

Project Summary – Five Year Plan Projects

Q3 2022/23 (Oct-Dec 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.

The Council has now received the Inspectors post-hearing Initials Findings letter which raises a number of matters that need resolving in order that the Local Plan can progress on to adoption. Officers are working on the matters with consultants and stakeholders and will present an update to members when the work is completed, which will be after the May elections. A review of the Local Development Scheme will be undertaken at the same time to set the timetable for the adoption of the Local Plan.

As a result of these additional requirements and the need for additional post hearing further work adoption of the Local Plan has been delayed.

2. Project

Create new sports facilities for the Borough.

Status

GREEN

Update

Currently awaiting outcome of Local Plan examination. From the Inspector's Initial Feedback it is agreed, as regards to Hawkenbury Recreation Ground (Policy AL/RTW 19), that it would be appropriate to consult on the road widening and re-provision of parking spaces that had been provided in a later evidence document provided to the Hearing.

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 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, leaving the Council 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. 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. KCC 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

GREEN

Update

Construction is now all but complete on the Paddock Wood Community Centre and the building is due to be handed over on 3 March 2023.

The risk of the outstanding S106 payments has been contained by a 24 month loan from TWBC to cover the shortfall and the finances of the project remain tight but stable.

The final account with Baxall is still required to close out the construction element side of the project.

The town council has incorporated a charitable company to run the facility going forward and a lease has been prepared to transfer it over to the Company Limited by Guarantee on handover, which avoids any VAT on the construction element.

Marketing of the nursery/pre-school has started with lots of interest to date. A site manager is being recruited to run the centre with the facilities management contract being finalised for the first year.

Furniture fit out will soon commence, followed by an opening date to be confirmed.