



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

PROVISION OF YOUTH, COMMUNITY, ADVICE AND INFORMATION SUPPORT FACILITIES IN CRAIGSHILL

REPORT BY HEAD OF AREA SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to advise the committee of the proposed works to Riverside Primary Community Wing and Sheil House, Craigshill to support the provision of improved youth, community, advice and information support facilities and to also advise on the progress being made on Craigsfarm to secure it's long term sustainability.

B. RECOMMENDATION

Council Executive is recommended to:

1. Approve the proposed disabled access works to Riverside Primary School and minor renovation works to the Community Wing at a cost of approx. £200,000;
2. Approve the proposed renovation of the ground floor and redecoration of the first floor at Sheil House, Craigshill to facilitate the centralisation of a number of community support, information and advice services including the relocation of the existing library from Almondbank at a cost of approx £1m;
3. Instruct officers to progress proposals for the re-use of Almondbank; and
4. Note the continued partnership working with Craigsfarm Management Committee to develop their business plan proposals including the option of transferring the facility to community ownership subject to approval by Council Executive.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I Council Values

- Being honest, open and accountable
- Focussing on our customers' needs
- Making best use of resources
- Working in partnership.

II Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)

The duty of Best Value as set out in the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003.

III Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)

A sum of £1,000,000 is included in the Councils Capital Budget for 2011/12 financial year for the enhancement of community facilities in Craigshill.

£200,000 is currently identified for DDA works at Riverside Community Wing.

IV Consultations

Craigshill Community Council and the wider community have been consulted by Area Services.

Consultations have taken place with the various community groups, organisations and Council services to be located in Sheil House.

Regular meetings and liaison with members of Craigsfarm management committee.

Local Members have been provided with a copy of this report for information.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

Background

West Lothian Council is committed to the improvement of youth, community, support, information and advice facilities across the County. The Craigshill area of Livingston has been identified as an area that could benefit from the enhancement and provision of modern facilities to help the community overcome the consequences of multiple deprivations.

Detailed investigations on service provision and extensive community consultation were undertaken to determine the level of demand and type of facilities required in Craigshill and how the funding allocated could be used to greatest benefit. In summary the findings were as follows:

- Craigsfarm was under utilised (only approx. 33% of the floor space was used and for on average 33% of the time it is open).
- Craigsfarm due to its age, condition and layout was not considered a long term viable options to provide the full range youth and community facilities demanded.
- A central location was considered preferable by respondents to the survey (62%)
- Community activism and support service activities should be centralised
- A new build community centre was considered too expensive and no central site available
- Diversionary activity for young people that kept them away from potentially anti social or risky behaviour was a priority.
- Quality of life factors and indicators that featured highly in the analysis; included self confidence, support and sense of community accounting for 66% of the outcomes valued most.

Desires identified by the community:

- 1. investment in a community centre;**
- 2. facilities for young people;**
- 3. information and advice services;**
- 4. vocational training;**
- 5. open space development; and**
- 6. pre-fives and after school services.**

In pursuit of delivering against these priorities a number of options were identified. Members at the Council Executive on the 8th October 2010 approved that the focus should be primarily on Sheil House and Riverside Primary School.

Detailed designs have been developed for both Sheil House and Riverside Community Wing. These have been consulted upon with a number of groups, services and organisations who are considering using and occupying the proposed accommodation. These included West Lothian Youth Action Project, Citizens Advice Bureau, NHS Lothians, West Lothian Drug and Alcohol Service, Daisy Drop In, YWCA (Scotland), Library Services and Access to Employment. All have expressed an enthusiasm to be part of the Sheil House development subject to their grant funding and operational technicalities being agreed.

The proposals for Riverside will involve the installation of disabled access lifts to permit access to the main hall, stage, gymnasium and canteen areas. These will be made available for community use out-with school hours and during holidays. Redecoration, new toilets and some minor works will also be undertaken to existing community wing. The draft layout is shown in Appendix 1.

The proposals for Sheil House will involve the partial renovation and redevelopment of the ground floor to provide meeting rooms (including interview rooms), vocational training rooms (including an IT suite), new library, small café & seating area, drop in facility / play area, centralised reception facility and community notice board together with office accommodation for the Citizens Advice Bureau. The first floor will be modernised to provide improved office accommodation and meeting rooms. Meeting rooms will be available for community to use subject to booking via the reception. The draft layout is shown in Appendix 2.

In implementing the Council Executive decision further consultations including at a public meeting on the 9th November 2010 were undertaken which subsequently highlighted the desire of the community to retain Craigsfarm and the management committees desire to potentially take ownership as part of a sustainable community asset transfer proposal.

Craigsfarm Management Committee and Council Officers have been working collaboratively over the past few months to develop a vision for the facility and have jointly engaged private consultants to prepare a business plan to hopefully secure the future viability of the subjects and investigate the potential for community asset transfer. Initial feedback from the consultants in terms of business opportunities include, youth enterprise and training centre, family centre, social enterprise and mall, voluntary sector hub, arts/sports hub, heritage centre, food centre. These are all being explored further with other emerging opportunities and may involve the need for the Council to provide initial “seed” funding to support the business plan. The business plan for the future of Craigsfarm will be reported back to members for determination once this is finalised.

The relocation of the Library will provide the opportunity to establish a more modern facility and allow the space currently occupied at Almondbank to be utilised either the West Lothian 16+ project, a project to support young people with complex needs to make a more positive transition to adult life, or for the future expansion of Beatlie. The NHS Child Development Centre located in one wing of Almondbank may also have expansion requirements. The reuse of Almondbank is being explored further by officers.

The proposed projects will support the delivery of five of the six identified desires from the community consultation. In summary these are as follows:

1. Investment in a community centre – through a combination of accessible halls and areas at Riverside, meeting spaces and advice services at Sheil House and the management committees aspirations for Craigsfarm;
2. Facilities for young people – through a combination of accessible halls and areas at Riverside which is a “hub” of youth activities and the administrative and advice centralisation at Sheil House
3. Information and advice services – By centrally locating a number of agencies and Council services in the one location clients can be easily signposted and supported by partners.
4. Vocational training – Provision of training and meeting rooms including an IT suite will greatly enhance the access to and provision of vocational training opportunities in Craigshill.
5. Open space development – Does not form part of the current proposal although a small secure play area is proposed for Sheil House as part of Daisy (subject to agreement and consents).
6. Pre-fives and after school services – The inclusion of Daisy Drop In within Sheil House and the continued support via Area Services for the Letham Community Wing where the Ladybirds Playgroup and Letham Lemurs After School Club currently meet are based will help support young children and after school services

Members will recollect that as part of the Council’s ten year Capital Plan an initial sum of £500,000 was earmarked to improve youth and community facilities within the Craigshill area. A further £200,000 has also been identified for Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) Compliance works to the Community wing of Riverside Primary School. To deliver the proposed projects it has been estimated that £1.2m is required and this has been budgeted for within the current Capital Programme. This represents an additional £500,000.

E. CONCLUSION

The proposed projects as highlighted in the report will deliver improved community facilities in Craigshill and support the delivery of improved advice, information and training.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Report on the provision of youth and community facilities in Craigshill approved by to Council Executive on 12th October 2010.

Investing in Community Facilities Craigshill Community Consultation Report

Reports to East Livingston and East Calder Local Area Committee

Craigshill Community Facilities Option Appraisal

Appendices/Attachments:

1. Riverside Primary School (Community Wing) – Proposed Layout
2. Sheil House – Proposed Layout

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