

## **OLD WOKING COMMUNITY CENTRE AND WOKING COLLEGE**

### **Executive Summary**

The site of Old Woking Community Centre, Sundridge Road, Old Woking is owned by Woking Borough Council and Leased to the Old Woking Community Association until 29 September 2060. Woking College at Rydens Way, Old Woking is the main sixth form education provision in Woking.

During the Coronavirus crisis, Woking College has been using parts of the Old Woking Community Centre (Community Centre) facilities to manage its social distancing requirements. Woking College (College) and the Community Centre have established a good working relationship during this period and have agreed that more formal arrangements to use the Community Centre premises would be beneficial to both the College and the Community Centre and importantly better meet the needs of the local and wider Woking community.

Woking College is facing increased demand for places at the College and needs more accommodation. Whilst it is seeking to provide more classrooms on its existing site the lead-time is significant and whilst it has secured Planning Consent for additional classrooms, it is still pursuing finance through the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). The experience it has gained in working with the Community Centre has highlighted the opportunity to make the use long term by adapting the Community Centre.

This report sets out proposals to allow the Community Centre to grant an under-lease to the College of part of the Community Centre building until 28 September 2060 (being one day prior to the end of its current Ground Lease term with the Council). The related development work proposed by this report will enhance the Community Centre building and improve the facilities for both the College and the community.

The capital cost of enhancing the facilities at the Community Centre is estimated at £2.9m. This cost will need to be met from Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy contributions that can be allocated to Education and a financial contribution from Woking College and will enable the work to be undertaken at no additional cost to the local taxpayer.

The Executive is requested to approve these proposals.

### **Recommendations**

The Executive is requested to:

#### **RESOLVE That**

- (i) Old Woking Community Centre be authorised, under the Council's Ground Lease, to grant an under-lease of part of the site and buildings to Woking College;
- (ii) the Council implement the improvements and alterations to Old Woking Community Centre at a total cost of £2.9m;
- (iii) the project be financed by £1.3m from Section 106, £1.2m from Community Infrastructure Levy and £0.4m from Woking College;

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- (iv) resolutions (i) to (iii) above are conditional upon the Education and Skills Funding Agency authorising Woking College to enter into this transaction; and
- (v) resolutions (i) to (iii) above are conditional upon the developer of Kingsmoor consenting to the use of its Section 106 education contribution for this purpose.

### Reasons for Decision

Reason: To support Woking College to meet the increased demand from young people to attend the College.

The Executive has the authority to determine the recommendation(s) set out above.

**Background Papers:** None.

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## **Old Woking Community Centre and Woking College**

### **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The site of Old Woking Community Centre, Sundridge Road, Old Woking is owned by Woking Borough Council and Leased to the Old Woking Community Association. Woking College at Rydens Way, Old Woking is the main sixth form education provision in Woking. A Plan showing the location of both organisations is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 During the Coronavirus crisis, Woking College has been using parts of the Old Woking Community Centre (Community Centre) facilities to manage its social distancing requirements. Woking College (College) and the Community Centre have established a good working relationship during this period and have agreed that more formal arrangements to use the Community Centre premises would be beneficial to both the College and the Community Centre and importantly better meet the needs of the local and wider Woking community.
- 1.3 This report sets out proposals to allow the sub-letting, on a long-term basis, part of the Community Centre building to the College and enhance the Community Centre building to improve the facilities for both the College and the community.

### **2.0 The Need for Sixth Form Places**

- 2.1 Surrey County Council is responsible for forecasting the need for educational spaces. It currently forecasts an increase in the number of pupils seeking sixth form places each year of some 30%. The number of pupils in Woking seeking sixth form places is forecast to rise from 1,062 per year in 2021 to 1,388 per year by 2030. These are pupils leaving secondary school and seeking entry for the first year in the sixth form
- 2.2 Woking College has seen its demand for places from school leavers increase each year. In 2019, the College had 445 applicants, rising to 535 in 2020, with the applications for 2021 now at 616. Across all tutor groups at the College the number of students expected in 2021 are some 1,450. This success is due to its improved results as well as increased demand. The College has secured Planning Consent to construct new classrooms on its site and is seeking finance from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to implement that consent that will help it continue to meet demand in future years. To cope with immediate demand in 2021 the College will erect a number of temporary buildings on its site for which it has also obtained Planning Consent.
- 2.3 However, the College advises that its medium term needs cannot be met solely on-site. In light of its success in working with the Community Centre, it would like to formalise those arrangements for the future. This will enable it to relocate a range of activities to the Community Centre site and facilitate additional classroom provision at a future date on its existing site.
- 2.4 During informal discussions with Surrey County Council, it has indicated that it is supportive of expanding Woking College.

### **3.0 Old Woking Community Centre**

- 3.1 The Old Woking Community Centre (Community Centre) site in Sundridge Road is owned by Woking Borough Council and it granted a Ground Lease to "The Old Woking and District Community Association" from 29 September 1961 for 99 years; lease expiry 29 October 2060. The Community Centre owns the buildings.

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- 3.2 The Community Centre Trustees are supportive of the proposal to Lease part of the site to Woking College. The under-lease arrangements will provide for Woking College to have exclusive use of certain parts but for the majority it will have use during College time and the community can use outside College hours. In order for Woking College to be able to invest in the building the under-lease needs to be as long as possible. It is proposed that it be until 28 September 2060, being one day short of the Ground Lease end date.
- 3.3 The proposed work to enable the College to use the site will address a number of existing building defects as well as provide new space for educational and community use.
- 3.4 The Community Centre requires consent from the Council to let part of the site to the College.

### **4.0 Development Proposal for Old Woking Community Centre**

- 4.1 The College and the Community Centre have discussed the overall arrangements that will provide mutual benefit to both the College and the wider community use. The reason for the proposed investment in alterations to the building is to address the education needs without prejudicing the community needs. The alterations will require a Planning Consent. The works are anticipated to take at least eight months from when consent is obtained
- 4.2 The College has taken action to deal with its immediate needs but would need to secure the redevelopment at the Community Centre for full operation by August 2022.
- 4.3 Plans are set out at Appendix 2 showing the proposed changes to the Community Centre.
- 4.4 The proposal provides the following accommodation for the College:
- Ground floor
    - A large IT area (65sq.m) with adjacent support offices
    - An entrance foyer with a lift access to the first floor
  - First Floor
    - Three Classrooms – (55sq.m; 60 sq.m and a large one at 75.sq.m) plus storage
    - Offices and support spaces
    - Large Social/study space (100sq.m)
- 4.5 The proposal provides the following accommodation for the community:
- Ground floor
    - A new community space (100sq.m) with storage – can be a sub-dividable space subject to the community association requirements
    - An entrance foyer connecting the new space plus providing direct access to the Elizabeth Hall (nursery)
    - A lift access to the Howards and Sundridge Halls on the ground floor – thus making them fully accessible
- 4.6 These alterations to the building will be beneficial for both the community use and the College use with both the Community Centre and the College wanting to use the spaces effectively.
- 4.7 Synergy Construction and Property Consultants of Guildford have provided the estimated cost, excluding VAT, of implementing these improvements as summarised below

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£'000

Building Construction and Alterations	2,358
Design and Risk Contingency (5%)	118
Allowance for Inflation (1.2%)	30
Professional Fees and Surveys	276
Furniture, Fittings and Equipment	75
Total Project Cost	2,857

- 4.8 VAT at the current rate of 20%, totalling some £571,000, will be payable but will be recoverable.
- 4.9 The Community Centre and the College requests that the Council acts as Employer to undertake the work given its role as Freeholder. Accordingly it is proposed that the Council, Community Centre and College enter into an Agreement for Lease, which provides for the under-lease from the Community Centre to the College, with the under-lease coming into effect upon the completion of the works. The Agreement for Lease will also provide for the Council to undertake the work, as ultimate property owner, and secure the financial contribution from the College. This proposal will be subject to the approval of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to enable the College to enter into the legal agreements and contribute funds.

### 5.0 Implications

#### Financial

- 5.1 The cost of modifying the Community Centre, to enable the under-lease to the College, is approximately £2.9m.
- 5.2 It is proposed that this be financed through a combination of Section 106, Community Infrastructure Levy and a contribution from Woking College as summarised below:-

£'000

Section 106 for Education	1,300
Community Infrastructure Levy - Education	1,200
Woking College	400
Total Financing	2,900

- 5.3 The money from Section 106 is held by the Council and may be released by the Development Manager. Currently £2,325,455 is held of which £1,022,724 has been earmarked for Brookwood Farm leaving a balance of £1,302,731 available for use. To enable the Development Manager to do so the Council will need to agree with the developer of Kingsmoor Park (a development commissioned by the Council as a Private Finance Initiative) that the £1.2m it contributed can be used for the College. Accordingly, £1.3m is proposed.
- 5.4 The money from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is held by the Council and may be released by the Development Manager. Currently £6,035,583 is held of which £2,414,233 has been ring fenced for Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space (SANG) (40%). The needs assessment that determined CIL requirements, the "123 list", identified infrastructure requirements for Education, Transport and Open Space. Taking the balance available for use, £3,621,350, one third could be allocated to education totalling £1,207,117. Accordingly, £1.2m is proposed.

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- 5.5 Woking College has indicated that it can contribute funds from its own resources, subject to ESFA authorisation as set out in paragraph 4.9 above. Currently a contribution of £400,000 is proposed but the Agreement for Lease will need to provide for an additional contribution if the total cost exceeds £2.9m.
- 5.6 The Council will incur some cost in using its existing project management resources to oversee the implementation of the project and legal resources in entering into the Agreement for Lease and the contract with the consultants and contractor. The cost of initial work by the consultants that produced the Design and Cost Plan have been met by the College; these consultants will continue to implement the project but with programme management from the Council's Strategic Asset Manager. The consultant costs are within the project budget.
- 5.7 Therefore, other than support in kind, the project can be implemented without a cost to local taxpayers.
- 5.8 If the Executive approve the proposals set out in this report the project will be incorporated in the Council's Project Management arrangements.

### Human Resource/Training and Development

- 5.9 The staffing resources required to implement the proposal are included in the project cost. Existing Council resources can undertake the management and legal work. Accordingly, the proposal does not give rise to additional human resources or training requirements.

### Community Safety

- 5.10 There are no new community safety issues raised by this report.

### Risk Management

- 5.11 The report seeks to help address the risk faced by young people and Woking College that there will be insufficient accommodation in the Borough to meet the needs of young people seeking sixth form learning in the Borough.
- 5.12 The normal risk management arrangements set out in the Council's Project Management procedures will apply and a risk register will be maintained for the implementation of the project.
- 5.13 There is a risk that consent to use the Section 106 contribution from the Kingsmoor development is not obtained and therefore the agreement with the Community Centre and the College will be conditional upon approval being obtained.
- 5.14 There is a risk that there may be a delay or a chance that the ESFA would not consent to the College taking on the under-lease, in which case it could not contribute to the costs. It is considered unlikely that consent will not be granted by the ESFA but the agreement with the Community Centre and the College will be conditional upon ESFA approval being obtained.

### Sustainability

- 5.15 The proposals in the report seeks to make a positive contribution to community sustainability through the improvements to the Community Centre and the accommodation made available to the College.

### Equalities

- 5.16 There are no new equality issues raised by this report.

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### Safeguarding

5.17 There are no new safeguarding issues raised by this report. The safeguarding responsibilities of Woking College have been taken into account in the design of the proposed alterations to the Old Woking Community Centre.

### **6.0 Consultations**

6.1 There have been extensive consultations between representatives of Old Woking Community Centre and Woking College in preparing these proposals.

6.2 There have been no public consultations in respect of these proposals.

6.3 If the Executive approve these proposals Woking College will consult the local community and educational institutions as part of its Business Case to the ESFA.

REPORT ENDS