

Report of East North East Area Leader

Report to Inner East Area Committee

Date: 8th September 2011

Subject: Options for use of Insurance monies from Pakistani Centre fire, Harehills

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Gipton & Harehills	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

This report provides an update on discussions that have been on-going with the Gipton & Harehills ward members and the Chair of the Inner East Area Committee concerning the use of the insurance monies from the Pakistani Centre fire. In particular the report summarises the main options for the use of this money and reflects the local ward members preference to invest the money in a new community facility as part of the expansion plans for Wykebeck Primary School.

Recommendations

That the Area Committee note the contents of the report and approve Option 1 to invest the insurance money in a new community facility as part of the school expansion plans in accordance with ward members preference.

Purpose of this report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on discussions that have been on-going with the Gipton & Harehills ward members and the Chair of the Inner East Area Committee concerning the use of the insurance monies from the Pakistani Centre fire and to seek support from the Inner East Area Committee for the preferred option of the local ward members which is to invest the money in a new community facility as part of the expansion plans for Wykebeck Primary School.

Background information

2. There is funding available to support the provision of a new facility or improve existing resources through insurance money received after the fire at the Pakistani Centre in Harehills. The amount of funding available for the Area Committee to invest in community facilities stands at £438,000.
3. South Gipton Community Centre is a single storey building on Brander Road. The centre cost Leeds City Council approximately £48,000 per annum to maintain, generated no revenue income, was under utilised and no longer fit for the purpose due to its poor state of repair. Increasingly the building had become a target for vandalism and anti-social behaviour. Therefore, the Inner East Area Committee made a decision to declare the building surplus to operational requirements.
4. The Centre was originally declared surplus by the Inner East Area Committee in anticipation of a proposal to transfer ownership to a local voluntary organisation, GIPSIL who put forward a proposal to demolish the existing building and rebuild a new facility. These proposals were withdrawn by GIPSIL, but the Area Committee confirmed on 21 October 2010 that they still wished the centre to be declared surplus due to its poor condition, high running costs and low usage. The Centre closed in March 2011.
5. Children's Services are proposing to expand Wykebeck Primary School within its current site from 45 reception places to 60. The site of the community centre has been identified by them as having the potential to provide valuable additional land for the school expansion. It is feasible to include community provision to replace that lost by the closure of South Gipton Community Centre if funding is available to cover the additional cost.
6. Within the Inner East Area Committee's portfolio there are six other community centres requiring substantial backlog maintenance work. The costs of this work are estimated to be in the region of £382,000. However, these figures may not be accurate as many of the backlog surveys on community centres have not been updated for a number of years.

Main issues

7. Discussions which have taken place with all relevant parties, including the Council's Asset Management Board, to come to an agreement on how to take the project forward and obtain best use of the insurance money. These discussions have produced three options:

8. **Option 1:** Demolish South Gipton Community Centre, and invest the insurance money in a new community facility as part of the school expansion plans. The facility would include meeting space and a hall for use by the community and the school and provision of a multi-use games area (MUGA) for use by the school, and supervised use by the community. The cost estimate for these works provided by Children's Services is £436,000 inclusive of a percentage of the charges relating to carrying out work in the outdoor area, including car parking and a contribution to the MUGA.
9. **Option 2:** Demolish South Gipton Community Centre and leave the school expansion plans to go ahead without a community facility. Invest some of the insurance funding into provision of a MUGA and invest the remainder of the insurance funding into other community centres in the Area Committee's portfolio. Encourage use of the school for community use in the evenings through the existing school lettings policy or explore usage of the adjacent Children's Centre for community use.
10. **Option 3:** Demolish South Gipton Community Centre and leave the school expansion plans to go ahead without a community facility or a MUGA. Invest all the insurance funding in the existing community centres in the Area Committee's portfolio. Encourage use of the school for community use in the evenings, through the existing school lettings policy or explore usage of the adjacent Children's Centre for community use.

Options Appraisal

11. Option 1 is the preferred option of the local ward members. The Area Committee agreed at the meeting of 24th March 2011 to support the use of the insurance monies to provide a new community facility within the school expansion plans. Consultation undertaken within the local community indicates that there is a demand for a new community facility to replace that lost by the closure of South Gipton.
12. Wykebeck Primary School already hosts some community activities within their school for parents, and would welcome a community facility on site for such events, and for extra curriculum activities such as music clubs. GIPSIL would welcome a new facility which could be used to deliver advice sessions, and community activities which bring people together. The Youth Service have confirmed that they would provide activities and advice sessions from a new community facility. South Gipton Tenants & Residents Association, formed in September 2010, would use a facility for parents groups, advice sessions, bingo, coffee mornings. Local councillors would use the facility for surgeries, and it would also be used for meetings by the Area Committee and the Gipton Community Leadership Team.
13. Some preparatory work has already been undertaken for this option. Plans have been drawn up for the community element of the school expansion. This would provide a space of 165sq metres, comprising a large hall, two small meeting rooms,

storage, a kitchette and two DDA¹ compliant toilets. The MUGA would be constructed in the school grounds.

14. A new facility would form part an integral part of the school building. Ward members have raised concerns about the future of this community facility should the status of the school change at any time in the future. Should this happen, agreement would be put in place to ensure that continued community usage was secure.
15. The consultation and discussions undertaken so far have generated a level of interest and expectation within the local community that the expansion of the primary school will include community provision.
16. Should either option 2 or option 3 be the preferred option, the inclusion of a community facility within the school expansion would not go ahead. As an alternative, the school and the children's centre would be available for some community use, however the scope of activities and events would be limited. Both venues would only be available in the evenings. Use of the school would be through the existing school lettings policy. The Children's Centre can only offer space for small meetings up to 8 – 10 meetings. Option 2 includes investing in the MUGA to offer a facility which would be available for supervised community use. Option 3 would mean there were no new community facilities in South Gipton.
17. Options 2 and 3 propose the use of the insurance monies for backlog maintenance. However the Inner East Area Committee does not support the use of the monies to cover backlog maintenance for other community centres within their portfolio. The majority of the centres needing backlog maintenance are not in the Gipton and Harehills ward, and the view of the Area Committee is that the insurance monies should benefit the ward in which the fire happened, i.e. Gipton and Harehills.
18. The consultation and discussions undertaken so far have generated a level of interest and expectation within the local community that the expansion of Wykebeck Primary School will include community provision. Option 2 offers a only the MUGA, and option 3 offers no community facilities at all, therefore both of these options carry the risk of a loss of community confidence in the Council.
19. All three options include demolishing the existing South Gipton Community Centre. The cost of this is estimated to be £82,000 inclusive of a 20% contingency amount. This cost will be covered using the savings on the NNDR² to fund prudential borrowing costs.

Preferred Option

20. On the basis of the information available and previous discussions with ward members and the Chair of the Area Committee it is proposed that the Area Committee confirms its support for Option 1.

¹ Disability Discrimination Act

² National Non Domestic Rates

21. Subject to Area Committee support for Option 1 the next step will to initiate the project is for a Design and Cost Report to be produced and presented to October's Executive Board.

Corporate Considerations

Consultation and Engagement

22. Consultation has taken place with Wykebeck Primary School, ward members, the local MP and a range of community and voluntary organisations within the local area as outlined in paragraph 12. The Council's Asset Management Board have been consulted on the options for use of the insurance monies.

Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

23. An Equalities Impact assessment has been undertaken as part of the project planning for replacing the facilities lost by South Gipton Community Centre.

Council Policies and City Priorities

24. Provision of appropriate facilities within communities which offer local venues for activities, advice and information supports the priorities set out in the Inner East Community Charter which are agreed with the local communities of Inner East and key stakeholders. The Charter supports the Vision for Leeds.

Resources and Value for Money

25. The scheme cost for the community provision as part of the Wykebeck School site is £436,000 with demolition of the existing centre being £82,000.
26. Inner East Area Committee have never indicated that they want the funding to be spent on backlog maintenance on other centres within their portfolio.
27. The Council's Asset Management Board have, however, raised concerns whether the option to invest funding to provide a community facility as part of the Wykebeck Primary School is best use of the money available. The options for investment of the insurance funding have been carefully considered and it is felt that the provision of the community space as part of the school expansion will be most beneficial for the local community.

Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

28. The Area Committee has delegated responsibility within the framework of the Council's Constitution (Part 3, Section 3D) and in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000 to make asset management and investment proposals to ensure that its community centre portfolio is sustainable and meets local needs.

Risk Management

29. A risk assessment has been undertaken as part of the project planning for replacing the facilities lost by South Gipton Community Centre.

Conclusions

30. South Gipton Community Centre was closed due to being in a poor state of repair. An opportunity has arisen to replace the facilities lost by the closure of South Gipton with a new community facility within Wykebeck Primary School. This can be funded using the insurance monies from the fire at the Pakistani Centre in Harehills. The Council's asset management board have advised that this may not offer the best value for money and that the insurance monies should be used to undertake backlog maintenance in six other community centres within the Inner East Area Committee's portfolio. The ward members preference is to invest in a new community facility within Wykebeck Primary School.

Recommendations

31. That the Area Committee note the contents of the report and approve Option 1 to invest the insurance money in a new community facility as part of the school expansion plans in accordance with ward members preference.

Background documents

Asset Management Board

- Wykebeck Primary School and South Gipton Community Centre Proposal - 11th August 2011
- South Gipton Community Centre – 9th June 2011

Inner East Area Committee

- Community Centres Update Report – 23rd June 2011
- Community Centres Update Report – 23rd March 2011
- Community Centres Update Report – 2nd December 2010
- Community Centres Option Appraisal – 21st October 2010