

Item no.

Report to: Resources Scrutiny Committee

Date: 14th February 2006

Report of: Head of Asset & Property Management

Subject: Community Centres

Ward: All

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To request an extension to the timescale in relation to the development of a property strategy for Community Centres of no more than one month subsequent to the report of the Asset & Property Manager on 13th September 2005.

2.0 Consultation

- 2.1 The Head of Regeneration and the Community Steering Group (a working party of senior officers and Members) have been consulted on this report.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Subsequent to the presentation of a report on the 13th September 2005, significant progress has been achieved in relation to the collation of base information to inform the property strategy.
- 3.2 A Community Steering Group has been created consisting of relevant officers from Asset and Property Management and Regeneration and Partnerships and Local Members.
- 3.3 Each community centre has been considered on an individual basis and matters outstanding on Thornley, Deaf Hill, Seaton and Eden Lane centres include feasibility studies and suitability and sufficiency surveys.
- 3.4 A format for the suitability and sufficiency surveys is to be finalised and surveys scheduled for February 2006.
- 3.5 The Steering Group consider it is essential that specialist feasibility studies are undertaken for each centre by independent consultants. A brief has been agreed and funding identified to undertake the works. A tendering process to select a consultant is underway. Having regard to the extent of consultation required as part of the studies it is not considered that the works will be completed in time to enable a property strategy to be completed by 31st March 2006.
- 3.6 A one month extension will ensure that the Asset & Property Manager will be in a position to develop a strategy combining the property information with current use and future demand assessments together with information on the availability of other facilities. Decisions regarding improvement, redevelopment or closure recommendations will then be brought forward to Scrutiny for approval prior to submitting a report to Executive.

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4.0 Position Statement and Option Appraisal

- 4.1 It is essential that the suitability and sufficiency surveys and feasibility surveys are completed on all centres to enable the Asset & Property Manager to create a community centre service plan which will determine the current position, expected costs and recommendations of each centre on an individual basis.

5.0 Implications

- 5.1 Financial
Once a final assessment has been made and an action plan developed, it will be necessary in conjunction with the Head of Regeneration and Partnerships, to source a package of funding which may include bids to external sources, but may also require a submission for monies through the Capital Programme.
- 5.2 Legal
Any legal work concerning a community centre is a complex process. Consideration must be given to any existing trust agreement, consent obtained from both the Coal Industry Social Welfare Organisation and the Charities Commission.
- 5.3 Policy
No current policy exists in relation to community centres; however, it is considered that there is a need for full option appraisals to be undertaken once key property review information is available.
- 5.4 Risk
A full risk assessment has been completed.
- 5.5 Communication
There are no communication implications at this stage of the process.
- 5.6 Corporate
The actions associated with the report comply with the Councils Corporate objectives to make the most of opportunities for investment, economic growth and employment and reduce inequality in the District.
- 5.7 Equality and Diversity
No direct implications.
- 5.8 E-Government
No direct implications.
- 5.9 Procurement
No direct implications.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 It is recommended that the content of the report be noted and an extension to timescales agreed with a revised completion date of 30th April 2006.

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Background Papers/Documents refereed to in the preparation of this report

- i. District of Easington Risk Assessment

Dale Clarke. Head of Asset & Property Management.

APPENDIX 1

Summary of Costs

Community Centre	Year One Costs	Total Cost
Deaf Hill	£48,175	£98,275
Eden Lane (Peterlee)	£181,525	£258,175
Parkside (Seaham)	£7,750	£36,550
Seaton	£39,150	£50,000
Thornley	£141,025	£239,025
Wheatley Hill	£232,800	£292,800

Notes

All costs have been provided by Harrison & Johnson Chartered Building Surveyors and Black & Veatch Electrical Engineers. Total costs are projective up to 15 years.

The costs indicated for Wheatley Hill Community Centre can be discounted due to the ongoing refurbishment and extension works.