
COMMUNITY HALL – ST MARK’S FIELD, ROCHFORD

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 A community hall is to be built at St Mark’s Field, Rochford, under the terms of a covenant. Revised planning permission has now been granted and work is expected to start in February 2001.
- 1.2 The Council has allocated £70,000 in the approved capital programme for St Mark’s Field community initiatives, with the intention that financial assistance would be provided to enable the hall to be completed and start operating.
- 1.3 This report provides current information and seeks approval for a package of financial support to Rochford Parish Council.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In 1993 an area of land off Doggetts Close, Rochford was sold to Springboard Housing Association. The sale included a covenant by Springboard to construct at its own expense a number of dwellings, and a community hall on a plot which was subject to a 99 year lease.
- 2.2 The Council subsequently sold the community hall site to Rochford Parish Council, subject to the lease.
- 2.3 In 1998, after a period without any progress on the hall, the Council requested Springboard to consult with Rochford Parish Council and bring forward proposals for the building. Subsequently, a group of District Councillors was nominated and have met regularly with the Parish Council and Springboard to develop detailed proposals.

3 THE HALL BUILDING

- 3.1 The building is of traditional brick construction with overall dimensions of approximately 17.5m x 8.5m (57’6” x 27’6”). The site includes eight car parking spaces and a secure external play area of approximately 170 square metres (1800 square feet).

Internally the building includes a hall, kitchen, office, lobby, store and toilet facilities (including a disabled persons toilet).

4 USES

- 4.1 The concept for the hall has from the outset been one of local, community based uses.
- 4.2 Members will recall that this area is within Roche Ward, which has been identified in both the Council's Crime and Disorder reduction strategy and in the Health Improvement Programme as an area requiring action to deal with social and health issues.
- 4.3 The StAR Partnership of organisations and individuals has been established to help deliver the action plans arising from these strategies. As part of its early work the StAR Partnership organised a 'Planning for Real' public consultation exercise to identify community concerns and gaps in the provision of services and facilities. The results of this community consultation process have been used to inform discussions about uses for the hall. It is anticipated that these might include:

- Breakfast club
- Parent & toddler group(s)
- Health visitor clinics
- Employment advice
- Local clubs
- Uniformed organisations (Beavers, Brownies etc)
- Charitable events
- Children and family parties (for local residents)

Some "anchor" clients who have expressed an interest are being followed up:

- Child minders' drop in centre
- Health visitor clinics
- Unemployment advice centre
- Whist drive club

5 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1 The Parish Council is still considering future management arrangements and whether a charitable trust or charitable company should be formed.
- 5.2 Springboard Housing Association have indicated that, in principle, and subject to a viable business plan, the ownership of the building structure can be transferred to the Parish Council after completion.

6 FUNDING

6.1 The design and building costs are being borne by Springboard Housing Association, and are likely to be in the order of £150,000.

6.2 The Parish Council will need to find finance for a number of additional items it considers necessary to operate successfully including

- a security system
- signage
- curtains
- kitchen equipment
- office equipment
- play equipment
- safety surface under play equipment

Discussions are continuing with Springboard about issues such as floor finishes.

6.3 There will be start up and running costs. Lettings will generate income but the Parish Council anticipates that it is likely to take three years to achieve balance.

6.4 The Parish Council is seeking financial assistance from this Council towards the initial capital costs that will fall to them, and in the form of tapered revenue funding.

6.5 Members are asked to consider

- A capital grant to the Parish Council of £24,000 to help fund fixtures and fittings such as those listed at paragraph 6.2 above
- Revenue support of:

£18,000	Year 1
£12,000	Year 2
£6,000	Year 3
£0	Year 4

to help cover start-up costs and anticipated deficits in running costs in the early years of operation

This totals £60,000. The Head of Financial Services advises that arrangements can be made to transfer the revenue funds suggested from the capital programme as the current capital programme contains support from revenue.

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- 6.6 The Parish Council would be required to use any funding solely for the development of the community hall, and to demonstrate to the Council how it had been used.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 As set out in the report.

8 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The covenant requiring the construction of the hall is between the Council and Springboard Housing Association.

9 ENVIRONMENTAL/CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Construction of the hall will provide a local facility which can be used for activities which will help address social and health issues. Use of the land will prevent the site becoming derelict and an eyesore.
- 9.2 Completion of the hall is included in the Rochford District Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy (7.7(a).)

10 PARISH IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The hall site is within the Rochford Parish. The Parish Council is leading the project to ensure the hall is developed.

11 RECOMMENDATION

- 11.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RECOMMENDS**

That capital and revenue funding be provided to Rochford Parish Council as set out in the report. (HHHCC)

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