
Young People's Working Group

22 April 2009

Report from the Assistant Director, Partnerships and Early Intervention

AN UPDATE ON "MYPLACE"

Summary

1. This report offers Members a further update on the preparations for a "myplace" bid to establish enhanced facilities for young people close to the city centre.

Background

2. "*myplace*" is the branding chosen by Government through which to distribute capital investment in order: "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 were recently published and are available on the Big Lottery Fund website (http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_myplace.htm). The website says that so far £240 million has been allocated: considerably in excess of the £190 that was originally advertised. It is not clear how the difference is being made up.
3. It has always been understood that there would be a second funding round in 2009. However, the deadline for this has slipped back on several occasions, and the latest advice on the website (and in conversations with the Big Lottery Fund) is that "a further small funding round is planned for later this year". We have been unable to decode this any further, and are continuing to work on the assumption that the bidding criteria, and sums available per authority, will be similar to the first round.
4. As Members are aware, our main attentions have been focussed on an ambitious scheme based around the Railway Institute buildings. We have appointed a local community architect, Phil Bixby, to assist us, and to ensure that young people's views continue to be fed in at all stages. Since the last update to Members, Mr Bixby has drawn up an exciting and credible set of drawings that demonstrate that it is possible to squeeze onto the site in question all of the elements needed to satisfy the requirements of *myplace*, whilst also meeting the aspirations of the Railway Institute. He has also commissioned an initial set of costings, which confirm our provisional view that the scheme would cost – at between £8 and £9 million – considerably in

excess of the maximum sum allowable under *myplace*, even assuming that the rules for round 2 are the same as for round 1. There is, therefore, a shortfall in the capital that would be needed, and although we continue to pursue a number of options for meeting it, this remains the biggest stumbling block to our successfully bringing this ambitious scheme to fruition.

5. We have had several meetings with Network Rail, the landowners, who remain interested in the scheme without being formally committed to it. It is clear that the appointment of a developer for the whole of York Northwest/York Central will be key to unlocking some of these discussions. We are also talking separately to Yorkshire Forward.
6. We have explained our proposals in outline to York Civic Trust. Their initial and informal reaction was very positive, although this should not be regarded as committing them at this stage. We have also drawn up the legal documents necessary to establish the sort of not-for-profit company or charity that would run the facility (incorporating young people).
7. Our view remains that this scheme deserves to be brought to the most advanced state possible, pending further advice about the second round of *myplace* funding, and resolution of the funding gap. Even if the scheme does not, in the end, work for *myplace*, it might be fundable through some other route or in some other way. However York Central is developed, the need to re-house the Railway Institute in suitable modern facilities will remain.
8. Nevertheless, in view of the aspects of this proposal that are outside of our control (because they depend on the attitudes of third parties), and in line with steers previously expressed by YPWG itself, we have also been pursuing options for a slightly less ambitious “Plan B”. The aim here would be to create or refurbish a city centre property that would at least include the social aspects that young people have told us they want to see – a youth café or similar. We can update Members at the meeting on our latest shortlist for such a scheme. In parallel with this, Mr Bixby has been working with a group of young people to see if it would be possible to set up an interim youth café on a much shorter timescale, maybe in an empty commercial property, to test out the model and get young people used to the idea. He calls this element of the work “*myplace now*”, and if it gets off the ground, it would of course greatly strengthen our *myplace* bid.
9. Finally, in view of the continued focus on this area, and reflecting previous discussions at YPWG, we have formally committed York’s Children’s Trust (YorOK) to “providing new facilities as resources permit and, specifically, a city centre facility that includes a youth café” (York’s *Children and Young People’s Plan 2009-2012*).

Consultation

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

Options

11. 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

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

Corporate Priorities

13. A successful *myplace* bid will contribute to meeting the following corporate priorities:
1. Improving the life chances of the most disadvantaged and disaffected children, young people and families in the city.
 2. Improving the health and lifestyles of the people that live in York, in particular among groups whose levels of health are the poorest.
 3. Increasing people's skills and knowledge to improve future employment prospects.
 4. Increasing the use of public and other environmentally-friendly modes of transport.
 5. Reducing the environmental impact of council activities and encouraging, others to do the same.
 6. Reducing the actual and perceived impact of violent, aggressive and nuisance behaviour on people in York.

Implications

14. 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

15. 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

16. That the Young People's Working Group 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

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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

Annexes: None