

**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**01 April 2009**

**Report of the Central Services Director**

**Part 1- Public**

**Executive Non Key Decisions**

**1 TONBRIDGE GATEWAY – PROGRESS REPORT**

**Summary**

**This report provides a progress report on the development of both the service model and building works for Tonbridge Gateway**

**1.1 Background**

- 1.1.1 This report outlines progress on the Gateway project since the last meeting of the Customer Services Improvement Board, held on 20 November 2008.
- 1.1.2 Members will recall that the development of the Gateway at Tonbridge Castle is in hand in partnership with Kent County Council (KCC). Gateways aim to provide joined up delivery of services from a range of agencies in one location.
- 1.1.3 Gateways are now open at a number of locations across the County including Tunbridge Wells, Tenterden, Maidstone and Thanet. There is a major publicity campaign in hand to promote the Gateway concept. Customer take-up has been very high with positive feedback.
- 1.1.4 Whilst based on core principles each Gateway is different and should reflect the needs of local communities.
- 1.1.5 With regard to the Tonbridge Gateway there are 3 key strands of work which can be summarised as follows
- Service Model
  - Building Works
  - Agreements with KCC
- 1.1.6 This report provides an update on progress rather than a full background to each element.

## **1.2 Service Design Model**

- 1.2.1 As noted above each Gateway is designed to include services that meet the needs of the local communities. In order to assess this there has been a significant amount of data analysis and customer profiling. This is captured in the Profile summary document attached at Annex 1.
- 1.2.2 Members will recall that a key platform for the development of the Gateway is that all existing TMBC services currently delivered for the Castle will continue and this is still the case.
- 1.2.3 The challenge has been to work with our key partners, KCC, to identify their presence and then to bring in other agencies from a variety of sectors. We have now established that KCC will have between 2 to 3 members of staff at the Gateway at least Monday to Saturday, with Sunday services still being considered. This presence will share in the "meet and greet" function and provide more specific and direct access to key services including adult and children services, general care services as well as a range of KCC general enquiries. There will also be a Registrar's service and the arrangements for this are under discussion.
- 1.2.4 The PCT are fully engaged and committed to having a presence and again the details are being confirmed.
- 1.2.5 Partners from other agencies including the voluntary sector are now being considered along side the services outlined above. A potential partners day is being held at the Castle on 3 April 2009. At the time of writing replies re attendance are being received and a verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

## **1.3 Building Works**

- 1.3.1 As Members will be aware works started at Tonbridge Castle in December 2008. In order to facilitate these works, staff from the Customer Services Team have been re-located into portacabins and provided a continuous 7 day a week service.
- 1.3.2 The contractors, Goodsells, have worked efficiently and effectively on site and have made good progress. The construction of the extension is at roof level and the internal layout is progressing well.
- 1.3.3 The design will provide for full DDA access and incorporates full facilities for people with special needs, including adult change facilities.
- 1.3.4 Completion is due in June 2009 with the offices re-opening shortly thereafter. The offices will re-open with at least our own services in situ, with Gateway partners coming on stream as soon as possible. An official launch will be planned as appropriate.

## **1.4 Agreements with KCC**

- 1.4.1 A number of agreements are being developed with KCC to cover the Gateway Management agreement, Memorandum of understanding, Health and Safety and a Communications Plan. Draft model agreements have been provided by KCC and these are now being tailored to meet the needs of the Tonbridge Gateway. Our Solicitor is fully engaged in this process and is content that the documentation is appropriate.

## **1.5 Legal Implications**

- 1.5.1 This activity is undertaken under the Council's general powers to do all things calculated to facilitate the discharge of its functions contained in section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.6.1 The Gateway is being developed with joint funding from KCC and this authority. This provides an opportunity to provide a wide range of high quality services on a partnership basis with KCC for the benefit of users including residents, schools, visitors and the partner agencies.
- 1.6.2 The Capital costs remain broadly as previously reported to Members of the Customer Services Improvement Advisory Board on 20 November 2008. In summary the total Capital cost of the scheme was reported as £600,000. The latest projection is £608,000 but this includes some items that are still only estimates. KCC are contributing £250,000 with the remainder being funded from the Council's Capital Plan provision with a contribution from the Building Repairs Expenditure Plan for appropriate elements. The cost plan is being reviewed on a regular basis by both the Gateway officer study group and Management Team.
- 1.6.3 The revenue costs for the Tonbridge Gateway cannot be fully quantified until the service model is further developed. The revenue model is being progressed with the involvement of the Director of Finance and in it is understood the revenue costs for the Gateway will be no higher than the existing operating costs of the current Customer Services operation at the Castle.

## **1.7 Risk Assessment**

- 1.7.1 The legal documentation being developed will minimise risk of any partner failing to fulfil their core requirements and responsibilities.
- 1.7.2 There is a risk that no suitable partners will want to work in the Gateway. This risk is deemed minimal as others have already expressed an interest in the Tonbridge Gateway. The experience at other Gateways has illustrated demand from other agencies.

## **1.8 Policy Considerations**

- 1.8.1 Customer Contact – The Gateway will provide enhanced public access to a wide range of services provided by a wide range of agencies. The services will be designed to deliver services that are appropriate to individuals in a tailored and joined up way.
- 1.8.2 Equalities/Diversity – The Tonbridge offices will be DDA compliant for the first time and this will be supported by ongoing staff training and service design to meet the needs of individuals.
- 1.8.3 Communications – The Gateway will be supported by a communications plan aimed at customers, particularly those most in need. The promotion of Gateway will enable us to communicate the availability and content of a wide range of services.
- 1.8.4 Asset Management – The development of the Gateway gives a high quality enhancement and added value the building.

## **1.9 Recommendations**

- 1.9.1 That the progress in respect of Tonbridge Gateway be noted and endorsed

Background papers:

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Gateway OSG minutes

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