

## PICKMERE PARISH COUNCIL

### REPORT OF ASSETS WORKING GROUP (PLANNING SUB-GROUP) TO PARISH COUNCIL

13 January 2018

#### AGENDA ITEM 8.2 - PROPERTY ASSET OPTIONS – APPRAISAL AND BUSINESS CASE

## 1 PROJECT DEFINITION

1.1 The Parish Council wishes to carry out a substantial enhancement of its built facilities. In particular it wishes to:

1. Provide a substantially enhanced Village Hall facility
2. Enhance the Pavilion facility in terms of its function as the base for Sunday afternoon teas by the lake, and for other community-focussed activities.
3. Achieve more economic and manageable built assets, with greater potential for their use as a focus for community activity.

## 2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**2.2 Existing Parish Council Landholdings** The Parish Council (PC) owns two buildings and 4 pieces of land in Pickmere. The two buildings are the Village Hall, an old building located on a site fronting Pickmere Lane, with a car park accommodating a maximum of 8-10 vehicles, and the Pavilion.

**The Village Hall** The Village Hall is of substantial age and is restricted in its potential to generate greater community activity. Its confined site, located on the outer edge of the village, is surrounded by agricultural land which is owned by the Crown Estate. The site lies within the Green Belt. The Hall is used for some community purposes, e.g. meetings of the local Women's Institute, a dog training group, a local art group, etc, and it is occasionally used for children's parties. It is not fully used, however, despite enhancement of its toilet and kitchen facilities some years ago. Further, a recent physical survey found that further maintenance and enhancement works would result in costs of around £100,000, though such expenditure would not solve its inherent shortcomings.

**The Pavilion** The Pavilion is a more modern building. It has the drawback of being small in size – the only meeting room is less than 20 sq m in floor area, and it has a small kitchen, and some toilets. It has the benefit of being located on one edge of the Council's attractive and substantial landholding near the lake. It is located much more centrally in the village than the Village Hall. The Pavilion is used on a weekly basis in the summer months for the provision of Sunday afternoon teas, with proceeds being used for local community purposes. In addition, the Pavilion is a base for two annual events – the Party by the Lake and the Family Fun day – both events using additional marquees. The Pavilion is not used at all during late Autumn/Winter months.

**Other landholdings** The Council also owns the IROS – approximately 2 ha of land adjoining Pickmere Lake – an equipped play area on Clover Drive, and two pieces of open amenity land at the junction of Clover Drive and Park Lane.

## **Generation and consideration of Options**

2.2 Following initial consideration by the Council, a public consultation exercise was held in 2012 where four options relating to the future use and development of the Council's built assets were suggested, and public comment was invited. Subsequent to and as a result of that consultation, it was decided to focus on only two of the options further. These were:

1. To retain and refurbish the existing hall, build an extension for further storage, and purchase additional land for car parking. In addition, to build a modest extension on the Pavilion to address problems of space for Sunday teas. The costs of such projects (given prices in 2014) were estimated to be in the order of £120,000.

2. To build a new multi-purpose extension to the Pavilion at the IROS with the addition of 10 parking spaces – this would be a replacement for the current Village Hall, which would be disposed of. Estimated construction cost of the new development was considered to be in the order of £250,000.

2.3 Since that time and delayed by the intervening and unsuccessful application by a few residents for Village Green status for the IROS, the Council has moved toward selecting one of the options for implementation. As part of that process, a pre-planning application consultation has been held with Cheshire East Council in relation to a proposal to provide a new Village Hall as an extension to the Pavilion, near the lake. This would replace the existing Village Hall, which would become surplus to requirements.

2.4 The officer reaction to this proposal was to point out that the site of the proposal is land designated as 'Existing Open Space' on the saved Macclesfield Local Plan. As such, built development is discouraged. However, the advice given by officers suggested that provided adequate justification, in planning terms, was provided to support a planning application for such a proposal, a positive outcome may be possible.

2.5 As a result of these discussions, the Parish Council has very recently submitted an outline planning application for such a proposal and a decision is awaited.

2.6 However, the Council has not at any point yet made a formal decision as which of the options considered by the public as described above it would prefer to pursue, but it is now appropriate that such a decision be made.

## **3 OPTION APPRAISAL**

3.1 The 2 options described above are considered here, together with a third option of 'do nothing'. Initial considerations of potential cost and funding opportunities are given below.

		<b>Broad Cost</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Advantages</b>	<b>Disadvantages</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Refurbish and extend VH; maintain and extend Pavilion</b>	£130k?	No obvious funding source – this option would require heavy fundraising	This option requires less effort than option 2, apart from the need to secure funding, and the need for planning permission for two small extensions. It provides a better VH and slightly improved Pavilion than existing.	Lack of funding. The likelihood of being able to acquire additional land at the VH is considered minimal. This option does not solve intrinsic problem issues relating to both buildings but particularly the VH. VH remains on a peripheral site in relation to the village. Solution does not exploit fully the potential for generating new community activity.
<b>2</b>	<b>Construct new hall on IROS in conjunction with the Pavilion; dispose of VH.</b>	£250-£350k?	Disposal of VH will largely fund project	This option will secure a purpose built, attractive VH on a central site; it incorporates the Pavilion's activities and therefore solves problems relating to both buildings on a central site with adequate car parking. This maximises its potential for community activity. Funding becomes an easier process. The solution rationalises PC property assets to one building. It disposes of refurbishment requirements for both VH and Pavilion.	This option involves maximum planning uncertainty, in relation both to the need for planning permission for the new VH, and also the need for planning permission for a new use of the existing VH site, though planning permission is considered likely in both cases; an early decision on the planning acceptability of a new VH near the lake is possible. The option may raise some local objection.
<b>3</b>	<b>Do nothing – retain VH and Pavilion as existing, with incremental improvements</b>	Running, maintenance and incremental improvement costs only	Simple – no particular funding required apart from the need for incremental changes	This option generates minimum cost, minimum disturbance to existing activities and minimum community / Parish Council effort.	The option results in only incremental enhancement of facilities; it generates no additional space in either building, and it provides little opportunity to expand community potential in the Parish. The retention of both sub-optimal buildings, with their restricted use, constitutes a poor use of PC resources.

## 4 OPTION SELECTION

4.1 The Planning Sub-Group has the following views.

4.2 Option 3 should be disregarded as it signifies an unwillingness to consider the needs of the parish positively. Option 1 might bring some improvement to present facilities, but is beset by significant risks and drawbacks, among which is the need to raise substantial funding with no Council resource available to provide a major element of such funding; in addition, it is considered unlikely that additional land at the VH could be acquired due to the attitude of the Crown Estate.

4.3 It is recommended that Council adopt Option 2 as its objective. This option seemed to be the best supported in the public consultation exercise of 2012. It would provide the maximum benefit to the Council and to the local community in terms of:

- The quality of the built asset provided, in terms of maintenance and management implications;
- The quality of the final facility in terms of its value to the local community, and the potential to generate new community activity;
- The potential for the option to be largely self-funding, which is beneficial in its own terms but also beneficial in terms of the potential to attract match funding from elsewhere.

4.4 The risks inherent in pursuing this option are as follows, together with concomitant responses:

That planning permission will not be granted for the new VH.	Such a decision should be apparent by mid-2018. If permission is refused (whether by CEC or at appeal) it will be necessary to revert to another option.
That planning permission will not be granted for the replacement use of the existing VH site.	Disposal of this site will make up the majority of funding for the project. If permission is refused (whether by CEC or at appeal) it will be necessary to revert to one of the other options.
That adequate funding is not achieved to secure the project, despite agreement to dispose of the VH site and the grant of planning permission.	This is an unlikely outcome. However, in such a case it will be necessary to revert to one of the other options.
That other issues (unforeseen at present) prevent the disposal or redevelopment of the VH site.	This is an unlikely outcome. However, in such a case it will be necessary to revert to one of the other options.

## 5 NEXT STEPS

5.1 Should Council be minded to agree with the above recommendation, the next steps that logically follow are :

- Planning Sub-Group to continue efforts to secure outline planning permission for the VH replacement on the IROS;
- On the basis that redevelopment of the existing VH site might raise a substantial proportion of the project cost, Funding Sub-Group to undertake a scoping exercise in relation to seeking funding for an amount in the order of say 25%-35% of the envisaged project cost to support such a project, and to make initial approaches to relevant bodies or persons.
- Should Outline planning permission be granted for the VH replacement on the IROS, Planning Sub-Group to discuss informally with CEC the optimum approach in relation to seeking

planning permission for a redevelopment or re-use of the VH site, with the aim of maximising financial return in the context of seeking an acceptable and appropriate development.

- That a valuation of the Village Hall site be sought, to inform future decision-making.