

Select Committee on Regeneration Culture and Adult Education

- Site Visit Cosley 16th February 2009
- MINUTES

Present: - Councillor C. Wilson Chairman Councillors Hanif, Lowe, Mottram and K.Turner.

Officers

Assistant Director Strategy & Private Sector Housing, Assistant Director Culture and Leisure Mrs. J. Elliott Directorate of Law and Property, Dean Hill Project Manager Healthy Towns.

Apology for Absence: -

Councillors Barlow, Blood, G.H.Davies and Woodall

1. Jubilee Park

The Project Manager for Healthy Towns presented a proposals for refurbishment of Silver Jubilee Park Coseley. These were as follows: -

- a) Refurbishment of a play area with improved facilities for disabled children
- b) The Tennis Courts to be converted into an outdoor gym
- c) Creation of a nursery ground to allow young children to be able to learn to cycle in safety.
- d) To refurbish the existing building into a Community Hub to include public toilets.

Councillor Turner asked if there were any plans to have refreshments available in the park. The Project Manager informed the committee that there were environmental health issues with providing refreshments in the park per se. However, refreshments would be commissioned for the 4 to 5 public events, which would take place in the Park following refurbishment.

Councillor Mottram asked if there were any plans to refurbish the tennis courts and expressed concern that local councillors had not been consulted about the proposed refurbishments.

The Project Manager replied that the Friends of the Park would like to refurbish the tennis courts at a future date. He also explained that an initial consultation had been conducted with the Friends of Jubilee Park to enable the formulation of a plan for proposed refurbishments. This plan would be then put out for wider consultation with local councillors and with all residents who live within 15 minutes walking distance of the park.

The Assistant Director Culture and Leisure and the Project Manager for Healthy Towns took no further part in the scheduled Site Visits

2. Archives

The Borough Archivist Gillian Roberts was in attendance at the site visit to the Archives Office at Mount Pleasant.

The Borough Archivist gave a short overview to the committee of the numbers of records and documents that must be retained by the Borough under various Acts of parliament.

She also confirmed that all the rooms in the building were in use for storage and that there remained only 3 years of accessions space.

Councillor Turner asked if the building was unsatisfactory for the storage of archives.

The Borough Archivist explained that the service had recently undergone an inspection by the National Archives and had been found to be 70% outside of the acceptable parameters, which were a constant temperature of 15/16 degrees centigrade and 45%/ 60% humidity. This had led to some records becoming so delicate that they could not be produced to the public. The state of these records also meant that they could not be copied, although she confirmed that currently 70% of the documents are in surrogate form.

She also informed the committee that the Archives are closed one day a week to facilitate the re-packing and cataloguing of documents.

Councillor Lowe asked if moving the Archives to another building would enhance community access.

The Borough Archivist confirmed that if the Archives moved to the Black Country Museum the proposed building would comply with British Standard 45454 for a flexible space for different types of users. It would allow for the provisions of services for school visits, increase access for disabled users and increase access for the public throughout the Borough.

Councillor Turner asked if the proposed space at the Black Country Museum would be sufficient for compliance with the standard. He was assured that in line with the British Standard the proposals included expansion space for 25 years.

The Borough Archivist conducted a tour of the building for the committee, which included an exhibition of some of the oldest documents retained in the Archives. The tour also demonstrated the extreme congestion of the building both in terms of the storage of valuable documents and the limited public access to the building.

In conclusion the committee agreed that the current building was not fit for purpose and because of the restrictions it imposed, the Service was unable to serve the community as a whole.

3. Bayer Street

A modular building is the proposed format for the Coseley Youth Club replacement building.

The purpose of the site visit to the new children's' centre in Bayer Street was to allow the committee to see an example of a modular building in situ

The Committee agreed that the modular building had many attractions: -

- It was of a good standard and took approximately 1 month to erect.
- It had an internal configuration that was very flexible
- It could easily be extended.
- All windows could be made secure by the fitment of electrical shutters.
and
- There is a choice of heating options.

4. Extra Care Housing

Before reaching the site for extra care housing the committee inspected the Coseley Scout Hut. This Hut was the original site for the replacement youth club. It had been hoped that the scouts and the youth club could have shared the refurbished building but it was not possible to reach agreement with the Scout Movement.

The Committee now walked the perimeters of the site for the new Extra Care Housing. The Assistant Director explained that the residents of the current bungalows would be gradually moved into the new extra care housing buildings.

It was agreed that the plans for the Extra Care Housing would be available to Members at the next Select Committee meeting.

The Committee also inspected the current site of the Coseley youth club and its outdoor facilities. This was followed by a visit to Clayton Fields, which is the preferred site for the new youth club.

The Assistant Director explained that there was a covenant attached to the deeds of the Clayton Fields site, which he believed, would not be breached by the building of a youth club ,a football pitch and changing rooms. However, he assured the committee that legal advice would be sought before any final proposal was presented.

It was agreed that the proposed plans would be available to the Members at their next meeting.

The Site Visit concluded at 3.15pm.