

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL SERVICES IN LEDBURY LINKING TO A LIBRARY BIG LOTTERY APPLICATION

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES

CABINET

8TH FEBRUARY, 2007

Wards Affected

Backbury
Frome
Hope End
Ledbury
Marcle Ridge

Purpose

To give an overview of schemes in Ledbury that will inform the way forward in developing new facilities in the town.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

- That: a) the schemes be noted;
- b) an outline application be submitted for Big Lottery Fund by March 2007 to support the library element of an integrated centre incorporating Info (customer services) and provision for young people; and
- c) as a starting point to preparing the bid a Consultation Partnership Board be established to oversee the project.

Reasons

There are a number of proposed projects for Ledbury which will enhance the facilities provision in the town. These cover:

- Enhancement of Info Shop at the Masters House
- New Children's Centre
- Developments of the Masters House with Ledbury and District Development Trust
- Relocation of the Tourist Information Centre
- Improve library provision to meet modern requirements of library service and meet DDA compliance

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Natalia Silver, Head of Economic and Community Services (01432) 260732

These schemes are outlined below, and will contribute to the following outputs and outcomes for people:

- Percentage of Herefordshire residents who find it easy to access a library / cultural and recreation facilities (LAA)
- Percentage of 11-15 year olds participating in activities (LAA)
- Percentage of residents with access to communication facilities
- Percentage of adults who use culture and leisure facilities (LAA)
- Number of visits to libraries per 1000 population (BVPI)
- Satisfaction with libraries (BVPI)
- Quality of life aspects for community activity, activities for teenagers, cultural facilities and facilities for young children (LAA)
- Residents who are satisfied with their local community as a place to live (LAA and LPSA2)

Considerations

The Masters House

1. The Masters House currently houses the Info in Herefordshire service and some office provision on the first floor. In January 2007 some improvement work is to commence on the Info office which will include reconfiguring the front desk and the cash desk, improving Disability internet access, providing meetings rooms, a disabled toilet facility and general redecoration and is expected to be complete by early March 2007. A recent conservation report and work conducted by the Civic Society showed that the building is of historic importance to the town and the County as a whole, and has the potential for heritage, tourism and community use. With this in mind the local authority is entering a partnership with the Ledbury District Development Trust, who will be representing the Town Council, Civic Society and Tourism Association to investigate and present options for its future use. Work for "Audience Development Planning" funded by the Heritage lottery and a business plan produced by the Development Trust is due to be completed by August, 2007. After the Conservation Report was produced it was clear that the Masters House would be unsuitable as an alternative site for the library service because of planning and structural restraints within the building.
2. Linked to this is the original intention of moving the Tourist Information Centre into the Masters House in January 2007 as the lease for the current site is due to expire on 30th August, 2007 and would have presented a budget saving. Following a recommendation from Community Services Scrutiny Committee the appropriate Cabinet Members have agreed to defer that move until the outcome of the work with the Development Trust. There is still an option for the TIC to be a part of the Masters House development or relocating to an integrated service site.

Ledbury Children's Centre/Youth Centre

3. Funding for the Ledbury Children's Centre is in place and work is due to start in March 2007 with a building completion date of August 2007. The Centre will be on

the Ledbury Primary School site and the service will be aimed at parents and /carers of 0-5 year olds. This project is still subject to Central Government approval with a view to it being value for money. The proposed development on the current Youth Centre site would provide services for Young People age 11-24 so would compliment the Children's Centre provision.

Ledbury Library

4. The current library, which is not in Council ownership, restricts the nature of service the facility can offer in meeting a diverse range of interest and needs of local communities. In addition the current library is not compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act, consequently the full range of services is not available to all users and this could result in a possibility of a legal challenge under the DDA Act if this is not managed. Where improvements to libraries have taken place (including at Kington and Bromyard) there has been an increase in use, specifically with children and young people.
5. A new build on an alternative site would provide a facility which can offer a diversity of services including IT access, activity space specifically for children and increase shelf space to enable improved access to stock. It would also create a DDA compliant facility, and would incorporate INFO in Herefordshire as an integrated service for the customer and facility for young people.
6. The Big Lottery have invited bids for funding for libraries from its Community libraries fund, for which a new build for Ledbury Library would be a suitable candidate. This is a new fund for library services that has not been available before, but is unlikely to be repeated considering the demands of the 2012 Olympic Games on Lottery funds.
7. The closing date for Big Lottery applications is 30th March 2007. Successful bids will be notified in September 2007 and details of the plans must be forwarded within six months of that date. Prior to writing the bid, consultation with key local partners needs to take place and a Consultation Partnership Board formed, this can build on current relationships with the Ledbury community through the development of facilities in the town.
8. Points to consider regarding a Big Lottery bid are:
 - The basis of the Big Lottery bid will include provision of community space with a focus on arts, literature and poetry with specific work for teenagers.
 - The Corporate Customer Services Strategy states that "all front line services will be integrated ... to ensure a "one and done" approach to capturing information and requests."
 - Current plans incorporate youth provision which is a reduction in size on current provision, but recognises a change in approach to services with young people, including smaller break out rooms, social area, and café. There is also an option to include key worker accommodation.

- The cost of the proposed project will be approximately £2,625,000 funded by £2,000,000 bid for from the Big Lottery fund, £375,000 to be bid for from the Council's Capital Programme and approximately £200,00/£250,000 in value of land. The Big Lottery fund require a minimum of 25% match funding. This would cover IT requirements including a new self service books system for issue and return of books.
9. The net Prudential Borrowing required for the library project is £375,000 as detailed above. This requirement is included in the capital programme proposals report elsewhere on the agenda. It is expected that if the lottery bid is successful then the Prudential Borrowing element would be spent towards the end of 2007/08. The capital financing costs for this project would be a maximum of £5,000 for 2007/08 followed by £31,875 for 2008/09, which then reduces by £675 per year thereafter.
 10. It is proposed that a Consultation Partnership Board will include representatives of Ledbury Poetry Festival, John Masefield Society, John Masefield School, Ledbury Voluntary Action, Ledbury Town Council, Ledbury District Access Group, Ledbury Youth First and Ledbury Development Trust. Also, local members to be involved throughout the process.

Risk Management

There is a risk of a challenge under DDA legislation if the library is not compliant with the required standards.

Also, that expectation will be raised through this process within the local community, with the risk that the lottery application will not be successful due to national demand.

The costs included in the report are based on an estimated amount per square metre. At this stage this is the accepted practice for estimating a project's costs. However there is a risk that final tendered amounts will vary from the estimate. Any additional costs would fall on the council and need to be factored into a future capital programme.

The current library is situated in a leased building and as such does not give longer term security. The move to an alternative site will help address this risk.

Alternative Options

The alternative option is to maintain the status quo in all areas. This will save expenditure on capital schemes, but would not increase performance.

Consultees

Colin Birks, Property Services Managers
Lin Beddis, Corporate and Customer Services
Lea Abbotts, Children Services
Steve Cameron, Principal Financial Policy Manager

Appendices

None.

Background Papers

Stage 1 pro forma 2007/08 capital bid stage 1-Ledbury Library