

**Subject:** Provision of Community Facilities  
in Edenfield

**Status:** For publication

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**Report to:** The Cabinet

**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> September 2006

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**Report of:** Executive Director of Resources

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**Portfolio**

**Holder:** Finance and Risk Management

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**Key Decision:**

YES

Forward Plan

General Exception

Special Urgency

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**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek in principle approval for the use of the Council's land to facilitate the development and enhancement of community facilities in Edenfield.

**2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- 2.1 The matters discussed in this report are linked to and support the following corporate priorities:
- *Improving leisure facilities in the Borough, through the use of the Council's assets to support the securing of investment to improve facilities.*

**3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The issues considered in this report highlight the following risks associated with the totality of this project.
- *Ability to secure external funds on sufficient scale is always a risk in projects such as this. However, the promoters of the project are engaged with Groundwork Rossendale who have a significant record of success in securing such funds.*
  - *Ability to deliver a project within the required timescale. This is clearly a risk and the promoters of the project have, for some time, been seeking to identify an interim solution should this not be possible.*

#### **4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS**

- 4.1 The council has been approached by Edenfield and District Community Association (EDCA), a registered charity, which runs the current Edenfield Community Centre about options for the provision of a new centre and improvements to the recreation ground.
- 4.2 Officers have met members of the EDCA Committee on two occasions to discuss their proposal, which follows the serving of notice to quit on the Associations by the owners of the site of the current Community Centre. The landowner has agreed to replace the current Centre within a comprehensive development of the current site for housing. This proposal was unacceptable to the association for a number of reasons, and as yet, no planning application for such a scheme has been submitted to the Council as the local planning authority.
- 4.3 The site of the current Community Centre, indicated on the attached plan, faces the Edenfield Recreation Ground, which is in the Council's ownership. There is no link between the two facilities and the recreation ground, while it has potential is in need of significant upgrading if it is to make any appreciable contribution as a facility for developing outdoor sports within the locality.
- 4.4 The community association have developed a concept which would involve the construction of a new Community Centre, including changing facilities on part of the recreation ground with the remainder being upgraded and brought back into regular use for sporting activities. Such a concept provides the opportunity for a range of additional income streams which would help to sustain the enterprise in the longer term.
- 4.5 In order to secure external funding for the project EDCA have enlisted the assistance of Groundwork Rossendale. However, in order to make bids for funding EDCA will need to be able to demonstrate some sort of security of tenure over the site, either through securing the freehold or a long lease. The purpose of this report is to seek member's views on the acceptability, in principle, of such a transaction, prior to the working up of the details for further consideration.
- 4.6 Such a project is permissible under the Council's wellbeing powers and would, if successful, result in the delivery of a significant improvement in facilities for one of the Borough's communities with little, if any, financial impact on the Council. A s.106 contribution relating to the development of community facilities in Edenfield is currently being negotiated and may be available if the permission implemented.

#### **5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES**

- 5.1 The report states there is little or no financial impact on the Council. This would seem a reasonable conclusion given both the nature of the proposal and the current use of the proposed site (i.e. a recreation ground). Covenants can be

built into any future contractual arrangements to protect the Council on this matter.

## **6. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

6.1 The Council has powers under the Local Government Act 2000 section 2 (1) to do anything which it considers is likely to achieve any one or more of the following objects: -

- a) The promotion or improvement of the economic wellbeing of their area;
- b) The promotion or improvement of the social well being of their area; and
- c) The promotion or improvement of the environmental well being of their area.

6.2 This power can be exercised in relation to or for the benefit of part of the local authority's area or any persons resident in our area.

6.3 The Local Government Act 1972: General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 repeats the above criteria for disposals of land. As long as the difference between the unrestricted value of the land to be disposed of and the consideration of the disposal does not exceed £2,000,000 the consent of the Secretary of State to such disposals is not required.

6.4 An independent valuation will be requested and will be available for any future report.

6.5 Regard must be had to the Community Strategy when exercising this power under the Local Government Act 2000.

6.6 Within the Community Strategy and the vision of Rossendale Alive the improvement of the economic, social and environmental well being of the residents of Rossendale is a key objective. A facility such as the one proposed relates directly to the Community Strategy, there being a health and well being objective of meeting health needs locally, a community objective of getting more people involved in community activities and empowering the local community to take responsibility.

6.7 The land is currently public open space and public notice would be required of any proposal to sell the land. Planning permission will also be required for any development.

## **7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

7.1 There are no Human Resources implications arising from this report.

**8. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY AND PARTNERSHIP**

As detailed above the creation of new community facilities within the Borough reflects a key aspiration of the Community Strategy and will assist the partnership in its ambition to strengthen the communities of Rossendale.

**9. CONCLUSION**

9.1 There is an opportunity to provide support for an improvement in community facilities in Edenfield. However, members will need to consider this in context of the precedent set and the project's fit with longer term strategy in terms of provision for outdoor leisure in the Borough.

**10. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

10.1 The Cabinet are recommended to: -

- a) Determine whether they would wish to agree in principle to make the Council's land available in the way indicated at paragraph 4.5.
- b) If it is agreed to support this ask the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to report before the end of the calendar year on the terms for any transaction.

**11. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

11.1 Chief Executive, Head of Street Scene and Liveability, Statutory officers. A statutory consultation process will be required in relation to any eventual property transaction. Direct consultation and involvement with the community in terms of the detail of the scheme will be a matter for EDCA.

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Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Correspondence with Edenfield and District Community Association	Futures Park Offices