

Item

Extending Cherry Hinton Library to Create a Community Hub Facility

To:

The Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources: Councillor Mike Davey
Strategy and Resources Committee - 11 October 2021

Report by:

Allison Conder - Strategic Project Manager, Community Services

Wards affected:

Cherry Hinton

Key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council's [Community Centres Strategy](#) (2019) identified Cherry Hinton Ward as having a gap in access to community facilities, and a high priority to identify options that would address this gap.
- 1.2 Cherry Hinton Library is a City Council owned building located in the centre of Cherry Hinton, on the corner of the High Street and Colville Road, and is ideally positioned to be extended to include additional community facilities and create a Cherry Hinton Community Hub (CH Hub) (see Appendix 1 for the existing building layout).
- 1.3 The County library service currently operates from the building but there is no defined legal document for its' occupation and is currently occupying under statutory user rights following the 1973 local government re-organisation. The County has fully supported

development of the library into a broader community hub facility as it will bring additional residents into the building and improve use and sustainability of the library service in the longer term. The County will be both a funding partner in the CH Hub and have been engaged as a key stakeholder on the steering group throughout the project's development.

- 1.4 In September 2020, planning approval was granted for a scheme to extend Cherry Hinton Library at a total estimated cost £767,000. There is a potential risk of cost over run but the architects budget includes 10% contingency. The funding sources to deliver this approved scheme include £197k city council allocated S106 funding (secure), £28k County allocated S106 funding (secure), £50k of community raised funding (not yet secured).
- 1.5 A budget bid was submitted to Council for the CH Hub and approved in Feb 2019 (ref. 100256) allocating £282k of capital funding to deliver the scheme in a single construction phase. However, this budget allocation was contingent on securing £250k funding from Royal British legion (RBL).
- 1.6 On 8th Sept 21 RBL Branch Property Trust Trustees Committee (RBL BPTTC) met to review a funding business case but rejected the proposal to provide any upfront development funding in lieu of any hire charges. The RBL BPTTC Trustees decision will mean that the local branch will now have to hire facilities for their use in the hub.
- 1.7 The RBL BPTTC's decision means that to deliver CH Hub scheme as a single phase of development, £492,000 of funding is now required (this is the scheme budget requirement of £767k less £197k city council allocated S106 funding, £28k County allocated S106 funding, £50k of community raised funding).
- 1.5 The community funding contribution of £50,000 has not yet been secured and fundraising efforts have also been impacted by the pandemic. To manage a risk that this funding may not be secured in time for the building work to start, it will be used to focus specifically on expenditure associated with the fit out the new café kitchen, seating area and garden, as these will be later work packages to be contracted within the overall programme of works.
- 1.8 In order for the Cherry Hinton Hub to be financially sustainable, and to protect the various stakeholder interests in the building, it is envisaged

that the Council will have a Head Lease with the Cherry Hinton Community Benefit Society (CHCBS) who will manage and operate the hub, and they in turn will have a sub-lease with the County Library service who will pay an annual charge for use library space in the building. The County has indicated a preference for a 50-year lease term.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

1. Approve £210,000 of funding from capital receipts or borrowing (according to availability of receipts) in addition to the £282,000 capital funding already approved in the February 2019 budget bid (ref. 100256). This brings the total Council capital funding required to deliver this scheme to £492,000 within a total estimated scheme budget of £767,000.
2. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director in consultation with the Head of Property Services and Executive Councillor for Finance & Resources, to approve any leases and associated management agreements for up to 50 years, as may be required for the management of the CH Hub building.

3. Background

- 3.1 In September 2013, Cherry Hinton Residents Association (CHRA) successfully secured £11,000 of S106 to create a new community meeting space within the current footprint of Cherry Hinton Library, working in partnership with the County Library service. Until 2013 there was no definitive, central Cherry Hinton community facility and this new meeting room project proved very successful, increasing footfall into the library from 25,000 to 62,000 in just 18 months.
- 3.2 In 2014, the Royal British Legion (RBL) sold Fishers Lane Hall for development, and the local RBL branch lost its dedicated base for providing support services to ex-military personnel, and for its fund-raising activities.
- 3.3 In 2016 Cherry Hinton Residents Association (CHRA) successfully secured grant funding from Marshalls, to appoint an architect to develop plans to extend Cherry Hinton Library. However, these initial plans could not be delivered within the funding envelope identified for the scheme.

- 3.4 In 2017 the Council completed a strategic, evidence-based review of community facilities and published a [Community Centres Strategy](#). Priority 9 within the strategy is to ‘address the gaps in provision in Cherry Hinton Ward, and ensure access to City Council services within a 15-minute walk-time for this high need neighbourhood area’.
- 3.5 In 2018, the Council agreed to provide project management support to the CHRA to develop a scheme to address the facility gap. Local architects Ingleton Wood Martindale (IWM) submitted a successful tender and began working on new plans for an extension scheme that could be delivered, either as a single phase, or a two-phase construction.
- 3.6 A steering group was formed to enable key stakeholders in the hub scheme to work collaboratively with the architects, and includes representatives from the Council’s Community Services team, County Library service team, the local Ward Councillors, the County Councillor for Cherry Hinton, CHRA, and local RBL branch members. The concept plans developed by IWM, were taken out for wide pre-planning community consultation and feedback and received strong local support. The feedback received from the community and from pre-application advice from the planning team and urban designer, led to further design changes and improvements to the scheme.
- 3.7 In September 2020, planning approval was granted for a scheme to extend the library to create 122m² of additional accommodation space. This additional space will create a new Cherry Hinton Community Hub, which will include three new flexible community meeting spaces; new storage; a refurbished library and library staff room; a new kitchen and community café and outside café garden and seating area (see Appendix 2 for architect’s indicative visuals of the new community hub, and Appendix 3 for the new layout plans).
- 3.8 IWM’s concept cost plan (based on an overall m² rate) indicates that £767,000 is required to deliver the Cherry Hinton Hub scheme in a single phase of construction. The funding sources identified to meet this cost include:
- i. Council S106 - £197,664 (secure)
 - ii. County S106 - £28,000 (secure)
 - iii. Community raised funding - £50,000 (not yet secure)

- 3.9 In February 2019, a capital bid was approved within the MTFs (ref. 100256) for £282,000 of Council capital funding towards Cherry Hinton Hub. However, this original budget bid envisaged £250k of funding from the RBL Branch Property Trust Trustees Committee (BPTTC) but this funding business case was rejected on 8th September 2021.
- 3.10 Following the RBL BPTTC decision, the funding now only totals £275,000, and this leaves a funding shortfall of £492,000 to achieve the required scheme budget of £767,000.
- 3.11 Funding of £50k will now be contributed to the scheme through local funding raising by the community, and this will help to offset some of funding lost from the RBL BPTTC. The local community has now set up a new charitable trust The Cherry Hinton Community Benefit Society (CHCBS) to lead the local fundraising effort, and to be responsible for leasing, operating and maintaining the hub. Community fund raising efforts been impacted by COVID since March 2020, but a local fundraising committee has been established to raise the agreed £50k target.
- 3.12 To manage the risk of the community not securing £50k of funding by on commencement of the building work, this funding will be used specifically to contract for the fitout of the café kitchen; landscaping of the outside garden and fit out of the garden seating. These are all elements of the scheme required in the later stages of the programme, and can initially be constructed to shell and core, to not delay the main construction programme. Their completion can also be delayed until such time as the community does reach the £50k funding raising target.
- 3.16 A detailed business plan has been developed for the new hub to ensure that sufficient income can be raised to meet running and maintenance costs each year. This has indicated that it will be most advantageous for the Council to have a Head Lease with the CHCBS, as they are a registered charity and will benefit from rate relief. Alongside the Head Lease, the CHCBS will also have a Section 106 funding agreement that will ensure that community use of Cherry Hinton Hub is assured for a minimum of 11 years.
- 3.17 There is an opportunity to clarify and formalise the County's specific occupation and responsibilities within the hub scheme as a sub-lease arrangement with the CHCBS. In this arrangement the County Council Library service will pay an annual charge of £11,355 pa to the CHCBS towards the overhead and maintenance costs for the areas of the hub

that they will occupy. The County Council has confirmed that its preferred leasing term with the CHCBS is 50 years, so it seems sensible for the Council to issue a Head Lease for the same period.

3. Implications

a) Financial Implications

Awaiting VAT advice.

b) Staffing Implications

The County Council has required that should at any time during their 50-year lease term the CHCBS ceases to operate as a registered charity, that their Head Lease responsibilities will revert to the City Council, except for operation of the community café facility. If this risk does become an issue in future, the Community Services Team would provide two days of Band 4 staffing time (£13kpa) to ensure that bookings can be made, and that the hub facilities remain open and available to the community and library service to use, whilst efforts are made to secure another community or voluntary sector organisation for the Head Lease.

c) Equality and Poverty Implications

An EQIA has been completed for this scheme and is attached at Appendix 4.

d) Environmental Implications

The architects submitted an energy statement with the planning application for the overall increase of floor area by 122m², which includes a strategy to reduce carbon emissions by:

1. upgrading the building fabric
2. replacing the heating plant and lighting with new energy efficient equipment and controls

A variety of key energy efficiency and were recognised through the initial design process, which resulted in a 2% reduction in CO₂ emissions. A reduction from 4,806 kg/CO₂/year to 4,723 kg/CO₂/year is predicted despite the increased footprint.

By implementing passive design and fabric first measures and renewable energy technology with the installation of an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP), a 28% carbon reduction is achievable overall. Consequently, the scheme will comply with the council's carbon reduction policy.

Key points from the Climate Change Rating Assessment at Appendix 5 are:

1. Overall rating assessed as net high positive – this is because of the 28% carbon reduction
2. There will be additional toilet provision and inclusion of a community café and garden, which may increase overall use of water. To mitigate this, the most water efficient toilet systems and push taps will be included in the design to minimise wastage, and water butts will be included in the garden to reduce use of mains water as far as possible

e) Procurement Implications

The Council will be complete an open procurement process for a Design and Build team to complete the detailed and technical design stages and the construction phase.

f) Community Safety Implications

A site visit on the 23.05.2019 with the Cambridgeshire Constabulary Designing Out Crime Officer identified some areas of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) risk with the existing maisonette resident's entrance and access to the garages and bin stores. The Estate and Facilities team now have an approved Estate Improvement Scheme (EIS) that will fund the police recommendations to reduce the risk of ASB and improve resident safety.

4. Consultation and communication considerations

The Cherry Hinton Hub scheme was initiated by representatives of the local community, and a steering group was set up to ensure resident engagement and input through the pre-planning design stage. The steering group also includes the Ward Councillor's, RBL and County library service team. An extensive pre-planning application consultation process was planned and implemented jointly between the architects, statutory agencies to coincide with the Cherry Hinton festival.

Consultation and engagement will continue through the detailed and technical design stages to ensure representation from different groups and future users of the hub.

The appointed design and build team will be required to submit a communication plan to show how they plan to engage in an inclusive and accessible way to practical completion.

5. Background papers

None.

6. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Existing Cherry Hinton Library Ground Floor Layout

Appendix 2 – Architects indicative visuals of Cherry Hinton Hub

Appendix 3 – New Cherry Hinton Community Hub Ground Floor Layout Plan

Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix 5 - Climate Change Rating Assessment

7. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Allison Conder, Strategic Project Manager, tel: 01223 457862, email:

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