


Report of: Head of Community Housing and Community Development

To: Executive Board


Date: 21st of April 2008

Item No:

Title of Report : Cowley Community Centre long list of options



Summary and Recommendations




Purpose of report: To provide a long list of options for the former Cowley Community Centre site, from which a short list is to be chosen for consultation.

Key decision: No


Risk: Low

Portfolio Holder: Councillor David Rundle




Scrutiny Responsibility: Community Scrutiny


Ward(s) affected: Cowley Ward




Report Approved by:




Author: Jeremy Thomas




Finance: Andy Collett




Portfolio Holder: Councillor David Rundle




Policy Framework: None




Recommendation(s):




Executive Board is asked to assess the long list of options (report) and Cowley Area Committees recommendations (appendix 1) and choose those options, which in the Executive Boards opinion should be taken forward for consideration, adding any other reasonable option.



Executive Board is asked to give its view on a second phase option regarding the housing adjacent to the old community centre site.





Background.

1. Following the disbanding of Cowley Community Association in summer 2007, Executive Board expressed its commitment to work to improve community provision in the Cowley area. To that end, it was agreed in August 2007 to close the old Cowley Community Centre on Barns Road, Cowley and to consult on the community needs of the area. The deadline set for this closure was the 31st of March 2008. Subsequently, at the Executive Board of the 17th of March, the decision was taken to move back the closure to the 25th of April. After that date, the Centre cannot be available for use for fire safety reasons. Work will begin to remove all asbestos from the centre and later to demolish the remaining buildings.
2. A report listing the options was presented to Cowley Area Committee on the 2nd of April 2008. The Area Committee has responded to that report and their recommendations are laid out in appendix 1.

Report.

3. Officers from Community Housing and Community Development, alongside Officers from Built Environment and Estates, have prepared a long list of options. These options have a short description with an indicative cost directly to the City Council and indicative income generated for the City Council. Each also has a comment from Officers.
4. The options are not exhaustive or mutually exclusive as any mixture of them is possible. However the aim is to show the core elements of an option and to show the cost/benefit to the City Council.
5. A potential second phase of development could consist of combining the Community Centre site with the 3 housing blocks next to it. This option would look to develop both sites for housing so increasing the volume and return of any such development. At this time it would be possible to develop this option, as a second phase dependant upon the option chosen for the immediate community centre site. Members may wish to explore this further as a second phase to the chosen option.
6. Officers in Community Housing and Community Development and the Built Environment will work up the options chosen. These options will then be taken back to Cowley Area Committee before any public consultation.
7. The consultation will take 5 weeks and will include public meetings and public displays within the Templar Square Shopping Centre. It will also involve key stakeholders and community organisations within the Cowley Area.
8. A final option will then be produced for the consideration of Executive Board in June/July.

LONG LIST OF OPTIONS FOR THE FORMER COWLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE.

DDEVELOPMENT OPTIONS	DISCRIPTION	INDICATIVE COST TO COUNCIL	INDICATIVE RECEIPT TO COUNCIL	COMMENT
1.Sell the cleared site	Set out requirements for land use and either put to the open market.	Officer time	Circa £3 Million	This option would leave little scope for decisions on what development would take place. The only controls would be through the planning process
2.Apply for planning and sell site	Apply for outline planning permission on an approved scheme. Invite developers to compete for the scheme. May be possible to have developer apply for planning if appropriate.	Officer time Architects Fees 20K	£3+ Million	This option increases the value of the site and gives a much greater level of control on the finished product in terms of the Councils priorities.
3. Housing private	Develop the site with private housing based upon Councils strategy of needs	N/A	£3+ Million	Affordable housing would be provided in line with the planning requirement of 50% units. This would generate the highest capital receipt as an example 30+ 3 bed houses could be provided

DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS	DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE COST TO COUNCIL	INDICATIVE RECEIPT TO COUNCIL	COMMENTS
4. Housing Social	Develop the site with 100% social housing with RSL partner	Officer time	£600,000+ This is due to lower values for social housing in terms of land	This would generate a smaller receipt but could provide 45+ units of affordable housing.
5. Housing private or mixed with a small community facility	Provide a community facility within the housing development. Two small meeting rooms.	Officer time	£3 + Million	This option is only viable with a private housing development due the cost required from the developer to build any community facility. The size of which will affect the values derived from the site and therefore the receipt paid.
6. Housing Private or mixed with a medium sized community facility Community facility, small	Provide a medium sized facility which would comprise two rooms (meeting style) with a small hall for activities		£2.5 Million	As above
7. Housing private or mixed with a large sized community facility	Provide a community facility on half the existing site that would include a hall, meeting rooms, kitchen and other main facilities.		£1.5 Million	As above
8. Housing private or social with rentable units	Develop a number of rentable units to allow for service delivery, for example a one stop shop or advice function	Officer time Possible rental	Private Development Circa £3 Million	The placing of units in this option may fill the criteria for permanent housing of Council

		charge	Social Housing Circa £500,000	Connect, the one stop shop. This would reduce the capital receipt with the loss of housing
DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS	DESCRIPTION	INDICATIVE COST TO COUNCIL	INDICATIVE RECEIPT TO COUNCIL	COMMENTS
9. Office development	Develop an office block, for rental by private sector	N/A	£2+ Million pounds	This option relies on demand for office space; the receipt would be lower than for housing and it does not seem to fit any real Council objectives. .
10.Retail	Develop a retail area according with Cowley's status in the new core strategy as a Primary District Centre	Officer time	£1+ Million pounds	This option relies upon the demand for extra retail in the area and the willingness to provide it. Again it does not meet any of the Councils main Objectives but would provided a capital receipt
11. New Community Centre (whole site)	New community centre taking up the whole site.	£ 2 – 4 Million	£0in terms of receipt,	This option depends on the demand for these facilities. It also allows for the closure of other centres and relocates those users. This could produce other capital receipts

Recommendations.

Recommendation(s):

- 1. Executive Board is asked to assess the long list of options (report) and Cowley Area Committees recommendations (appendix 1) and chose those options, which in the Executive Boards opinion should be taken forward for consideration, adding any other reasonable option.**
- 2. Executive Board is asked to give its view on a second phase option regarding the housing adjacent to the old community centre site.**



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Background papers: None



Extract from minutes of Cowley Area Committee – 2 April 2008

141. COWLEY COMMUNITY CENTRE SITE – LIST OF OPTIONS

The Head of Community Housing and Community Development submitted a report (previously circulated now appended) which detailed a list of options for the Cowley Community Centre site.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To welcome the decision to demolish and replace the old buildings on the Cowley Community Centre site;
- (b) Not to support options 1, 2, 3, 4, 9 and 11 as detailed in the report;
- (c) To support some parts of options 5, 6, 7 and 8, namely:
 - (i) Housing with some community facilities, including the One- Stop-Shop and possibly the Credit Union;
 - (ii) That the size of the community facility needs to be related to the local consultation but 2 meeting rooms, some office space for voluntary groups to use, a small hall and a kitchen would be a minimum;
- (d) That option 10 should be explored further but not only with retailers, e.g. Templars Square, but open up to other large organisations such as Health and the County Council;
- (e) To support the linking of the redevelopment of the Community Centre site with the adjacent housing subject to:
 - (i) The project being a partnership with Oxford City Homes and the whole site considered rather than seeing it as two separate entities, and:
 - (ii) That timescales are looked at, as including the housing could lengthen the timescale for redevelopment considerably.
- (f) That the Cowley Area Committee and local Ward Councillors be included at every stage of the decisions affecting the future of the site;
- (g) That the Cowley Area Committee receive a further report following the Executive Board meeting which would approve a set of preferred options for further investigation;
- (h) To pass recommendations (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f) and (g) above to the Executive Board as the formal comments from the Cowley Area Committee.