



To: North Area Committee  
Report by: Head of Community Development  
Relevant committee: North Area Committee 1 Aug 13  
Wards affected: Kings Hedges

## **Community Facility Capital Projects in the North Area - Gurdwara and Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre**

### **1. Executive summary**

1.1 This report provides an update on the provisional grant award of £50k made by this committee in November 2012 to provide a community room within the Gurdwara in Kings Hedges. The Sikh community have now changed their plans. The internal space (which was to be the community room) has been improved and decorated and they have installed a new kitchen. The space is now used by their community for communal meetings and eating. Their new plans need to be worked up in more detail but include the construction of a stand-alone community facility at the rear of their car parking area. They are asking for approval of a revised grant of £100k.

1.2 The report also sets out an initial proposal to create an additional meeting room at Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre so that 2 existing rooms could be hired out to a service provider of pre-school age child care. There is a high demand for this service in Kings Hedges and a lack of places available. The additional meeting room would protect existing community use during the day time and provide additional community space in the evenings and at weekends. Any additional income generated would help to reduce the net cost of running the centre.

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 The Area Committee is recommended:

- a) To withdraw its offer of a £50k capital grant to the Gurdwara for an internal community room and to invite Dr. Jagjit Singh to submit detailed proposals for his community's revised scheme in the autumn for consideration as part of the next round of project prioritisation under the Council's devolved decision making process for developer contributions. As set out under Option B in paragraph 3.7.
- b) To give their views about initial proposals to create additional community space at Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre and, if supportive, to ask officers to consult the Executive Councillor for Community Wellbeing and, if she is supportive, to report back to the area committee with detailed proposals and project appraisal.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 On the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2012 north area committee prioritised funding of £50k towards the provision of a community meeting space at the Sikh Gurdwara in Kings Hedges. The proposal put forward by the Sikh's Management Committee was to create a community room within the rear bar area of the existing building which local groups could hire. There would be accessible toilet facilities and an adjacent kitchen. The £50k award was provisional, subject to a detailed project appraisal showing costs and a plan to deliver the scheme by March 2014.
- 3.2 In January 2013 the Head of Community Development was informed that the Sikh's Management Committee was re-considering its ideas for the Gurdwara. On 16<sup>th</sup> May, Dr. Jagjit Singh attended north area committee to explain that they now wanted to construct a separate community room but that this would cost more money. Members expressed concern that the plans had changed, more money was now required and that the project was delayed.

- 3.3 North area committee members were invited to the Gurdwara on 19<sup>th</sup> June where Dr. Jagjit Singh explained their new plans to build a small stand-alone community facility with toilets and kitchenette at the rear of the Gurdwara's car park. Detailed cost estimates were not available but were considered by Dr. Jagjit Singh to be around £170k (assuming the new building would be VAT exempt). Dr. Jagjit Singh said that he thought his Management Committee could raise around £70k from donations and from discount from supportive contractors from the Sikh community. They would require around £100k as a capital grant from north area committee.
- 3.4 The rear bar area has now been converted into a communal space where the Sikhs gather together to hold activities or to eat after prayers which are held in the front area of the building. The communal space is also now a religious area and visitors are asked to remove their shoes and cover their heads. There is a new kitchen adjacent to the communal space.
- 3.5 At the meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> June, members were informed that the Gurdwara was proving very popular as it was the only one in the wider Cambridge area and many Sikhs travelled a long way to attend (the Cambridge Sikh Society's website says it is the only Gurdwara in Cambridgeshire). The existing building was already crowded at times and the Sikh's Management Committee wanted to use the new community facility for their activities as well as to hire to local groups.
- 3.6 Members attending the Gurdwara meeting expressed the following concerns:
- a) The proposals had completely changed from the original plans.
  - b) The amount of grant required had doubled.
  - c) The original plans would have encouraged local groups into the Gurdwara which would have been positive for community cohesion. The new plans would separate local groups from the Gurdwara.
  - d) There were no detailed designs and costs available.

- e) It was not clear how they could deliver the project by March 2014 (assuming the increased grant was confirmed).
- f) If the Sikhs wanted to use the new building themselves due to over-crowding, this would limit the building's availability for local groups.
- g) Wanted re-assurance that there would be no discrimination against any community groups wishing to hire the facility.

3.7 The Head of Community Development met with the Chair, Vice Chair and Spokes of north area committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> of July to discuss options. These are:

- a) That the area committee withdraws its provisional grant offer of £50k because the original proposal has completely changed.
- b) That north area committee withdraws its provisional grant offer of £50k but asks Dr. Jagjit Singh to submit revised and fully costed proposals, with a delivery programme, in the autumn which can be considered as part of the next priority setting round for devolved developer contributions.
- c) That the area committee increases its grant offer to £100k, subject to:
  - i) detailed project appraisal including costs, design and delivery programme showing how it will be delivered by the end of March 2014.
  - ii) Reassurance about community access
  - iii) Planning permission, Building Regulations approval

3.8 North area committee is recommended to agree option B. This will give Dr. Jagjit Singh more time to consult his community and draw up detailed proposals for proper consideration. The projects prioritised in the autumn will not have a March 2014 completion deadline although the developer contributions currently earmarked for the Gurdwara have to be contractually committed by June 2015.

3.9 If members agree option B, they are also asked to consider an alternative project to increase community space at Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre.

#### **4. Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre**

- 4.1 Officers in community development have been working with County Council officers to consider how we might assist with the high demand for pre-school age child care in the Kings Hedges and Arbury areas. Suitable rooms need to have access to a safe outdoor area, have separate toilet facilities for very young children and be large enough to be viable to service providers.
- 4.2 Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre is in an ideal location and it has a purpose built room with children's toilets and access to a safe garden area. The issue is that demand is very high in the area and the room is only half the ideal size for a fully viable childcare programme.
- 4.3 A solution would be to provide a new door into an adjacent meeting room so that the child care provider has secure access to both rooms. However, this would reduce the amount of hire space during the day for local community groups (the room would still be available in the evenings and at weekends).
- 4.4 Officers have asked the Council's Architect to look at the building and he has provided an outline proposal to create a new meeting room of similar size to the one which would be 'lost' by converting the large entrance foyer and creating a new entrance adjacent to it. Very initial cost estimates for the work to the entrance foyer are £70k including fees and project management. This could potentially be met from developer contributions for improving community facilities.
- 4.5 This would enable the 2 existing rooms to be hired out to a child care provider under a longer term agreement whilst protecting the amount of space available during the day for local community groups. There would be additional community space in the evenings and weekends.
- 4.6 This arrangement would also help to ease the local demand for pre-school age child care and provide some additional income for the centre which would help to reduce the net cost of the service.

- 4.7 In addition, officers asked the Architect to consider whether a single storey extension could be constructed in the garden, adjacent to the existing child care room, to provide the required space. Officers are in discussion with County officers to enquire whether the County Council might fund this work if it was dedicated child care space.
- 4.8 If members are generally supportive of the above, officers will progress the preparatory work further in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Community Well-being and ward councillors and bring a detailed project appraisal with costs and delivery timetable back to the area committee. The works would be subject to planning and building regulations approval.

## **5. Implications**

- 5.1 North area committee has £200k of devolved developer contributions to allocate to projects that will improve community facilities within their area. This figure includes the provisional £50k allocation to the Gurdwara. £60,585 of the devolved contributions has to be contractually committed by June 2015.
- 5.2 Approval of the Gurdwara funding (either now or in the autumn) would be subject to a detailed project appraisal with Equalities Impact Assessment, costs and project programme, any planning or building control approvals and a completed Capital Grant Agreement setting out community access arrangements.
- 5.3 Approval of the Buchan Street funding would be subject to a detailed project appraisal with Equalities Impact Assessment, costs and project programme and any planning or building control approvals.

## **5. Background papers**

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report: N/A

## **6. Appendices**

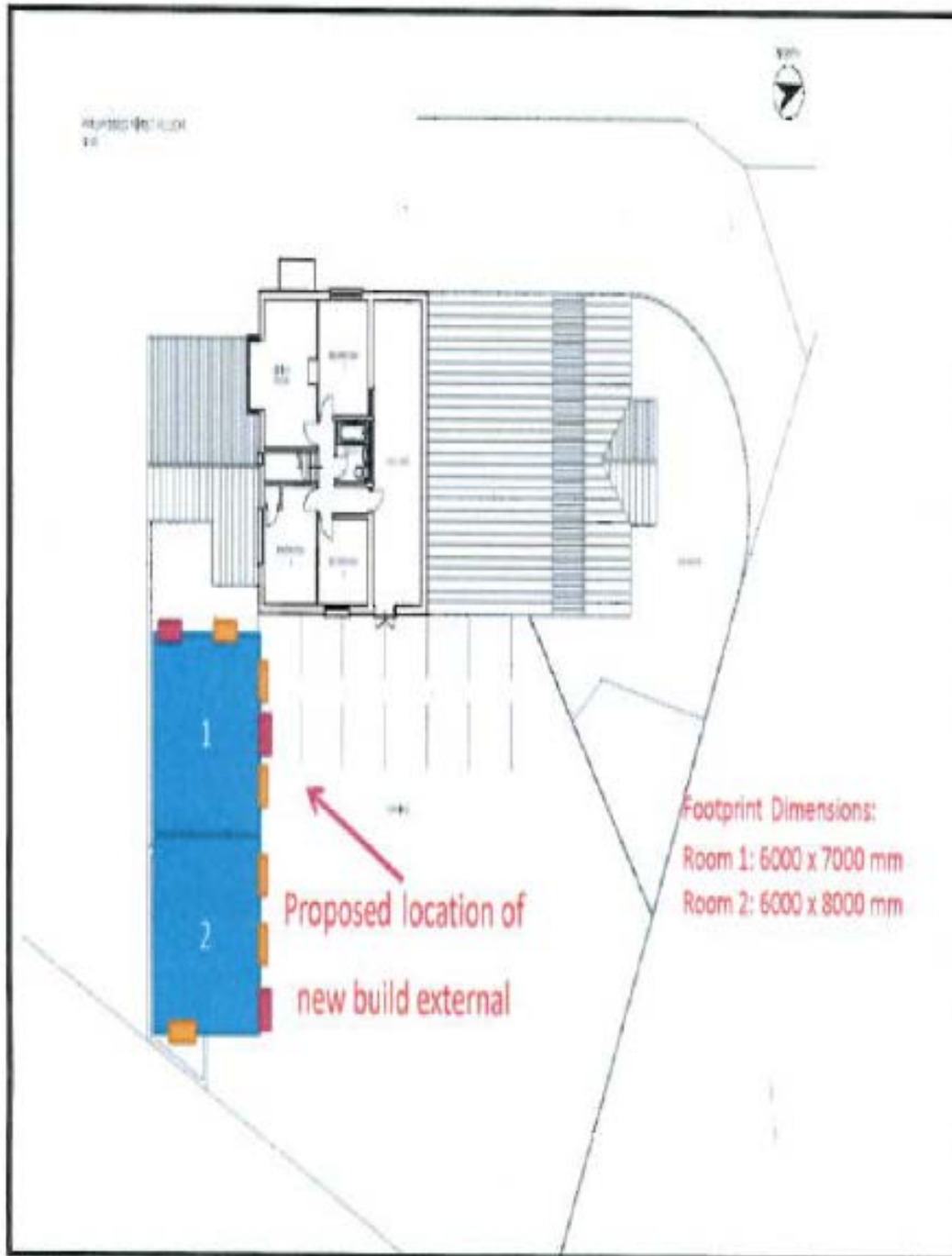
- 6.1 Appendix A: Plan of Gurdwara proposals
- 6.2 Appendix B: Indicative plan of Buchan Street proposals

## **7. Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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## Appendix A – Gurdwara revised proposals for Community Room





# Appendix B – Buchan Street Indicative Plan (Scheme 1 preferred)

