

Young People's Working Group

22 October 2008

Report of the Assistant Director, Partnerships and Early Interventions

MYPLACE

Summary

1. This report provides an update on progress in identifying suitable city centre facilities that could be developed for young people's use and made the subject of a bid for *myplace* Government funding.

Background

2. Members will recall that *Aiming High for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities* set out the Government's vision for improving youth facilities in response to clear ongoing demand from young people, parents and communities for more and better places for young people to go. The first tranche of funding available under this strategy has been branded *myplace* and is being administered by the Big Lottery Fund on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). £190m is available in capital grants of between £1m and £5m. There are two funding rounds at this stage: the first, with a deadline for bids of 30 September, and a second round with a deadline of 31 March 2009.
3. At YPWG's last meeting in July, Members recommended that the Executive be advised to support a bid for *myplace* funds. They also advised officers to carry out a wide consultation, to propose two or three alternative sites, and to ensure that the Council develops and maintains partnerships with other organisations to support the bid.

Consultation

4. Over the summer period, extensive consultation was conducted with young people using a variety of techniques. A representative focus group was formed to advise us of the facilities that young people want. Members of this group visited the sites under consideration, and conveyed their views to the Executive Member for Children & Young People's Services and Advisory Panel in September.
5. What rapidly became clear as a result of this consultation was that to be inclusive and available to all young people in the city, any such facilities needed to be located in the city centre, and as close as possible to transport hubs. The

young people felt strongly on this point, and this very much influenced our selection of sites on which to focus.

Options

6. After extensive discussions with a wide range of partners, officers were able to identify a possible site close to York Station and on the fringes of the major “York Northwest” development site. Young people confirmed that this site met a number of their “essential” criteria. We were also able to identify a number of suitable partners with whom to pursue the idea.
7. Frustratingly, however, and perhaps inevitably in central York, the site in question also presented a formidable range of difficulties. These included the presence of some existing tenants who would need to be redeployed, as well as a series of planning issues (the site being in a conservation area). For this reason, officers with experience of making successful bids through the Big Lottery Fund advised us that we would be unlikely to be able to submit a compliant bid in time for the first deadline of 30 September. In the end the clinching factor was a communication from the current landowners to the effect that, while they were supportive in principle, they would need more time before they could contemplate putting their own resources into the project, or granting a long lease on the facilities (an essential prerequisite).
8. After due consideration, and with some reluctance, officers decided that it would be better to keep our powder dry for the second bidding deadline of 30 March, rather than submitting a bid now which was likely to be rejected on technical grounds. Bill McCarthy wrote formally to the Big Lottery Fund to this effect. The risk, of course, is that the majority of funds available in the first tranche will have been allocated in the first round of bidding – although we believe that a later bid would increase our chances of attracting private investment into the project.
9. Officers will now work in more detail on the technical obstacles that prevented us from submitting a bid in September, to ascertain whether they can be overcome by next March or whether the project will need to be considered a longer-term aspiration. Obviously in the short term, our resources have been diverted to deal with the consequences of the fire at York High School.

Corporate Priorities

10. All priorities concerning young people are relevant to this issue; a successful bid would also be consistent with the recommendation by the former Youth Scrutiny Panel to enhance facilities for young people’s activities in the city.

Implications

11.
 - **Financial** – A successful bid will have substantial financial consequences, particularly for revenue budgets, which would need to be the subject of a separate report to Members.

- **Human Resources (HR)** – There are no HR implications at this stage.
- **Equalities** – Equality issues will be fully considered at every stage.
- **Legal** – Issues concerning planning consent, procurement, and ownership may be identified as the project develops.
- **Crime and Disorder** – There are currently no perceived implications.
- **Information Technology (IT)** – No implications at this stage.
- **Property** – The head of property services is involved in the project.

Risk Management

12. Any likely risk or liability to the council will be fully scrutinised and will be included in subsequent reports to members.

Recommendations

13. Members are asked to
- 1) Note the progress in consultation with young people on the facilities they would like to see in the city centre, but also our difficulties in bringing forward a suitable site in the timescales available.

Reason: to advise the Executive of the continued need to develop such facilities for young people.

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Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers/ Annexes: None