

APPENDIX 1 - Confidential

SUBJECT: Ropewalk, Derby Road - Consultation
DATE: 3rd March 2010
RECIPIENT: Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

SUMMARY:

Land at the former Neighbourhood Advice Centre and its car park are now surplus to council requirement. Local community stakeholders were consulted on the future of the site on 11th February 2010. This report outlines the feedback from this consultation.

BACKGROUND and BRIEFING DETAILS:

BACKGROUND

1. Land at Rope Walk comprises of two elements. Firstly, the Neighbourhood Advice Centre (and car park) which was decommissioned as part of the 2009/10 budget setting process. The centre was closed in May 2009 and the service reconfigured to form the Housing and Money Advice Service relocated at Southbrook Rise. This service now has a strong focus on providing an outreach service throughout the whole of Southampton. The council now wishes to dispose of this surplus property.
2. Secondly, at the rear of the Centre is the former Neighbourhood Advice Centre is the Ropewalk Community Garden. This is managed by a group of volunteers, who give their time to a range of activities from gardening to arts and crafts. The 'Friends' of the Garden are a legally constituted body who have attracted funding and support from agencies such as the Environment Centre, University of Southampton and Groundwork. The council supports the continuation of this project and the provision of the garden within the inner city.
3. Both sites are currently in the General Fund and are part of the Housing and Local Services portfolio.
4. Consultation (from October to December 2008) regarding changes to the Neighbourhood Advice Service was undertaken as part of the council's 2009/10 budget setting process.
5. The council had initial discussions with Hyde Martlet Housing Association about selling the Neighbourhood Advice site to develop more affordable homes. Following requests from community representatives at a meeting of the Council's Cabinet on 18th January 2010 the council decided to consult more widely on the possible future uses for the site. In other words if the site was not to be used for housing what might it be used for. Key stakeholders in the community were invited to a drop-in event held in the former Neighbourhood Advice Centre on Thursday 11th February 2010 where plans of the site were on display. Stakeholders were also invited to provide comments in writing or by telephone.
6. 244 people attended the drop-in event on 11th February 2010, 92 people provided feedback comments and 11 people provided comments prior to the event.

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7. Community consultation suggested the following uses for the site as listed below with a strong preference for the provision of community facilities.

- To provide community facilities
- Use by the Pakistani Welfare Association
- Use as an Advice Centre
- Used for play/young people
- Used for the elderly
- Used for education
- Used by the Mosque
- Not to be used for housing
- Used for a soup run
- To be kept as open space
- Used for secular use
- Used for a car park to enable those whose homes back onto the site have rear access by car
- Used for women's groups
- Used for a Somali centre

OPTIONS and TIMESCALES:

8. A report is due to come forward to the council's Cabinet on 15th March 2010 with a proposal for the way forward on this site.

Appendices/Supporting Information:

**Further Information Available
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