
ROCHFORD HOSPITAL – REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS (Min 148/2000)

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report explains the outline proposals being prepared by the South Essex Mental Health and Community Care Trust for the redevelopment of the Rochford Hospital site.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Trust has for some time been considering their options for the reorganisation of their use of the Rochford Hospital Site in light of the imminent closure of the Runwell Hospital site. On 26th April 2000, Members received a presentation from the Chief Executive of the Trust and resolved to support in principle the developing strategic plan. The information presented at that meeting in April has now been developed into clear proposals for the future of the site.
- 2.2 The plan that has now been developed seeks to make best use of the existing buildings on the site, through several relatively modest changes and extensions. The Trust wrote to the Council on 3 October 2000 asking for a letter of support from the Council for the proposals in order to allow an outline business case to be sent to the NHS Executive and South Essex Health Authority by 20 October 2000. In view of the timescales for reporting this matter to a suitable Committee, officers have provided a general letter of support in the light of the April decision, but without advice on the acceptability or otherwise of the proposed demolition of the district office as outlined below. The advice also made clear that general support for the scheme did not in any way undermine the proper consideration of a planning application in due course.
- 2.3 The Local Plan Rochford Town Centre Inset Map shows the designation of the site as a 'Hospital'.

3 DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

- 3.1 Appendix 1 and 2 to this report provide details of two options for the redevelopment of the site. Members will note that the fundamental difference between each of the options is the demolition of the district office building.

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- 3.2 The key principles of the each of the two options are:
- A new single-storey extension to the Henry Hayes building (Nos. 4 & 32 on the plans)
 - A small single-storey extension to the Rayleigh Ward (Nos. 9 & 31)
 - A new central pavilion for the 'doughnut' building (Nos. 12 & 28)
 - A covered link to join together several buildings in the north east corner of the site (No 35)
- 3.3 With regard to the district office, it is understood that the Trust's preferred option would be the demolition of this building, since this would allow the centralisation of car parking within the site and enable a better arrangement for landscaping to be prepared.
- 3.4 The proposals being prepared by the Trust are intended to enable improved arrangements for operating the existing uses on the site.
- 4 DISCUSSION**
- 4.1 The proposed changes to existing buildings within the Hospital site are relatively modest and, subject to their consideration through the planning process, it is considered that there should be general support for the principles. It is understood that the changes will enable the Trust to make better use of the buildings and to gather together particular uses in a more logical way. The proposed changes continue the use of the site for the provision of healthcare facilities and this accords with the Local Plan 'Hospital' designation.
- 4.2 The demolition of the district office would allow centralisation of the car parking in one main location, rather than continuing with smaller car parking areas spread throughout the site. The building in question is not listed, though it is within the Rochford Conservation Area.
- 4.3 The building is hidden away in the south-east corner of the site, and is not visible from the Market Square or from West Street. As such, it makes no contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area. On balance, it is considered that the demolition of this building, which would need to be the subject of an application for Conservation Area consent, would not be unacceptable. As with the proposed extensions/alterations, Members will need to bear in mind that any positive indication that the removal of the building might be acceptable must not be construed as undermining the proper planning consideration of the matter in due course.
- 4.4 Overall, it is considered that the proposals that have been prepared by the Trust can be supported in principle, including the possible removal of the district office building. The proposals are intended to enable the site to be used more effectively by the Trust.

5 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The removal of the district office building would not have a negative impact on the appearance and character of the Rochford Conservation Area.

6 RECOMMENDATION

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

That the South Essex Mental Health and Community Care Trust be informed that Rochford Council supports, in principle, the redevelopment proposals for Rochford Hospital, subject to the details being considered by the Local Planning Authority in due course.

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Background Papers:

Letter and plans from the South Essex Mental Health and Community Care Trust – 3 October 2000

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