

REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

Date of Meeting: 08 Feb 2022

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 22 Feb 2022

Report of: Director of Culture, Leisure and Tourism

Title: Wonford Health and Wellbeing Centre feasibility proposal

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Council

1. What is the report about?

This report is seeking funding and approval to progress the next Workstage of the Wonford Health & Wellbeing Hub project. This includes further detailed feasibility towards full planning consent for the redevelopment of the existing Wonford Community and Sports Centre facilities.

2. Recommendations:

2.1 That Council approve:-

- (1) the provision of £750,000 funding to progress to the next Workstage of the Wonford Health & Wellbeing Hub and;
- (2) that local residents and groups are invited to be involved in the co-design of the proposed redevelopment

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

Wonford is the most deprived ward in the city and contains several LSOAs (Lower Super Output Areas) highlighted in the top 20 highest areas of physical inactivity and poorest health outcomes in the city.

Wonford is a future nominated site for regeneration and development within the wider transformational Liveable Exeter housing plan. The principles of Liveable Exeter are visible through the commitment to put health and wellbeing at the centre of Wonford, through a community led vision and investment into a redeveloped health and wellbeing hub

Following an in depth local community engagement and co-design phase, through investment from Sport England as part of the Local Delivery Pilot programme, the Council

seeks to progress the project to formal in depth feasibility and submission of a planning application.

Engagement with the local community has highlighted a vision that includes:

- The development of a hub that brings the community together and improves the health and wellbeing of local residents;
- Openings the facility outwards to the community rather than the current intimidating building outlook;
- Connecting the facility to Wonford Playing Fields, the Ludwell Valley park and the wider city Green Circle cycle and walking route;
- A list of activities and multi-use facilities that deliver the outcomes prioritised in the initial co-design phase;
- The development towards a local hub for leisure and wellbeing activities led by the local community, rather than a sports centre for those living outside Wonford.

4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources?

To commit £750,000 of council resources to progress to formal planning stage of the new Health & Wellbeing hub redevelopment. The Council will receive additional New Homes Bonus in 2022-23, totalling approximately £684,000 and it is proposed to use this funding along with the balance from reserves to finance the project.

Programme management and community engagement will be delivered through the Active & Healthy People Team, externally resourced by the Sport England Local Delivery Pilot programme. This is estimated to cost around £30,000 for the next phase

The financial commitment above includes project management capacity through Exeter City Living, commissioning architectural and other technical input to lead to planning submission

Further capacity will be required through the Exeter Leisure and Active & Healthy People team to explore management models and prepare detailed business modelling and operational planning for both the leisure and community facilities within the health & wellbeing hub

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

The financial implications of the proposal set out in the report have been included in the 2022-23 budget and therefore there are no further financial issues for Council to consider at this stage.

However, if Council wishes to proceed further, there will need to be a detailed business case identifying sources of capital funding to deliver the project, including any borrowing requirement. The business case will be expected to assess the costs of borrowing against the revenue benefit that the project delivers. For clarity, this is revenue benefit over and above the current budget for Wonford. If there is a gap in resources, it is expected that the business case will identify ways of addressing this shortfall.

6. What are the legal aspects?

In progressing with this project, it is essential that Officers engage with Legal and Procurement Services in order to ensure compliance, for example, with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 in relation to procurement, and the UK Subsidy regime in relation to the use of funds.

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

This report raises no issues for the Monitoring Officer, save for the legal aspects raised above.

8. Report details:

The Sport England Local Delivery Pilot programme initially identified Wonford as a key priority to focus resources and programme delivery to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents through increasing physical activity.

Initial engagement identified the existing sports centre and community facilities are not well used by the local community, not connected to the local green space and perceived as a traditional sports centre meeting the needs of people living outside of Wonford.

A 24 month programme of engagement, led by a 'Sounding Board' consisting of local members as residents, has:

- Identified a local vision for health and wellbeing in Wonford, 'What Wonford Wants'.
- Co-designed the outcomes, activities and facilities that deliver improved community wellbeing through a redeveloped Wonford Health & Wellbeing Hub at the existing site of the Wonford Community and Sports Centres
- Developed a series of options on the future design and improvements to the existing buildings and facilities
- Highlighted the need for the facility to connect with the outdoor space and further enhance and integrate outdoor activity facilities connected to the hub
- Established the need for greater partnership working between the local GP practice 'Wonford Green Surgery' and local community assets
- Prioritised improving facilities for sustainable travel to the site, so walking and cycling become the main modes of transport for residents using the hub. This includes connection to the Green Circle, running alongside the existing building and playing fields

Following the completion of the initial project including Workstage to understand the requirements and needs of the community, the GPs surgery and the sports / leisure provision, the project is seeking funding and approval to undertake the next Workstage in the development process. This next Workstage will see the project progress from its current position to the submission of a full planning application.

The activities to be undertaken and progressed in this next Workstage can be summarised as:

Community Engagement: Fundamental to our progress during this next Workstage will be continued and ongoing community engagement. Interaction and involvement with Wonford residents, the project specific Stewardship Group, local community groups, etc will help

shape the facility in the early design stages and through concept design to the submission of the planning application. The nucleus of this new Health & Wellbeing Hub is its future use by the community – therefore full engagement and ‘co-design’ with the community will be critical throughout this next Workstage.

Surveys & Technical Investigations : This next Workstage will involve detailed investigations and surveys of the existing buildings, site area and local infrastructure. These will include structural surveys, ground investigations, utilities surveys, services surveys / searches, drainage surveys, highways assessments, etc. All to help inform the development of the design.

Design : The design will develop through the *Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Plan of Work* in Stages 1, 2, 3 & part of Stage 4. These RIBA Stages will see the collation and evaluation of the survey information, confirmation of the project brief, evolution & progression of the concept design, progression of the architectural design (including spatial co-ordination), and commencement of the detailed / technical design. All undertaken in conjunction and collaboration with key project stakeholders, including the community, GP practice, sports / leisure department, the estates department, and the local authority planning department. The outcome of the design in this next Workstage will be the submission of the planning application.

Cost / Revenue Modelling & Management: Cost Estimation & Cost Planning of the project will be an integral part of the evolving design through this next Workstage. This Cost Planning function will not only consider the capital build cost of the project, but also consider the ongoing operational revenues & costs of the facility – including energy costs, staffing costs, incomes, concessions, etc. This will allow the construction costs and predicted operational cost / revenue models to be managed and controlled throughout the Workstage.

GP Surgery: Continue working with the GP practice to explore the opportunities for a ‘hub’ / ‘campus’ approach which will provide a Health & Wellbeing Hub at the heart of the community.

Funding: Develop a detailed investment portfolio for the capital funding of the facility to include CIL funding, Council resources and significant external capital contributions (e.g. Sport England strategic facilities fund)

The cost for all surveys, investigations, professional fees and statutory fees to progress this next Workstage is estimated at £750,000 and is expected to take 12 to 14 months to complete.

9. How does the decision contribute to the Council’s Corporate Plan?

The decision to approve and fund the next stage of the Wonford Health & Wellbeing hub programme directly impacts key council corporate strategic priorities:

- Building Great neighbourhoods
- Promoting active and healthy lifestyles
- Net Zero ambition

The focus of the investment is at improving the health and wellbeing of local communities and residents, and prioritising those areas of the city with the largest inequalities and poorest health outcomes.

10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

Risk	Mitigation / Comment
1. Keeping the community actively and meaningfully engaged during the next stage of design.	Once the next stage is approved to progress, a detailed, collaborative engagement plan is to be developed. The Sounding Board / community representatives and Project Team will work together to create this plan. Delivery of the plan during the Stage will be a key activity in the next stage detailed works programme.
2. Covid 19 / Pandemic may profoundly impact on the willingness for future social & community gatherings, especially for the elderly and/or vulnerable.	The evolving design will look for ways to provide an environment which will help negate concerns related to virus spread & control – such as suitable ventilation strategies, segregation of spaces / areas, visible controls / practices, etc
3. The current Covid pandemic could negatively impact on the progress of the design process in the next stage.	Procure all necessary detailed surveys and searches as soon as the next stage is approved, so that such can be undertaken as soon as possible within any future changes in restriction measures / policies. Utilise IT based design sharing platforms and collaboration tools.
4. It may not be viable to integrate the GPs practice within the new building.	The pandemic crisis this year has resulted in slower than planned progress in fully testing the feasibility of the GP practice relocating into the new building. Although the technical / building consideration has been undertaken, the financial aspects (short-term and long-term) still need to be explored and concluded in the next stage.
5. Capital Funding not secured / available for the building.	Further work to be undertaken during the next stage to further refine the capital cost requirement and explore / confirm the funding routes.

11. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)

11.1 Under the Act's Public Sector Equalities Duty, decision makers are required to consider the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

11.2 In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

11.3 In making decisions the authority must take into account the potential impact of that decision in relation to age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), sex and gender, gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women and new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage and civil partnership status in coming to a decision.

11.4 In recommending this proposal significant potential positive impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act

12. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

12.1 The Wonford Health & Wellbeing hub programme will have a direct impact on delivering our carbon reduction target (carbon neutral by 2030). To date, a high-level feasibility of the future redevelopment has been conducted. At this next stage,

relevant existing Council priorities and policies (e.g. Net Zero programme) will be shared with the design team and will be an important part of the brief. We will seek to maximise the opportunities for the hub to contribute towards our environmental aspirations. These will include:

- Encouraging and enabling local residents to walk and cycle to the hub, through enhanced active travel infrastructure (e.g. parking, accessible walkways). This will involve reducing the amount of single use vehicle occupancy of members accessing the hub.
- The new health and wellbeing hub being a destination point of the Green Circle and E4 strategic cycling route promoting walking and cycling
- Exploring the potential to take new approaches to waste management at the hub
- Other specific carbon reduction initiatives as identified by the design team during the detailed feasibility stage

13. Are there any other options?

To consider an undefined alternative proposal to develop a different scheme for the existing Wonford Community and Sports Centres.

To maintain the status quo and the buildings operate within the current existing Corporate Property and Exeter Leisure portfolio with no additional capital investment. This will be to the detriment of Wonford and the health and wellbeing of the local community

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Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

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