

**Executive Member for Children and Young
People's Services and Advisory Panel**

19th January 2009

Report of the Director of Learning, Culture and Children's Services

AN UPDATE ON "MYPLACE"

Summary

1. Members have previously requested an update on preparations for a *myplace* bid, following the decision in September 2008 to postpone this until the second round in 2009. This paper reports on the appointment of Phil Bixby, a local community architect, to assist with the process. We hope that Mr Bixby will be present at the meeting to answer Members' questions.

Background

2. "*myplace*" is the branding chosen by Government through which to distribute £190m of capital investment in grants of between £1m and £5m. The aim of the *myplace* project is: "to deliver world-class youth facilities driven by the active participation of young people and their views and needs." The first bidding round closed on 30 September 2008 and the results are still awaited (although some very early "fast track" projects have recently been announced). The Government has confirmed that a minimum of £30 million, plus any surplus from round one, will be made available in a second bidding round in 2009. The latest news we have on the timing of this is that it will be "launched in the spring", which is considerably later than we had previously been led to believe. There has been talk of further funds being made available over the next ten years, but nothing confirmed as of yet.
3. For those associated with young people's services in York, the fund offers an ideal opportunity to plug an undoubted gap in our facilities: a high quality city centre place for young teenagers to meet and socialise, to complement the advisory services at Castlegate. We have therefore, embarked on a comprehensive exercise to consult young people about what they wanted, as well as a thorough search for suitable sites and premises – assisted by colleagues in other Directorates. Both these exercises were quite time-consuming, but necessary in order to satisfy the requirements of the Big Lottery Fund who are administering the bid, and who needed to be assured that a thorough options appraisal, led by young people, had been conducted.
4. By the time that we made a presentation to EMAP on 4 September, there were just two site options left in the frame. Some of the young people who

had been working with us on the project made a presentation at that meeting, leaving Members in no doubt about their preference for a city centre option. We therefore concentrated our remaining efforts on the site based around the Railway Institute (RI) facilities on Queen Street, in partnership with the RI and in close consultation with the landowners, Network Rail.

5. Unfortunately the issues involved in bringing forward a scheme based around this site, which borders York Central/York Northwest, proved too complex to resolve before the deadline for submitting the bid, despite everyone's best efforts. Those issues included: the need to ensure the partial relocation of some of the RI's existing facilities as part of the scheme; the position of existing tenants on the site; queries about an electricity sub-station; the need to get permission from the Office of the Rail regulator; and various strategic planning considerations. The main issue, however, was the fact that for this particular scheme to work, other parties would have to contribute substantial capital funds, and it was not possible to turn willingness in principle, into binding commitments in the time available, particularly as we were simultaneously advertising for a development partner for the whole of York North West. Unlike some bidding processes where it might be possible to leave such matters for subsequent resolution, the national requirements of *myplace* are stringent, and we were advised that the bid would fail on technical grounds if we submitted it with question marks over such issues.
6. We decided that the scheme was too important to risk a non-compliant bid, and therefore took the decision to defer it until the second round, giving us more time to resolve the outstanding issues. The Chief Executive wrote to the Big Lottery Fund advising them of this.
7. In late November we appointed Mr Phil Bixby, a respected local community Architect, to work with us on the project to offer technical advice, maintain the consultation with young people, and to give us additional capacity. Mr Bixby's brief is to:
 - *as his principle objective*, to pick up the work previously undertaken, and relationships established, in relation to the Railway Institute site, and to advise if it is capable of being made the subject of a high quality *myplace* bid;
 - maintain a continued dialogue with young people, building on the involvement of our focus group, and with other interested parties including Members;
 - draw up a comprehensive brief for the project that includes the needs and wishes of all parties, and a project plan;
 - liaise with Network Rail at a sufficiently senior level so as to secure their formal approval for the project including the granting of a long lease and the removal of any technical hurdles;
 - liaise with the Railway Institute so as to ensure their continued cooperation, leading to the establishment of a formal memorandum of understanding or similar;
 - advise whether the architect's drawings are a good basis on which to proceed, or if we need to start again;

- seek, in consultation with ourselves, other possible sources of capital to help finance the project;
 - help us to draw up a robust set of costings and a delivery plan;
 - help us to construct a management vehicle for running the facility, including the RI's interests and also that of the voluntary sector and of young people themselves;
 - help us to construct a credible revenue plan;
 - leave us with the means to move quickly towards outline planning permission, maintaining dialogue throughout with COYC's planners, and with the city's Heritage interests.
8. In addition, his *secondary objective*, informed by progress on the first, is to help us identify a Plan B: a substitute facility, perhaps rather less ambitious in scope, that could be the subject of an alternative *myplace* bid.
9. Mr Bixby will be assisted by a cross-Directorate bid team, and by regular dialogue with myself and with Paul Herring (Youth Services) and Colin Stroud (CVS).
10. We hope Mr Bixby will be present at the meeting to convey his initial impression and answer Members' questions.

Consultation

11. As previously mentioned, continued consultation with young people is part of Mr Bixby's brief.

Options

12. If Mr Bixby's work identifies options that need a steer from Members, these will be put before an appropriate meeting at a later stage.

Analysis

13. As this is an update on work in progress, an analysis is not appropriate at this stage.

Corporate Priorities

14. A successful *myplace* bid will contribute to meeting the following corporate priorities:
- Improving the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city.
 - Improving the health and lifestyles of the people that live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest.
 - Increasing people's skills and knowledge to improve future employment prospects.
 - Increasing the use of public and other environmentally-friendly modes of transport.

- Reducing the environmental impact of council activities and encouraging, others to do the same.
- Reducing the actual and perceived impact of violent, aggressive and nuisance behaviour on people in York.

Implications

15. Any relevant financial, HR, equalities, legal, crime and disorder, IT, property and planning issues will be identified at an appropriate point as the work progresses and brought before Members as necessary.

Risk Management

16. As we are talking about the submission of a bid, there are no significant risks at this stage, other perhaps than to the reputation of the council if we are unable to put forward a credible application. If the bid is successful, a full project plan, including a detailed risk analysis, will be developed and put before Members. The main risks are likely to be around the robustness of the plans to support the ongoing revenue costs.

Recommendations

17. That the Advisory Panel advise the Executive Member to note this update report and comment as they wish.

Reason: additional investment in youth facilities in the city is in line with our corporate priorities, and the views of residents and young people themselves.

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Report Approved

Yes

Date

31
2008

December

All

✓

Wards Affected: *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers: None

Annexes: None