

Cabinet – 17 March 2010

Walsall ‘myplace’

Portfolio: Councillor R Walker, Children’s Services

Service: Children’s Services

Wards: Palfrey

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: No

1. Summary of report

This report seeks approval to pursue a BIG Lottery grant to develop a world-class, world-first young people’s facility in Walsall, and the authority to develop and submit a business plan for the project. With a development process heavily dependent on the views of the young people of Walsall, the centre will be designed to provide a visionary approach to young people services, to be delivered in partnership with a wide range of partners and stakeholders.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That approval is given for the provision of a young people’s facility on the Joseph Leckie school campus, and authority given for the preparation of a business plan for submission to the BIG lottery to help deliver the project.
- 2.2 That Cabinet delegates authority for the submission and implementation of the business plan to the Executive Director of Children’s Services, in consultation with the portfolio holder, Cllr R Walker.

3. Background information

- 3.1 In October 2008, Walsall Council secured funding of £1.287m to develop a ‘World Class’ youth facility under the Government’s ‘myplace’ initiative, administered through the BIG lottery on behalf of DCSF. Following consultation with young people and other partners, an opportunity was identified within the New Deal for Communities area in Blakenall to deliver a new sports youth and community facility to replace the dilapidated buildings at the Green Rivers centre. All the partners including Green Rivers Community Association and the Council worked hard to develop a project that could meet the various funding bodies’ criteria, however, in the timescales available this proved very difficult to achieve. Unfortunately there were many complicated issues that arose during the development of the project, particularly in respect of developing a viable and sustainable business case and a robust governance structure for the future management of the facility. In late summer 2009 the match funding partners to

the my place grant resolved that they were unable to provide any form of grant to the Green Rivers project due to their own concerns about the sustainability of the project. Progress therefore to resolve these issues has been such that Cabinet resolved in September 2009 that the risks associated with continuing with the project as detailed in the my place grant offer were too great and the project has not proceeded.

- 3.2 In October 2009 the Big Lottery Fund were notified of the match funders and Cabinet's decisions. The Council then took a proactive stance and proposed an alternative project within the Blakenall area in order that it did not miss this opportunity to secure funding. Initially it was felt that a viable alternative project was possible in that locality but further feasibility work during November 2009 concluded that this too was not going to be possible. By the end of 2009 it appeared that the Council could not propose a viable alternative to the Big Lottery Fund for use of its 'myplace' grant, but then in January 2010 the Council was contacted by the Big Lottery Fund and was invited to consider whether it could propose a final alternative 'myplace project'- this proving to be the last opportunity for the Council to secure 'my place' investment for young people in Walsall.
- 3.3 The DCSF are very keen for alternative proposals to be formulated for a my place-funded project in Walsall. There needs to be a business plan showing clear evidence that a project could be delivered within the original timescale, which is by 31 March 2011, which meets the my place criteria, designed with young people's involvement at every stage, completed and ready for occupation by the end of March 2011, and is financially sustainable. There is a clear strategic plan within Walsall for developing Integrated Young People's Support Services and a developing Integrated Youth capital strategy. This will seek to deliver World Class youth facilities across the entire Borough and this project is an important part of this vision. It builds on the continuous active consultation with young people and fits in with the Council-endorsed Integrated Young People's Support Services.
- 3.4 In short, the project needs to:
- deliver an attractive and safe place for young people to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in a wide range of exciting activities;
 - enable more young people, particularly those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds, to participate in positive activities that support their personal and social development;
 - demonstrate how it will increase the number of young people who access information, advice and support in places where they feel comfortable;
 - show how a partnership between the third, public and private sectors can deliver and operate financially sustainable facilities with and for young people.
- 3.5 Young people working on the Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF) and Youth Capital Fund (YCF) group have already allocated 50% of the available YCF (£60,800) to add to the potential myplace grant as an indication of their support for the project. The young people's panel members are keen to be involved in the development of the project and would like to ensure the inclusion of young people with disabilities.

- 3.6 A sub group would be formed to support the project, which would include young people from the area where the new facility would be sited. This is likely to be sourced from the additional engagement of young people elected in the bcal areas as representative of the Neighbourhood Management Area, which have already been active for example in major consultation with young people in local schools, youth centres and young people in local areas using Detached Teams.
- 3.7 Additionally, the Walsall Partnership (LSP) is determined to put the needs of young people at the heart of its work. At an event on 8 February, that involved a wide range of partners from the private and third sectors along with many public sector frontline workers, it clearly demonstrated that this is an area that is to be given the highest priority. The Chief Executives of the Council and PCT were both most supportive of work that addressed the identified needs of young people across the borough.
- 3.8 Consideration has been given to a number of sites across the borough for the new facility, which has led to the conclusion that a new build on the site of the Joseph Leckie school campus meets the criteria listed below, and would appear to be deliverable within the timescale:

- within an area with a high IMD (Index of Multiple Deprivation) score;
- there are few other fit-for-purpose youth facilities nearby and/or a lack of existing youth provision;
- there is land or Council owned property that would provide a suitable base for a building that would be able to be built and ready to use by March 2011;
- there are good opportunities for positive partnership working with a range of partners from the public and third sector, and multi agency teams would be able to capitalise on the new building;
- there is evidence that the sustainability of the centre could be assured from a number of sources to lessen the effect of potentially falling public sector revenue;
- there is evidence that the new building would provide many opportunities to capitalise on other capital programmes already underway in the Borough.

In addition, Joseph Leckie is one of the wave 6a schools in the BSF programme; the development of this young people's centre will create synergies with the enhanced facilities that the remodelling of the school will deliver, and will also contribute to the aspiration of co-located services as part of a community hub on each BSF campus.

4. Resource considerations

- 4.1 **Financial:** there is potentially a grant of £1.287m from the BIG lottery, available for use until 31 March 2011. The young people of the YCF group have allocated a further £60,800 from the YCF in support. The proposed site is in the council's ownership.

There will be on-going revenue costs for running the new facility. These costs will be considered as part of the business planning process and will be met from re-aligning current revenue budgets and through seeking partnership contributions wherever possible.

Some work has already been undertaken with a range of partners that have expressed enthusiasm for involvement which includes partners from the public, private and third sector.

- 4.2 **Legal:** these are yet to be considered in detail given the short timescale. However there are no obvious major complications in the current proposals.
- 4.3 **Staffing:** For the new facility to be successful it must clearly be sustainable. A major contribution to this from the start is the current IYPSS youth work staffing in the vicinity. This would be augmented over time by contributions from a wide range of partners who it is anticipated will want to use the centre. These include:
- The local PCT. The Chief Executive has already indicated that she is keen to explore ways that staff can use the opportunities in such a centre to deliver preventative healthcare to vulnerable groups of young people;
 - The Social Care teams – particularly family workers or those working with those with a disability;
 - Police - very active within the Walsall Partnership and keen to form positive relationships with young people (existing police base within Joseph Leckie).

5. Citizen impact

- 5.1 A centre such as this will provide a focal point for young people's engagement in positive activities which will contribute towards reduced anti-social behaviour, and other risky behaviour.
- 5.2 The chosen site will provide young people and their families with an opportunity to engage in a wide range of personal and social development activities which will contribute to improved community spirit and social cohesion.

6. Community safety

The centre will be designed by young people, for young people and will in part be run by young people, bringing a sense of responsibility and ownership, as has been seen at other young people led ventures. This will reduce the risk of impact on the local community, and contribute to an increased sense of community safety.

7. Environmental impact

The centre will be built on green space within the campus of a major Building Schools for the Future site. It will have an environmentally efficient and high quality design, using leading edge techniques to minimise the environmental impact

8. Performance and risk management issues

- 8.1 **Risk:** A full risk analysis will be built into the business plan to be developed by 31 March 2010. The development project will be managed through the Integrated Young People's Support Services Programme Board, using a strict project management approach to identify and reduce risk. The project will also benefit from support from central government to learn from projects ahead of Walsall in development terms, which will also reduce the risk of the project running into difficulties.
- 8.2 **Performance management:** The initial project aim is to develop and deliver a business plan by 31 March 2010. Progress towards this will be monitored by the Head of IYPSS. Clear performance criteria will be established for the facility itself, which focus on 'reach' (the number and range of young people attending the centre), delivery of accredited programmes of learning and attainment of certificated outcomes.

9. Equality implications

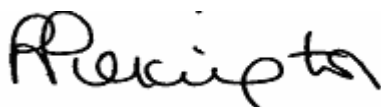
The centre will be designed so that it reaches out to the widest possible range of young people, and will follow best practice identified around the country. The facilities will be attractive to all young people who can access it, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

10. Consultation

Initial consultation has taken place with young people from the YOF and YCF group, who have supported the development of the centre and allocated funding. Further consultation will take place with the school headteacher, local community, and in particular local young people, given the approval of the Cabinet to the recommendations above. In addition the local community will be consulted on the planning application.

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Pauline Pilkington
Executive Director
8 March 2010



Councillor Rachel Walker
Portfolio holder
8 March 2010