

**COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE CENTRE – SAPLEY EAST
(Report by the Directors of Environmental & Community Services
and of Central Services)**

1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

1.1 The Oxmoor area of Huntingdon has been the focus of sustained urban regeneration. The Oxmoor Opportunities Partnership (OOP), in which this Council was a key player, aimed to meet a five point plan proposed by the Oxmoor Community Action Group. The Partnership made a successful bid for Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) funding from the Government through which programmes were managed and funded between 2000 and 2007.

1.2 The five point strategy was:

- To create a safe place to live
- Support families
- Focus on young people
- Promote greater access to services and information
- Improve the local environment.

1.3 Considerable change has come about as a result of this work and there are notable achievements outlined in the SRB Evaluation Report. However, the report concluded as follows:

“The success of the OOP so far is fragile. Much of what is required is to continue the work that has been done so far and which requires longer than the SRB term to achieve. Two main changes are needed to make this success permanent:

- ***OOP should concentrate on capacity building to allow the community to take the lead;***
- ***Employment should be one of the key elements of that work.”***

1.4 The Council, with its partners Luminus and the County Council, has made arrangements for the regeneration work to be continued through a Neighbourhood Management Approach (also being established in Eynesbury and Ramsey).

2. PHYSICAL REGENERATION

- 2.1 A key ingredient of the SRB programme was to improve the physical condition of the area and to make provision, through a plan, for necessary facilities and infrastructure. These aspects were brought together in the Oxmoor Action Plan, drawn up after a 'Planning for Real' exercise, with local people. Critical to the Plan was a new "Heart for Oxmoor", whereby a new centre on the site of the former Sapley Square would be created. Phase 1 of the centre, which included the Oak Tree Health Centre, the Maple Centre and shops, has radically transformed the facilities and the environment. Phase 2 on the site of the eastern part of the former Sapley Square and surrounding land provides an opportunity to add much needed facilities and investment to address outstanding issues from the original plans.
- 2.2 An extensive consultation exercise has recently been carried out offering different options for the redevelopment of the eastern part of the former Sapley Square together with other adjacent used and unused/underused land, with the objective of drawing up a Master Plan. The result of this consultation is summarised in paragraph 4 below.
- 2.3 To follow up the employment and capacity issues identified in the SRB Evaluation Report, Luminus, on behalf of the Partnership, were awarded a Bursary by EEDA to examine the feasibility of the development of a local enterprise centre and to develop an application capital grant. This feasibility work involved key stakeholders and the local community and has identified a vision for and the scope of a scheme, an appropriate legal status (a Community Interest Company (CIC)), capital grant and revenue potential. As a result, a significant grant of £600k has been identified in EEDA's Investing in Communities Programme.
- 2.4 The Council has previously agreed that any sums it receives from land sales on the Oxmoor will be reinvested to provide community benefits and regeneration.
- 2.5 This report proposes that Council should be a key partner in setting up a CIC to deliver a Community Enterprise Centre (and potentially other community assets) within the Sapley Square East development area in accordance with the emerging Master Plan.

3. THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 3.1 Annex A shows the extent of the programme of engagement with the community that was undertaken between 9th September and 19th October 2000.

- 3.2 As part of that exercise, the local community consider three alternative development options including:
- up to 60 new homes and the upgrading and reconfiguration of existing housing for the elderly;
 - faith buildings and community managed workspaces (for social enterprises, voluntary organisations and business start ups);
 - safer routes through the area; and
 - more useable open space.
- 3.3 Residents were asked to place 'issue' cards to communicate their likes and dislikes about the area and the three options for the possible development. They were also invited to respond to a series of questions and vote for their preferred option.
- 3.4 A total of 605 issue cards were placed on the three options: 367 for likes and 238 for dislikes. These issues fell into six topic groups as follows:

Topics	Likes	Dislikes
Faith Buildings and Community Facilities	159	73
Access and Car Parking	22	83
Residential and Supported Housing	63	36
Oak Drive	53	32
Open Space and Play Area	68	9
Pub	2	5
Totals	367	238

- 3.5 Community facilities and faith buildings proposals elicited 232 (38%) of all the issue cards placed during the consultation and shows there is clear support for a range of developments including more community facilities in the consultation area.

4. THE CASE FOR MORE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

- 4.1 In 2007 an evaluation of the investment committed under the Single Regeneration Budget was carried out by Cambridgeshire County Council's Research Group. The Research Group found that in comparison with 2000, Oxmoor's physical environment was much improved and the fear of crime, reported crime and antisocial behaviour had all been reduced. However it found the programme had had little effect on employment opportunities.
- 4.2 To achieve permanent success, the study concluded the (regeneration) work would need to continue and the priorities for the Neighbourhood Management Team (as the successor body to the Oxmoor Opportunities Partnership) should be to:

- build capacity for the community to take the lead; and
- improve employment opportunities, particularly among longer standing residents.

4.3 The findings and recommendations of the SRB Evaluation Report suggest:

- the need to put assets and decision making into the hands of local people so the regeneration process can continue over a generation; and
- the need to tackle the deeply entrenched culture of worklessness and low expectations in sections of the community on any level by improving ambitions and providing a greater range of opportunities.

4.4 The Council's Local Economy Strategy provides for an increase in jobs and access to employment to support growth in the District generally and to address the specific needs of more deprived communities. Mainstream economic development activity is generally focused on larger development opportunities in and around commercial centres of the market towns, skill development and business support. To address the economic needs of the District as a whole, this activity needs to be supported by specific interventions in particular communities. The development of community-based enterprise centres in contrast with the general business-focused enterprise centres is an accepted element of regeneration schemes across the country. They provide small-scale employment, skill and learning opportunities which can be focused on particular community needs and address particular issues, such as long-term worklessness. They provide a visible sign of an enterprise culture and provide links to mainstream economic development activities allowing for the "growing on" or referral of business opportunities. They can also provide a continuing form of revenue income for investment in community based activities. This approach supports the delivery of the Local Economy Strategy and the activities of the Council and our partners.

5. A COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE CENTRE

5.1 It is therefore intended to include a Community Enterprise Centre in the draft Master Plan for the final stage of consultation.

5.2 The concept is that the Centre would provide:

- A 400 sq m scheme over two floors with an estimated build cost of £1.2m, including fees but excluding land, which would have a high quality of design, appropriate to its setting. The building would also be constructed to

reduce carbon emissions and be resistant to climate change.

- The ground floor could provide accommodation for retailing and community focused activities for social enterprises and other not-for-profit organisations. Initial ideas include:
 - Retail 'returned' furniture and electrical goods (which otherwise would be sent to landfill). This would be similar to a scheme already operating in Fenland District by the Ferry Project (a charitable subsidiary of the Luminus Group).
 - A new social enterprise, supported by the Ferry Project, to provide meals for the Oak Foundation's proposed extra day-care home;
 - A hair and beauty salon for Huntingdonshire Regional College trainees to gain experience of working for customers;
 - Offices/advice centres for voluntary organisations that require accommodation alongside others using the reception services and meeting rooms provided at the Maple Centre.
- The first floor could be used for serviced accommodation for micro enterprises, social enterprise or other voluntary organisations.

5.3 Funding would be from the Council re-investing the value of its sale (or long lease) of the land, EEDA grant, grants and contributions from other partners or bodies and a commercial loan, if required.

5.4 EEDA have indicated that they would give high priority to such a scheme with a likelihood of £300k grant in 2009/10 followed by a similar sum in 2010/11, subject to any Government reductions in their funding

5.5 Part of the EEDA grant would cover the value of the Council's land (in the order of £150k) which the Council would then contribute to the building cost.

6. A COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY

6.1 It is proposed that the Community Enterprise Centre (and potentially other assets) be owned and run by a Community Interest Company.

- 6.2 A company of this nature has limited liability, has to be established for community benefit and “locks in” assets for that purpose. This approach maximises the potential for grants and ensures that the surpluses are used for community benefits. Thus the grant provider and funders are converting capital sums into an ongoing stream of revenue support to the community.
- 6.3 Subject to their own decision making processes the Company would be made up of 5 organisations, each having an equal vote. These would probably be:
- Hunts Forum for Voluntary Organisations
 - Huntingdon Regional College
 - Ferry Project
 - Cambridgeshire Charitable Foundation (This body manages a number of community grant schemes from private business but also the County Council’s Community Grants.)
 - Huntingdonshire District Council.
- 6.4 The Council would hold no more than 20% control of the company - a legal restriction of this type of body - but to satisfy EEDA grant conditions will be the accountable body. This will mean that the Council would keep the accounts and organise the meetings on behalf of the Company for which it would charge them an annual fee.
- 6.5 There would be a need for a robust business plan which is made easier by the anchor elements provided by the Ferry Project, as set out in paragraph 5.2 ante.

7. TIMESCALE

- 7.1 The table below shows the relationship between the EEDA, Investing in Communities, grant programme timetable and that of the planning consultation. It demonstrates that the Cabinet will have to conclude the second stage of consultation and Cabinet will have approved the Master Plan for the area before a formal application for grant would have to be finalised. Up until that point EEDA require Council support for the proposed community enterprise centre, subject to the Master Plan outcomes.

2009	Investing Communities	in	Planning Consultation
January	EEDA decision on whether grant would be included in their plan – in principle		Consultation 2 nd Stage
February			
March			Cabinet Report seeking agreement to Master Plan
April	Formal application for Grant		

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 Oxmoor residents and organisations have supported developments, including additional community facilities, on the Sapley East area. There are no strong objections to this part of the regeneration scheme.
- 8.2 There are strong arguments to support a community enterprise centre to meet the continuing problems of higher than average unemployment levels. It matches well with the needs identified in the Local Economy Strategy. A centre would also provide increased skill and learning opportunities and additional community opportunities.
- 8.3 To maximise current and future funding opportunities for the community, the community enterprise centre should be owned and controlled by a Community Interest Company.
- 8.4 The Council would probably be the “accountable body” for the Community Interest Company and will have a 20% stake in it,
- 8.5 Significant grants are included in the Investing in Communities Programme, but require Cabinet support before January 2009.
- 8.6 Cabinet will be considering a final report in March on the Sapley East Master Plan before EEDA make a final decision on the grant.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 Cabinet is **RECOMMENDED** —
- to endorse the application for grant support from the East of England Development Agency’s Investing in

Communities Programme for the construction of a community enterprise centre in the Sapley East area;

- to reaffirm the previous decision to reinvest the proceeds of the disposal of land in this regeneration scheme to produce future community benefits;
- to support the principle of establishing a community interest company which will own and manage the proposed community enterprise centre and other assets if opportunities arise;
- to authorise the Director of Environmental & Community Services to –
 - obtain agreement in principle from appropriate organisations to form a community interest company; and
 - work with those organisations to prepare a robust business plan to demonstrate the viability of the community enterprise centre;
- to consider a Master Plan for the regeneration of the Sapley East area and a business plan for the community enterprise centre before final decisions are made in March/April 2009.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985

Source Documents:

1. Sapley East consultation exercise files in Planning Division.
- 2.
- 3.

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ANNEX A

Time and Date	Group	Venue
9 th September	Oxmoor Community Action Group St Barnabas Church and Learning Centre Trustees	St Barnabas Church Hall St Barnabas Church Hall
10 th September	Moor Play Norfolk and Essex Road Residents Association	Medway Christian Centre Medway Christian Centre
11 th September	Medway Court residents	Medway Court
13 th September	Boot and Buckles	Medway Centre
14 th September	Medway Christian Fellowship Huntingdonshire Community Group	Medway Centre Medway Centre
15 th September	Darby and Joan Police Amateur Boxing Club	Medway Centre Medway Centre
17 th September	Open session Neighbourhood Management Board	Maple Centre Maple Centre
18 th September	Huntingdon Town Council	Town Hall
23 rd September	Oak Tree Centre users	Oak Tree Centre
3 rd September	Safer Neighbourhood Panel	Oak Tree Centre
24 th September	Jehovah Witnesses	Kingdom Hall
26 th September	BRJ Club members	BRJ Club
3 rd October	Youth Advisory Committee	Huntingdon Youth Centre
6 th October	Open session	Maple Centre
18 th October	Huntingdon Community Church Shareout	St Barnabas Church Hall
19 th October	Apple Fair	Coneygear Park