



**Executive
16 November 2009**

**Report from the Directors of
Housing & Community Care,
Finance & Corporate Resources,
Environment & Culture, and
Policy & Regeneration**

Wards Affected:
ALL

**Approval for a new Learning Disability Resource Centre
(John Billam)**

Forward Plan Ref: H&CC-09/10-11

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 In July 2009 the Executive considered a joint report from the Directors of Housing & Community Care and Policy & Regeneration outlining further progress made towards regeneration in South Kilburn. At that meeting the Executive agreed in principle the relocation of Albert Road Day Centre (ARDC) and noted that a full report would be prepared outlining proposals for a new location in or close to the John Billam recreation ground in autumn 2009.
- 1.2 This report advises members of the considerable progress that officers have made in identifying a suitable site for the relocation of the ARDC from the Kilburn site, to the John Billam site. It is also proposed to utilise this new Resource Centre site for the Council's existing Autistic Unit – ASPPECT (*Autism Services Promoting Partnership Empowerment Creativity & Teamwork*) currently located in a Portakabin at Strathcona Day Centre.
- 1.3 The current ARDC building, once vacated would be demolished and used as a residential development site as part of the ongoing South Kilburn Regeneration scheme, details of which have been provided to the Executive in separate reports.
- 1.4 A map of the John Billam site is attached at Appendix 1 showing the specific proposals referred to throughout the report.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Executive approve use of the site shown edged red in the plan in Appendix 1 (“the New ARDC Site”) for the relocation of Albert Road Day Centre as a Resource Centre for people with learning disabilities, subject to appropriation of the New ARDC Site as set out in paragraph 2.2 and also the grant of planning permission.
- 2.2 That the Executive authorise the Director of Environment and Culture to commence and comply with the procedure as set out in section 122(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 to appropriate the New ARDC Site for planning purposes.
- 2.3 That the Executive agree to officers preparing and submitting a detailed planning application for a new Resource Centre to relocate the ARDC and ASPPECTS to the John Billam site.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Albert Road Day Centre provides day services for up to 45 adults with severe learning disabilities some of whom have additional sensory/physical disabilities, challenging behaviour or autism. The service provides therapeutic activities which include art and music therapy, Independent living skills and some further educational activities that are both a personal social care to the users, and respite for the families or carers.
- 3.2 The ARDC site is crucial in the South Kilburn redevelopment. Reprovision of the Day Centre is one of the schemes that can be brought forward quickly resulting into HCA providing funding to the South Kilburn Development. It is important to give impetus to the project because it will be two years before the site could be handed over for development. Further delay in its relocation will result in a delay in this part of the redevelopment project.
- 3.3 ASPPECT was the first local authority-run Autistic Unit to get accredited by the National Autistic Accreditation Board. The Unit which started off at Stonebridge Day Centre moved into its Portakabin base in November 2003. The Portakabin was purchased from LDDF capital grant in 2003. Due to the nature of the clients’ needs, it is not fit for purpose hence the proposal to relocate these users to the new facility. There are currently 13 service users in the ASPPECT Unit, whose needs are similar to those in the ARDC thereby making best of use of staff skills, facilities shared, and overall efficiency gains from a new Resource Centre approach to services. Further demand for complex autistic need is growing
- 3.4 Parents and carers of ARDC have pressed that in relocating ARDC, there will be no reduction of the current floor space.
Current floor space of ARDC building is 1,100sq.m. to cater for 40 plus service users , and around 35 members of staff. The current ASPPECT floor space is 218 sq. m. The proposed Resource Centre is planned to have 1254 sqm with access to the open space in the park as well as its own facilities.

The specification of services and facilities for the new proposed Resource Centre was drawn up with the families and carers of all involved in the two day services and can be met in the revised design.

- 3.5 The new Resource Centre will provide day, evening and weekend activities to support people with learning disabilities and autism. The purpose of the centre will be to help to promote social inclusion, independence and choice for service users and to support outcomes as stipulated within service users in their Support Plans derived from assessments of needs, and plans agreed with users and their carers or advocates.
- 3.6 After looking at 15 different sites over a period of 18 months, a suitable site to relocate Albert Road Day Centre has been identified on the John Billam playing fields off Woodcock Hill. The site is owned by Brent Council and administered by the Parks Service. The proposed site for the Resource Centre development is not on the grassed area but on a piece of adjacent gravelled land upon which stood, until recently, a large wooden structure i.e. the Scouts' Hut, now demolished due to safety reasons.
- 3.7 The John Billam open space is designated as a recreational area and provides playing fields, used by local residents as well as sports clubs. The Parks Service administer the use of the playing fields and the adjacent allotments. The main user located within the J.Billam Park is the Gujarati Ayra Association London (GAA) who hold a long lease on the Kenton Hall building and adjoining car parks. The Council retains a small changing-room facility within Kenton Hall that is hired out to sports and community organisations.
- 3.8 It is recognised that car parking at peak periods is an issue to be resolved prior to any planning application. Currently under the terms of their planning permission, the GAA are required to use the car park between Kenton Hall and the scout hut land for parking in the first instance and then the area in front of Silverholme older peoples' homes as an overspill car park. This is intended to limit the impact of traffic movements on existing residents. Additionally there are informal arrangements whereby allotment and parks users, and sports clubs use both the gravelled area as well as the GAA car parks.
- 3.9 GAA has been approached to formalise the use of a certain amount of spaces on their leased land in regard to the ARDC proposal. Currently whilst this has not yet been resolved the GAA has indicated a willingness to consider a formal arrangement subject to a wider engagement with the Council regarding parking and access arrangements. It is hoped to satisfactorily resolve this issue prior to the submission of any planning application. The careful attention to retaining open space without any net loss should mitigate concerns on the impact of this proposal.
- 3.10 Over the past few months senior officers from Housing & Community Care, Property & Asset Management, Environment & Culture(Parks Services and Planning), and MACE(Architects appointed to provide feasibility for relocation, and drafting a planning permission submission) have been working closely to ensure that the development proposal for the site is in line with planning and

development requirements. For example, the use of a communal meeting room space in the Resource Centre by local community groups would replace the facility the old Scout Hut used to offer.

3.11 In drawing up the proposals, key stakeholders have been closely involved and consulted.

- Two high level meetings at senior officer levels have been held with the GAA who own the lease on the Kenton Hall which is on the same playing fields and with whom the centre would share the access road. The meetings have looked at the proposed developments including discussions around improvement for the access road, car parking and general working with the community.
- The Silverhome Close Community whose residential home backs onto the access road which the centre and Kenton Hall use through the Parks Service
- The sports organisations that use the playing fields; through the Parks Service
- Whilst 3 previous consultation meetings about the relocation of Albert Road had been held with parents and carers of the centre, the first joint consultation meeting with parents and carers of ASPPECT and ARDC took place at Albert Road Day Centre On 27th Jan this year. The key areas discussed were - the criteria for the location of the new resource centre; the criteria for ASPPECTS to be accommodated as part of the new resource centre (for example , space, meeting National Autistic Society requirements); sharing ideas of what the council means by a “resource centre”; Transport. The meetings were co-chaired by officers from the Carers’ Centre who have up to now been closely involved with the relocation planning and development.

3.12 The proposal is located at the South of the John Billam playing field on an existing hard standing area in front of the Parks Depot building, with parking for upto 6 cars associated with the Resource Centre. The proposed building would be within the hard standing area thereby not encroaching on open space. The building would be a mix of single and two storeys, including a roof terrace, and a secure courtyard in the middle. The shared facilities include dining, kitchen, specialist therapy, and meeting rooms.

3.13 The building design is shown in draft papers attached in Appendix 2.

3.14 Overall Benefits of the scheme –

- The proposal enables a modern, fit for purpose facility for people with learning disabilities to be built with the full involvement of the people using it, and their families/carers. It will maximise the efficiency of running complementary services that share facilities without imposing undue pressure on those with different needs.

- The proposal will implement an important redevelopment element in the South Kilburn area with associated community benefits in line with the Council's policies.
- The costs can be fully met within the capital planned in the South Kilburn area redevelopment, as well as produce an efficient use of social care resources.
- The playing field users, allotment holders, and the charity partner (GAA) all benefit from an improved access road, car park, and associated improvements on the site.

4.0 Legal Implications

4.1 The proposed site of the new day centre is currently held by the Parks Service and as explained above, forms part of the overall sports ground. Accordingly, in order to now use the site for redevelopment, it is necessary to appropriate the land for planning purposes. The procedure to follow in order to bring this about is set out in section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 (the LGA 1972). Under section 122(2A) of the LGA 1972, the Council cannot appropriate any land consisting of or forming part of open space to another function unless before appropriating the land, they cause notice of their intention to do so, specifying the land in question, to be advertised in two consecutive weeks in a newspaper circulating in the area in which the land is situated and consider any objections to the proposed appropriation which may be made. Since the land forms part of the overall sports ground it is considered that it should be treated as open space, and accordingly the Executive are asked to authorise officers to undertake this procedure and to proceed with appropriation unless significant objections are received (in which case a further report shall be brought to the Executive).

4.2 In order to appoint an architect for the new building, officers can utilise the Council's existing property services framework agreements – there is a specific framework for architects. There is no requirement for this to be awarded by the Executive, as the contract value will not exceed £500,000 (see Standing Order 86(d)). However the works contract will exceed £500,000 and, on the assumption that it will be individually tendered, the Executive will need to approve both the pre-tender strategy and the award of contract.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 A report to the Executive on 14th July 2009 entitled South Kilburn Regeneration Progress Update set out that an alternative facility for Albert Road on the John Billam site would cost a maximum of £4m. It also suggested that the most appropriate funding route may be through the Council's Growth Area Fund allocation. This funding was introduced by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) in 2008/09 with the intention of bringing forward housing growth to aid in meeting the government's housing targets. The fund can be used for infrastructure or other 'blockages' to housing provision. The Council has made two successful bids for the Growth Fund. £2m was initially secured in 2008/09 and

potentially £2.553m in 2009/10 and a further £2.684m in 2010/11. The latter amounts are subject to current consultation. It is proposed to initially use the growth fund to pump prime the construction of a replacement facility for the ARDC. Part of the Capital Receipt obtained from the sale of the Albert Road site would then be utilised to replenish the Growth Fund. Members can then decide how this overall total will be allocated to their overall priorities.

- 5.2 The relocation of the ARDC meets the criteria because it provides a key future housing site in South Kilburn that will provide new housing either to existing tenants being decanted out of the worst housing or to provide private housing that cross subsidises the cost of provision of new social housing. The exact mix on site will depend on a range of factors but is preferred as a predominantly private housing site to help the cross-subsidy arrangements.
- 5.3. The estimated capital requirements are summarised in Appendix 3 (Initial project budget). This shows that the estimates prior to procurement are £3.75m for the building. That allows up to £125k for fittings and facilities inside the building, and £125k towards car park improvements to, within the maximum capital allowance of up to £4m previously proposed. A further report will need to be brought to Members after the procurement of the build contractors. This should establish that the cost of the Resource Centre is within available resources and the arrangements in place to manage the project to ensure this remains the case.
- 5.4 The combined revenue budget for the two facilities is around £875k in 2009/10. It is anticipated that a shared facility in a modern new build facility will generate significant efficiencies in both staffing and running costs. Any such savings could be utilised to meet anticipated future demand for the services provided or be utilised elsewhere in the Council's budget.

6.0 Diversity Implications

- 6.1 The proposal extends the partnership between the Council and the Asian charity GAA in the use and management of the J. Billam Park.
- 6.2. The proposal seeks to improve the community amenities in the access to and use of the park through improvements to the access road and the car park, and in the availability of a community meeting room for local groups
- 6.3. The proposal extends the choice of services to those with disabilities in modern fit for purpose facilities.
- 6.4 A full Equalities Impact Assessment would be undertaken prior to the works and other procurement being submitted for approval.

7.0 Staffing Implications

- 7.1 The proposals would lead to a relocation of staff from Albert Road Day Centre and ASPPECT to form a single staff team working in a Resource Centre

setting that will promote choice and independence to people with a wide range of learning disability needs.

- 7.2 Staff at both ARDC and ASPPECTS have been consulted over the proposals and have all contributed to the relocation development proposals. Ongoing consultations will be carried out in line with approval of the scheme and planning permission.

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