

## QUEENS WALK LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Jonathan Bianco
<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	Finance Property and Business Services
<b>Officer Contact</b>	Steve Smith – Planning, Environment, Education and Community Services
<b>Papers with report</b>	None

### HEADLINE INFORMATION

<b>Summary</b>	This report advises Members of the current utilisation of the Queens Walk Learning and Development Centre and recommends that the facility is identified for alternative use with learning and development activities being transferred to Adult Learning Centres across the Borough.
<b>Contribution to our plans and strategies</b>	This report relates to Managing Assets efficiently.
<b>Financial Cost</b>	<b>Recommendation 1)</b> The closure of the Queens Walk facility will generate full year revenue savings of £74k per annum The part year savings in 2011/12 would be £21k <b>Recommendation 2)</b> Funded from existing capital funding <b>Recommendation 3)</b> Subject to development of a detailed proposal and MTFF bid submission
<b>Relevant Policy Overview Committee</b>	Corporate Services and Partnerships Policy Overview Committee.
<b>Ward(s) affected</b>	The Queens Walk Learning and Development Centre is located in the Cavendish ward.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

### **That Cabinet:**

- 1) Agree to the closure of the Queens Walk Learning and Development Centre with effect from 28 October 2011 and that all Learning and Development activities are transferred to Adult Learning Centres across the Borough;**
- 2) Agree to the relocation of the Library service to the temporary buildings on the South Ruislip Site with effect from 28 October 2011 and;**
- 3) Authorises officers to develop a proposal to use the Queens Walk site for the reprovision of facilities for people with disabilities with high dependency and complex needs.**

### **Reasons for recommendation**

The Queens Walk Learning and Development Centre is not currently utilised effectively and therefore it is proposed that the asset be identified for alternative use.

### **Alternative options considered / risk management**

The temporary library service could remain at the Queens Walk Centre until the permanent facility is built in the summer of 2012 in Victoria Road South Ruislip but this would not achieve the service and financial benefits as set out in the report.

### **Policy Overview Committee comments**

None at this stage.

## **INFORMATION**

### **Supporting Information**

The Queens Walk Learning and Development Centre was opened in 1999 and provided staff facilities for 10 training rooms and two offices for Learning and development staff.

The School Improvement Service moved from the Queens Walk Centre in June 2011 and consolidated with other School Improvement Services staff already in the Civic Centre. The Pre-School Learning Alliance service have occupied a small office in the Centre since opening (see para 4).

The use of the facility for Learning and Development and other meetings has been in steady decline as set out in the table overleaf:

	Number of events held	% of Room utilisation
<b>January 2011</b>	127	43%
<b>February 2011</b>	117	38%
<b>March 2011</b>	168	48%
<b>April 2011</b>	45	20%
<b>May 2011</b>	113	36%
<b>June 2011</b>	92	29%
<b>July 2011</b>	70	27%
<b>August 2011</b>	16	7%

A majority of the use of Queens Walk is for training purposes and arrangements have already been made to provisionally transfer these events subject to Cabinet approval to Adult Learning Centres across the Borough as follows:

Brookfield	28
South Ruislip	84
Ruislip Manor	9
Stockley	7
Longmead	35
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The remaining users of Queens Walk can be accommodated in other buildings across the Borough.

In addition to Learning and Development events, the South Ruislip Library Service has been offering a service from the Centre since November 2010 whilst its new premises are being constructed. This service can move back to its original site and operate from temporary accommodation until the new accommodation is completed.

Once vacant the current Queens Walk facility can therefore be used for the reprovision of a new resource centre in South Ruislip focused on disabled people with high dependency and complex needs. A specialist facility is proposed, providing a therapeutic environment for people with learning disabilities as well as meeting the respite needs of families and carers replacing facilities currently provided in the Day Centres at Woodside, Parkview and Phoenix as stated in the later report (Disabilities Plan 2011-15).

## **EFFECT ON RESIDENTS, SERVICE USERS & COMMUNITIES**

The effect of the proposed recommendations is that Learning and Development events will take place in a number of facilities across the Borough and this will mean that facilities with better locations can be used rather than consolidating all events in the South Ruislip Area.

### **Consultation Carried Out or Required**

Consultation has taken place with all key stakeholders involving the Corporate Learning and Development team, the School Improvement Service and the Pre School Alliance service who have been involved in the identification of alternative premises for the delivery of their services.

## **Financial implications**

The closure of the Queens Walk facility will generate full year revenue savings of £74k per annum. The 2011/12 part year savings based on closure at the end of October 2011 would be £21k.

The relocation of the Library service to the temporary buildings on the South Ruislip Site with effect from 28 October 2011 can be funded from the existing capital funding allocated to the South Ruislip Development.

The proposals for development of a facility for people with disabilities with high dependency and complex needs will be subject to an MTFF bid submission.

## **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

### **Corporate Finance**

Corporate Finance has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial implications set out above. Revenue savings associated with the closure of the Queens Walk facility have been factored into draft budgets for 2012/13 through the MTFF process.

Any proposals for provision of facilities for people with disabilities on the site and associated financial implications will be included in the draft capital programme for 2012/13 and reported to members.

### **Legal**

Queen's Walk is currently held by the Council for staff training purposes. Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to appropriate its land for a different purpose where the land is no longer required for its original purpose. Thus, there are no legal impediments to the Council now using Queen's Walk to provide facilities for people with disabilities.

As stated in the report, the Pre-School Learning Alliance currently occupy an office in Queens Walk. The terms of the licence between the Council and the Alliance enable the Council to terminate the Licence Agreement by giving the Alliance 28 days notice provided that the Council offers "suitable alternative accommodation". The Licence further provides that "such alternative accommodation need not be located within the area of Queens Walk"

Given that the Council has offered the Alliance alternative accommodation at Barra Hall, the Borough Solicitor confirms that the Council is able to terminate its licence with the Pre-School Alliance by giving them 28 days notice.

Finally, the Borough Solicitor also confirms that there are no legal impediments to the Council relocating the Library Service.

### **Corporate Landlord**

The Corporate Landlord authored this report

### **Relevant Service Groups**

The relevant service groups are aware of these proposals as stated in the report

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None