

Forest Heath District Council

(This report is not a key decision. This report has been subject to appropriate notice of publication under the Council's Access to Information Rules)

Report of the Leader of the Council

CABINET

5 FEBRUARY 2013

CAB13/067

MILDENHALL FACILITIES PROJECT

1. Summary and reasons for recommendation(s)

- 1.1 This paper outlines an initial framework for a major corporate and partnership project to identify the most effective way to provide the current range of public services in Mildenhall, in terms of efficient management of the public estate and outcomes for the community.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 **That the initial approach to managing and communicating the Mildenhall Facilities Project outlined in this report be approved.**

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3. How will the recommendations help us meet our strategic priorities?

- 3.1 In terms of potential efficiencies and outcomes, this project helps to meet all four of the aims contained in the Council's Strategic Plan, and many of the specific objectives attached to them, including those relating to strengthening partnership working.

4. Key issues

- 4.1 There is currently an exciting opportunity for a range of partners delivering services from various sites in Mildenhall to review whether there is a more efficient and effective way to manage the public estate in the town. Specifically, this opportunity arises from the fact that the District Council, County Council (and Mildenhall College), Suffolk Constabulary and Anglia Community Leisure all need to take asset management decisions in the short to medium term in respect of their existing facilities in Mildenhall.
- 4.2 In the case of the District Council, these decisions relate to the District Offices at College Heath Road, the Dome and the swimming pool, as reported to Cabinet on 15 January, 2013 (Report No CAB13/058 refers). It is the Council's stated intention to achieve savings and improve collaboration with partners through the sharing of buildings, which is an aspiration also shared corporately by the County Council and police. From the Council's perspective, a partnership project to review the combined assets of the public sector in Mildenhall is therefore implicit in any future asset management decisions by relating to its three facilities.
- 4.3 There is also the opportunity (should they be interested) to engage a far wider range of partners in this project, including the parish council, voluntary and community organisations and the health sector.
- 4.4 The project is also timely as it means that options could be included in the next phases of consultation with the local community on the 'Site Specific Allocations' Local Plan. This would include options for the possible allocation and subsequent development of sites at which services could be co-located, and could also consider and consult on options for alternative uses for any vacated sites.
- 4.5 The initial step for the project would be to form a joint officer project group between the various partner agencies. The Leader will provide the Cabinet lead for the project, coordinating the input of a variety of portfolio holders and local ward members, and liaising with partners as required (including representing the Council at any partner meetings).
- 4.6 Any formal decisions required for the project will be submitted to Cabinet and full Council (and any relevant working parties) at the appropriate times, under the terms of the Council's policy framework and Asset Management Plan (AMP).
- 4.7 A first task for the officer group will be to prepare a short document to explain the available opportunities to partners, stakeholders and the local community, as well as to Forest Heath councillors and staff.

5. Other options considered

5.1 At this stage all options are open for consideration.

6. Community impact

6.1 **Crime and disorder impact** *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998)*

6.1.1 Not applicable at this stage of the project.

6.2 **Diversity and equality impact** *(including the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment)*

6.2.1 Not applicable at this stage of the project.

6.3 **Sustainability impact** *(including completing a Sustainability Impact Assessment)*

6.3.1 Not applicable at this stage of the project, albeit a key project aim will be sustainability.

6.4 **Other impact** *(any other impacts affecting this report)*

6.4.1 None.

7. Consultation *(what consultation has been undertaken, and what were the outcomes?)*

7.1 The key partners listed in paragraph 4.1 have already been consulted on the principle of forming the project and are keen to be involved. Consultation, internally and externally, will be a key factor in the success of any proposals, including the chance for local people to comment through any future consultation on the LDF.

8. Financial and resource implications *(including asset management implications)*

8.1 None at this stage, other than officer and councillor time. In accordance with adopted asset management principles, the project will need to demonstrate a strong business case for any change on behalf of local taxpayers.

9. Risk/opportunity assessment *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*

Risk area	Inherent level of risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual risk (after controls)
Failure to achieve improved service outcomes and savings through sharing of buildings	High	Establish partnership project to examine all options	Low
Failure to engage partners and local people in the project	Medium	Incorporate strong communications and consultation in project	Low
Failure to achieve desired project and AMP outcomes	Medium	Strong project management in accordance with adopted principles.	Low

10. Legal and policy implications

10.1 None at this stage.

11. Ward(s) affected

11.1 All wards are affected in relation to the provision of centralised services in the District, but the project directly affects the wards covering Mildenhall and surrounding villages.

12. Background papers

12.1 Asset Management Plan report (Report No CAB13/058 - 15 January 2013).

13. Documents attached

13.1 None.