

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE – 06/01/2015

Title:

**BRIGHTWELLS GOSTREY CENTRE, FARNHAM – RESULTS OF FEASIBILITY
STUDY FOR MOVING SERVICES TO A REDEVELOPED MEMORIAL HALL**

**[Portfolio Holder: Councillors: Carole King, Julia Potts and Simon Thornton]
[Wards Affected: All]**

Summary and purpose:

To agree revised plans for the redevelopment of the Memorial Hall to provide a base for Gostrey Centre services and create a new Community and Well-Being Centre for Farnham and the surrounding area which will secure the future of these vital local services.

The report also seeks authority to submit a planning application and progress to the tender and build phases for construction of this Community facility at the Memorial Hall in Farnham.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

Value for money

Brightwells Gostrey Centre

Funding is set aside within the annual budget to maintain the current building and cover the utility costs for 2014/15. A potential re-location from the existing premises to a new building will enable a significant saving in ongoing running costs and the provision of financial support.

Memorial Hall

Refurbishment of the existing Hall would improve the current community facilities making it a more attractive venue, increasing the potential for income generated from bookings. It will also result in an improved, energy-efficient venue, generating savings in future running costs and removing the need for costly major repairs.

Multi-use Centre

One building instead of two will allow the already reduced running costs to be spread over a wider range of stakeholders, those associated with the Gostrey Centre and those with the Memorial Hall.

Leisure and Lives

In addition to continuing day centre provision, a community centre would be provided. This will create new, and enhance existing, activities and facilities for older people. Existing leisure services at the memorial hall will be enhanced and expanded and cater for the wider community.

Understanding residents' needs

The 2012/13 Adult Health and Social Care Commissioning Profile demonstrated a high level of adult social care and health need in Waverley. The 2011 census shows Waverley is the borough in Surrey with the highest number of residents over 85 years old (3.2% of the borough's population). This figure is forecast to grow by 28.6% in 2020. 19.6% percent of Waverley's population is aged 65+. This is the second highest in Surrey and is projected to rise by 14.3% in 2020.

The potential extension of the Memorial Hall would provide older residents in the Farnham and surrounding area with a dedicated space for services that they need, reducing experiences of social isolation and associated health needs. It will have the flexibility to expand and change to meet the needs of this growing demographic.

The provision of an exemplar Community Centre would bring together a variety of agencies with a common aim, under the same roof, with plans for a dedicated space for Carers Support, the provision of a Telecare demonstrator suite and flexible space for new partner organisations.

Environment

Brightwells Gostrey Centre and the Memorial Hall are not currently energy-efficient. Improvements to the existing Hall and a new day centre would result in significant energy-efficiency savings. The area surrounding the building will be landscaped and current major flooding issues would be remedied.

Financial Implications:

Financial support for the Gostrey Day Centre is circa £100,000 per annum which is a combination of grant funding to deliver the day centre service and revenue funding to maintain the building. This new facility would result in a significant reduction to these costs. Details of how quickly these savings in running costs and grant support would be achieved are yet to be developed. Monies would be saved from the maintenance and running costs of the Gostrey Centre, with the expectation that the Centre would become a self-sustaining venue given the potential additional income generated from rental hire and services provided. The Gostrey Centre, in its current state requires significant capital spend and work has been identified over the next 3 years totalling £214,000. The Memorial Hall requires further capital in excess of £395,000 for building repairs for the same 3 year period. Neither of these costs are included in the budget currently. These cost demands would be eliminated by the new building, securing the future of both the Memorial Hall and the Gostrey Centre.

The cost of building a new day centre as an extension to the Memorial Hall is estimated at £1.5m. This would form a project bid to be included within Waverley's 2015/16 and 2016/17 Capital Programme. This will be subject to approval by the Council in February 2015.

External funding will be sought from agencies with a health and well-being remit that would benefit from a new centre being built. It is expected that part of the funding could come from the Brightwells scheme and initially this element could be bridge-financed by Waverley's capital reserves.

There may be potential for further funding from SCC for the centre. This is in addition to £55,000 for a Health and Wellbeing suite and £7,500 for Telecare demonstration equipment that has already been committed.

Legal Implications:

Whilst the Section 106 Agreement which forms part of the planning permission for the Brightwells scheme expects the provision of a replacement community facility (Gostrey Centre) on-site, the Brightwells Development Agreement allows the opportunity for the Gostrey Centre to relocate elsewhere in reasonable proximity to the town centre.

Introduction

1. Following a request from Gostrey Centre Trustees to explore a permanent move away from the main Brightwells site to the Memorial Hall, the Executive gave authorisation to carry out a feasibility study to test this proposal as it represents the opportunity to secure the future of two key community facilities.
2. As part of the approved Brightwells redevelopment, a new Brightwells Gostrey Centre is to be provided within the Brightwells scheme or in reasonable proximity of the town centre.
3. The Portfolio Holders for Older People and Major Projects requested that Officers investigate the feasibility of moving the Brightwells Gostrey Centre away from its current location to the Farnham Memorial Hall, a potentially more beneficial site for the objectives of the Council and Day Centre.
4. A meeting took place with Gostrey Centre trustees on 7th November 2013 to discuss the way forward and the future of the Centre. Following this meeting, an email was received from the Centre trustees indicating their support for the possible move from the existing premises. The email stipulated that 'We would expect that any new centre would be no smaller than that proposed in the East Street Development, and that the accommodation would be similar in design.
5. The proposed scheme ensures that Brightwells Gostrey Centre and their clients would not suffer any disruption to services from the main Brightwells scheme construction as the objective would be to relocate the service before the main work starts on the site.

Feasibility Study

6. In December 2013, the Executive agreed to allocate £30,000 from the Capital Budget for the tender and appointment of external advice to carry out the feasibility study of the relocation of the Brightwells Gostrey Centre. Michael Edwards Associates (Quantity Surveyors) and Lyttle Associates (Architectural Services) were subsequently appointed to carry this out.

7. Stakeholder consultation has taken place with Gostrey Centre trustees, in addition to representatives from the North East Hampshire & Farnham Clinical Commissioning Group and Surrey County Council Commissioning team, regarding their requirements for a new Centre, and visits to a variety of Community Centres in Elmbridge and Woking have taken place to identify best practice to help to design a fit for purpose exemplar Community Centre for Farnham and Waverley.
8. Regular hirers of the Memorial Hall have been consulted and feedback has been collated and where possible informed some design changes to the initial draft plans.

Outcomes of Feasibility Study

9. The design shown in Annexe 1 was selected as this meets with the space requirements specified by the Gostrey Centre trustees and provides greater potential for future use and therefore income. The Gostrey Centre has a legal entitlement as a result of the Section 106 agreement generated by the main Brightwells regeneration scheme and its trustees are therefore considered prime consultees. Their requirement for 870sq metres of space, 4 multi-purpose rooms, a café and a hall have been fulfilled. It should also be noted that the 907sq metres of space being created by the refurbishment represents a 45% increase on the current site which stands at c624 sq metres.
10. Key considerations for regular hirers of the Memorial Hall included provision of storage space, ease of access and retention of as much of the hall floor space as possible. These have all been catered for in the design, including maintaining as much of the current hall floor space as possible. An additional concern centred around continuing activities during the build process and research has been undertaken to establish alternative venues.
11. The aesthetically pleasing design and flexible layout would mean that the Memorial Hall could become commercially viable as a facility, eventually becoming self-sustaining by being hired for events such as weddings. In addition to providing the space required for service delivery by the Gostrey Centre, partner agencies contractually renting space will generate income whilst maintaining the community aspect for the wider community within the Memorial Hall.
12. In addition to the financial benefits of a single, flexible space, the new centre, with its wider usage, will help bring together different groups within the community under one roof. Its location is also beneficial, being close to the centre of town while providing good access and parking in a landscaped environment. This underlines Waverley's commitment to improving leisure and lives of its residents.

Conclusion

13. Building a new community centre, backed by Gostrey Centre trustees, at the Memorial Hall represents the most financially viable future for both the Gostrey Centre and Memorial Hall.
14. This new and enhanced building will provide the Gostrey Centre with not only the space they require, but ensure that there is the flexibility and versatility needed for a community space in the long term. One where facilities can be used to serve the community and provide a means of gaining financial stability and independence for the building.

Recommendation

It is recommended that

1. approval be given to officers to submit a planning application for the refurbishment and extension of the Memorial Hall in Farnham in line with the designs identified in Annexe 1; and
2. provision of up to £40,000 be made in the 2014/15 capital programme funded from the emergency schemes budget to take the proposed project to the planning stage and, subject to Council approval of the overall scheme, to progress to the tender stage for the construction of this new facility with the necessary consultancy support.

CONTACT OFFICER:

Name: Kelvin Mills

Telephone: 01483 523432

E-mail: kelvin.mills@waverley.gov.uk

Name: Katie Webb

Telephone: 01483 523340

E-mail: katie.webb@waverley.gov.uk