

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee **Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Date of Committee **14th March 2007**

Report Title **Nuneaton Masterplan – Scope and Implications for Adult Health and Community Services**

Summary The report describes two possible approaches to the development of Nuneaton town centre in the face of economic threats arising from competing developments in the sub-region, especially the Coventry Arena.

For further information please contact: Edwina Cordwell
Head of Libraries, Learning and Culture
Tel: 01926 412146
edwinacordwell@warwickshire.gov.uk

Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? [please identify relevant plan/budget provision] No.

Background papers None.

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- Details to be specified

Other Committees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee
Local Member(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Elected Members	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Councillor F McCarney, Councillor M Stanley, Councillor Mrs J Compton, Councillor R Dodd, Councillor R Randev
Lead Cabinet Member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Councillor A Farnell
Cabinet Member	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Councillor C Hayfield
Chief Executive	<input type="checkbox"/>

Legal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Jane Pollard, Alison Hallworth
Finance	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Philip Lumley-Holmes, Financial Services Manager
Other Chief Officers	<input type="checkbox"/>
District Councils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council
Health Authority	<input type="checkbox"/>
Police	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Bodies/Individuals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> John Scouller, Environment and Economy Chris Simpson, Environment and Economy Steve Smith, Resources Mark Herbert, Resources Oliver Winters, Resources

FINAL DECISION NO

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS:

Details to be specified

Further consideration by this Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Once the consultant's report is available
To Council	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Cabinet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TBC
To an O & S Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Possibly to Environment & Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee
To an Area Committee	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nuneaton and Bedworth – date tbc
Further Consultation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TBC – may link with timing of public consultation on Area Action Plan (NBBC)

**Adult and Community Services Overview and Scrutiny
Committee – 14th March 2007**

**Nuneaton Masterplan – Scope and Implications for
Adult, Health and Community Services**

**Report of the Strategic Director of Adult, Health &
Community Services**

Recommendations

1. To consider the alternative proposals for regeneration and their potential benefits and disadvantages for directorate services in Nuneaton.
2. To approve in principle, subject to comment, efforts to secure a landmark building to house a new Library and associated services for the town centre of Nuneaton.
3. To endorse, subject to comment, the efforts to date and approach proposed by officers within Adult Health and Community Services
4. To request a further report in the light of findings from the cost benefit appraisal due for completion in March.

1. Background to the Masterplan

- 1.1 WCC and NBBC are working in partnership to address the long- term economic difficulties of Nuneaton and Bedworth town centres, in the context of growing sub-regional competition. The partnership is led by regeneration officers of the two councils and supported by AWM and CSWP.
- 1.2 In 2003 / 4 the partnership engaged consultants ARUP to research and develop strategic proposals to develop each town centre. In January 2005 Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee and the Cabinet of Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council approved their report in principle. This report is the Masterplan, and in brief it recommends:
 - In Nuneaton, a range of themed developments around the town centre, emphasising 'quarters' for different activities, such as business, civic, cultural and entertainment
 - In Bedworth, mainly commercial development concerning the future of convenience food shopping – Aldi and Tesco.
 - In both towns, the report high-lights the importance of the cultural offer in attracting visitors and residents, and for this to be supported by transport

links, good quality food and drink, town centre management, etc.

- It stipulates for Nuneaton that improving the cultural offer means nothing less than a new landmark cultural centre consisting of a new Library with enhanced facilities for leisure, learning and culture. This would be on a nearby site to maximise commercial development on Vicarage Street.
- It also urges the whole-hearted adoption of George Eliot as Nuneaton's only unique selling point.

This paper concentrates on the Nuneaton scenario, which is of greater immediate and potential interest to Adult Health and Community Services.

2. An alternative approach – the Colleges' proposal

- 2.1 Since January 2005 the partners have been developing proposals for implementing the Masterplan. In the mean time an alternative approach has emerged that would have a significantly different impact, although perhaps with the same end result. North Warwickshire and Hinckley College and King Edwards College wish to co-locate in the town centre. To do so they require the entire Vicarage Street site, including the space occupied by the Library. The Learning and Skills Council are encouraging this approach with the potential of significant financial backing.
- 2.2 An important difference in the two approaches is that the Colleges are under pressure to complete the development in the next 3 – 4 years. This means if their scheme goes ahead that they will require the Library to be vacated within 2 – 3 years, inevitably meaning a move to temporary accommodation.
- 2.3 The Library and Information Service is willing to consider moving to temporary accommodation to facilitate the development, as it did in the case of Rugby. However significant guarantees are required about the move, and especially about the certainty of permanent accommodation. Without this such a step could not be safely undertaken, because of the Council's responsibility for the service and the needs and expectations of users of the service in Nuneaton.

3. Status of the two approaches

- 3.1 Each approach envisages the demolition of the present Library and its replacement with a much-improved Library and Cultural Centre. So far the Council has not formally considered replacing the Library, although local Members are aware of the proposals and some have expressed a wish to see it achieved.
- 3.2 Both Councils have approved the Masterplan approach in principle. The Colleges are anxious for the two Councils to express support for their proposals, as they seek funds from the LSC and other bodies. The Cabinet of the Borough Council has already expressed its support. N&B Area Committee has received the proposal and asked for further information. A further report is being prepared for their meeting on 28th March.
- 3.3 Each approach has potential benefits and risks. It has previously been

suggested that a surplus of as much as £5m could be generated by the masterplan proposals arising from commercial development that could be used to offset the costs of public realm investments such as the new Library and Cultural Centre. It is likely that the Colleges' proposals will generate a much smaller surplus/capital receipt and therefore other sources including WCC will need to fund the remaining costs. WCC has instructed consultants Turner Townsend to conduct an Options Appraisal, to include the issues for the Library. This report is expected during March.

- 3.4 Meanwhile the Borough Council is preparing a new Planning Framework, known as the Area Action Plan. The two development approaches may figure in public consultation on the future development strategy for the town centre, as required for that purpose.

4. Progress to date

- 4.1 So far the Strategic Management Team in Adult, Health and Community Services has:
- Documented the defects and limitations of the current Library
 - Agreed outline proposals addressing the aspirations for Library and Cultural Services in the context of a new landmark building
 - Endorsed initial proposals for the promotion of Adult Social Care through the new facility and asked for more detailed proposals
 - Considered the potential for extending working relationships with partners through the new building
 - Agreed safeguards for the Library Service to be met if it is required to leave the current building for temporary accommodation

These proposals will be brought to Members for discussion and approval in the near future.

5. Taking the project forward

- 5.1 The Options Appraisal will provide feasibility and cost / benefit appraisals of four options for the future library, comprising three possible locations for development and a 'do-nothing' scenario. Adult Health and Community Services are contributing their service requirements and Resources Directorate leads on corporate property and financial matters. Economy and Environment leads on the overall regeneration strategy, and is the conduit to external funding bodies such as Advantage West Midlands.
- 5.2 Once the consultants' report has been received and examined by officers it will be brought to Members for discussion. This may require presentation to several committees including Adult and Community Services, Nuneaton and Bedworth Area Committee and Cabinet. Given the Colleges' need for WCC support in making their approach to the Learning and Skills Council, the intention is to try and complete this stage of the process in time to reach full Council in July.

- 5.3 This therefore requires a coordinated effort across WCC, to include three Strategic Directorates as a minimum. Such a complex project provides an ideal opportunity to demonstrate the Council working effectively as a single organisation. It is vital to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure is put in place as soon as possible to move it forward coherently.

GRAEME BETTS
Strategic Director of Adult, Health &
Community Services

Shire Hall
Warwick

February 2007