

## Meeting of the Executive Member for Children and Young People's Services and Advisory Panel

4 September 2008

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

### Emerging Options for a "Myplace" Bid

#### Summary

1. This report summarises progress towards preparing a bid, driven by young people and in partnership with the voluntary sector, for "myplace" monies to create a world-class youth facilities in central York. It will be supplemented by an oral presentation on the available site options, and we hope that young people will be present to offer their views.

#### Background

2. "myplace" is the branding chosen by Government through which to distribute £190m of capital investment over the next three years 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.
3. The strategy intends to improve the level of ambition across the country and transform the way facilities for young people are planned and delivered. In particular it aims to improve the role and influence of young people and the increase the level of genuine cross-sector partnership working.
4. In more detail, successful bids must deliver all four of these outcomes:
  - more young people, parents and communities feel that young people have exciting and safe places to go in their leisure time where they can get involved in an attractive range of activities;
  - more young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, participate in positive leisure time activities that support their personal and social development;
  - more young people have access to information, advice and support services from within places they feel comfortable;
  - stronger partnership working between local authorities, third, private and public sector partners to plan, deliver and operate financially sustainable youth facilities with and for young people.

5. The BIG lottery fund is administering *myplace* on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) with a deadline of 30 September 2008 for the first funding round. Subsequent funding rounds will be available, though the aim at this stage is to distribute the majority of the first tranche of available funds in round one.
6. Members of the Young People's Working Group had a preliminary discussion about these issues on 10 July 2008 and agreed in principle to support a bid.
7. City of York Council has previously collaborated with a range of partners to develop the nationally renowned Castlegate city-centre resource that targets young people aged 16 and over. We therefore have a strong track record of partnership working that we can evidence in the bid. We now support to develop a larger facility to widen the scope of services and leisure activities available to all young people in the city centre. York currently has no such centrally located facilities of this nature.

## **Consultation**

8. Consultation with young people, and evidence of their active involvement in the project, will be key to the success of the bid. A review of previous consultations with young people has been conducted and is included at Annex A. Current consultation with direct reference to *myplace* is being undertaken with potential partners in voluntary and statutory organisations with young people and residents.
9. A range of consultation methods have been employed including face to face, via ward events, postal, internet and specific *myplace* meetings. A range of third parties within the voluntary sector and the local authority are consulting existing groups with a set of specific questions on our behalf.
10. We are also we are working with Inspired Youth (a voluntary youth engagement project) who are facilitating a group of young people to be active participants in the preparation of the bid including comments about possible site options and input to the design. We hope to be able to bring some of these young people to the EMAP meeting so that Members can hear their views directly.
11. It is already clear from previous work that York residents, young and old, feel there is a lack of suitable places for young people to go, and things to do, particularly in the city centre. What young people in particular are telling us is that they want facilities that can serve a variety of purposes, including dance, drama, sport, and advice and guidance services. This emphasises the need, in an ideal world, for a multi-functional building. Above all, though, young people have asked for a place where not every activity is predetermined – in other words, a place to chill.

## **Options**

12. We have been investigating a range of sites and premises on which to locate a world-class youth facility of this nature. As Members will appreciate, in a

city such as York, this is not an easy task, especially as the presumption underlying *myplace* is that the facility needs to be located in, or close to, the city centre. At the time of writing, we have not identified any sites suitable for the construction of a brand new facility within the timescales of the project.

13. We do, however, believe that there may be possibilities to renovate or adapt existing properties. At the time of writing, and within the very tight timescales imposed by the bidding process, we are continuing to appraise and consult on a range of such options, and we will update Members with an oral report. Should we conclude that no suitable site options can be identified at this point, we will discuss the pros and cons of waiting until a further round in the bidding process.
14. There has also been an extensive search for a voluntary sector lead body in conjunction with York CVS, since the *myplace* team has indicated that it would welcome bids led by this sector. We have collectively concluded that there is presently no medium-to-large voluntary organisation located in York with the capacity to take on the financial and operational management of a bid of this scale. We therefore recommend that City of York Council acts in the capacity of lead body, with voluntary sector partners. Over time, if the bid is successful, we will explore the possibility of establishing a consortium of smaller organisations to take on the running and development of the facility.

## **Analysis**

### **Advantages**

15. A successful *myplace* bid will enable the city to further develop its facilities for young people in a central location, supported by the expertise of the voluntary and statutory sectors working collaboratively. This will respond directly to the wishes of residents and the views of young people themselves.
16. A range of voluntary organisations will have access to an administrative and delivery base from which to operate alongside each other, which is more cost-effective and which will free up resources for service delivery. A wide range of activities will be established, many of which will be free access to all young people, enabling young people to be active participants in the life of the city.
17. All of the site options presently under discussion represent aspects of York's history, and there is huge potential to establish an iconic building that reflects the aspirations and choices of the young people themselves. *myplace* offers a unique opportunity to access substantial capital investment in addition to other financial commitments for community resources, enabling us to extend our reach to the young people of York.

### **Disadvantages**

18. On the other hand, there are limited suitable sites, due to the constraints in the built environment, and the fact that large parts of the city centre have

unique conservation requirements. A relatively substantial site is required given the range of elements required to meet the needs of young people. If a single site in or near the city centre cannot be identified, it is extremely unlikely that a *myplace* bid will be successful.

19. It must also be emphasised that this is a capital-only bid; staffing and ongoing maintenance costs cannot be included. It will fall to the Council and its partners to ensure that the ongoing revenue costs can be covered. We believe that this will be possible if we seek to transfer into the facility a number of young-people-facing Council services, and a range of voluntary partners, who can all contribute to the rental and running costs. However, it is difficult to tie down this element until we have homed in on a single site option.

## **Corporate Priorities**

20. The project 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**

### **Financial**

21. The financial implications of a successful bid are mostly of a revenue nature as it is intended to cover the capital costs of developing a facility that meets or exceeds all current standards for sustainability, Disabled Access, IT and multimedia from the capital monies sourced from the bid. Revenue costs will need further consideration once a single site has been identified; the intention is to secure "in principle" expressions of support from a range of partners, including certain council services, who can contribute to rental and maintenance costs. This will ensure that we can put together a revenue budget from a number of funding streams – and the bid is unlikely to succeed unless we can mount a convincing case in this area. We will put another report in front of members before any financial commitments are made.

### **Human Resources (HR)**

22. There are no Human Resources issues at this stage.

### **Equalities**

23. There are no equalities issues at this stage, but as identified above, a successful bid would contribute to our objective to reach out to disadvantaged communities.

### **Legal**

24. There are no legal issues identified at this stage; any subsequent formal partnership agreements will be brought to Members' attention.

### **Crime and Disorder**

25. Engaging young people in positive activities, offering appropriate adult support and giving young people a safe dedicated space to meet peers will impact positively on the reduction of crime and disorder.

### **Information Technology (IT)**

26. There are no IT issues at this stage.

### **Property**

27. Myplace requires that any potential site must be acquired with at least a 20-year lease and a corresponding commitment to the upkeep and maintenance of the premises. We are in close consultation with colleagues in City Strategy and Resources, and their views will be included in the oral advice we offer to Members about suitable sites and premises.

### **Planning**

28. Any planning issues will only become clear once a suitable site has been identified. Clearly it will be important that planning considerations do not delay the process. However, the *myplace* team are not envisaging that works will commence before 2010, which should allow adequate time for a planning application if it is needed.

### **Risk Management**

29. 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

30. Subject to the oral advice offered at the meeting, the Advisory Panel is invited to advise the Executive Member to support in principle the submission of a bid to secure *myplace* monies, led by the Council with voluntary sector support. After further work, the final bid will be put to the Executive and to CMT for sign-off later in the month.

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

## Contact Details

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Report Approved  Date 18-08-08

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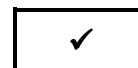
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**Wards Affected:** *List wards or tick box to indicate all*

All



**For further information please contact the author of the report**

## Background Papers

None

## Annex

Annex A: A summary of previous consultation