceed there would need to be a feasibility study done.....and there weren't any funds available to do feasibility studies! In addition COBs (Community Operations Boards) were to be renamed CEBs (Community Engagement Boards). And that another framework for governance would be created. We live in an uncertain world!

So.....Some Questions for The Area Board

A Will there be any funding available for a Hub project in Marlborough. Either from budget or asset sales proceeds??

B Could the Community/Youth centre at St Margaret Mead be made available-or does WC Property Dept have other plans?

C Will there be any help and advice (feasibility study) available- and funded- to help deliver the Hub?

Marlborough COB have ideas and have done some work to try and move the Campus/Hub project forward. We are enthusiastic because we think many in Marlborough would have their lives greatly enhanced by such a facility. We understand that this whole project is a partnership with WC and the community has its part to play in this effort to 'deliver inclusive communities and more accessible services'

BUT.....in Marlborough's case-Is it worth continuing?

George Hayles
Chairman