

Project Summary – Five Year Plan Projects

Q2 2022/23 (Jul-Sept 2022)

1. Project

Create a new Local Plan for the Borough.

Status

AMBER

The Local Plan has been submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination, in accordance with the latest timetable. A Planning Inspector has been appointed to undertake the Examination.

Examination Hearings were held in March and between May and July 2022. This varies slightly from the published timetable in the Local Development Scheme (October 2021) which had considered that these would be completed by April.

As a result of these delays to the Hearings, and the need for additional post hearing Action Points requested by the inspector the overall timetable (as set out in the Local Development Scheme) for adoption of the Local Plan has been delayed.

The Council (at time of writing) is awaiting the Inspectors post-hearing letter. Upon receipt a review of the Local Development Scheme will be undertaken to set the timetable for the adoption of the Local Plan, however it is still considered achievable by the Spring of 2023.

2. Project

Create new sports facilities for the Borough.

Status

GREEN

Update

Currently awaiting outcome of Local Plan examination

Hawkenbury site - all site surveys have been completed and a pre planning application submission made to Local Planning Authority (TWBC) and KCC. A formal response has been received and some initial work has been undertaken to establish the extent of mitigation required for noise, ecology and transport issues.

Outline planning consent has been renewed for the sites at Hawkenbury (21/00300/FULL) and Rusthall (21/00068/FULL).

An initial review of business case for the project has been carried out.

A proposal to obtain a more detailed understanding of the extent of mitigation required for noise, ecology and transport issues together with updates to the capital values included in the business cases is to be prepared. The outputs from this further work will be taken into account in a review of the business case.

Consultation has been undertaken with potential users of the proposed Hawkenbury site and considered as part of the Cabinet decision to extend the existing grounds maintenance contract to December 2024.

Site allocations associated with the provision of sports facilities are part of the the Local Plan submitted for examination.

3. Project

Support the development of community centres in the borough: Cranbrook

Status

AMBER

Update

The project has now received confirmation from the NHS that the GPs are on board with the project and ready to lead the delivery of the new facility. Kent and Medway NHS have given us the specification of the facility in terms of size of building they believe the GPs require and the project is awaiting confirmation that the GPs agree with this analysis in order to finalise the brief for the Pre-Construction Services Agreement contract.

Work has been completed on the ground conditions which has confirmed that the cheaper pad foundations are suitable for the site. Costs have been updated on that basis but given inflationary costs increases, no changes have been made other than moving previous allowances from the foundations to the contingency.

The project continues to remain viable however the increases in the Bank of England borrowing rates which impact the Public Works Loan Board borrowing values is resulting in higher repayments costs on the projects. The current position is that starting construction at this time is not ideal, however given the need for c18-24 months worth of design and planning works before construction can start, the economic environment may have improved by then that enables the council to be in a stronger position.

The parish council have confirmed that they support the use of the KCC framework to bring forward the Pre Construction Services Agreement and subject to KCC issuing the access agreement to the parish this can now be done. The brief can then be finalised and tendered.

KCC has given the parish written confirmation that they are keen to see the project progress and that they would support the library moving in and that they will consult with KCC Corporate Landlord to determine what degree of investment can be allowed for.

VAT report has concluded that there is a c£560k hit on the capital costs of the building and or a hit on the leasehold income to the council and or a revenue impact to the NHS. The project can still stack up despite these additional costs however the payback period goes beyond the 25 years initially desired by the Council.

4. Project

Support the development of community centres in the borough: Paddock Wood

Status

AMBER

Update

Construction is now underway on the Paddock Wood Community Centre and the building is due to complete in early December 22.

With the building nearing completion there remains a number of outstanding S106 payments that the council is relying on to complete the funding package necessary to deliver the building and the council is seeking short term gap funding to close the remaining amount.

All provisional costs relating to the project have yet to be closed out but progress is being made on finalising these costs.

Risks in the ground from high levels of ground water have mostly been mitigated by a very dry April, this has help to avoid significant extra costs from needing to pump large volumes of water away.

Most risks in regard to UKPN utility provision have now been resolved.

The town council has agreed to incorporate a charitable company to run the facility going forward and is likely to start marketing the pre-school element in the near future.