

MARPLE ACTIVE COMMUNITIES HUB**Report of the Deputy Chief Executive****1. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update members on the progress being made on the delivery of the new Marple Active Communities Hub.
- 1.2 To update members on the status of the former Marple Swimming Pool and next steps for that site.
- 1.3 To seek delegated authority for the Deputy Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Housing to take all steps necessary and required for the delivery of the Marple Active Communities Hub Project.
- 1.4 To seek delegated authority for the Deputy Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Housing to take the necessary steps to implement the strategy set out in this report and enter into works contracts for the build of the hub and highways works subject to the project meeting the requirements of the approved funding envelope.
- 1.5 To seek delegated authority for the Deputy Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Housing to take the necessary steps to enter an enabling works contract for the service diversions, building surveys and site set up for the main build to maintain programme required for project delivery.

2. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

- 2.1 In July 2024, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) was renamed as the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG). Throughout this report, where it would previously mentioned DLUHC, this has been replaced by MHCLG. In addition, MHCLG has discontinued the use of “Levelling Up” and now refers to “Funded by the UK Government” in all branding and communications.
- 2.2 The Government’s £4.8bn Levelling Up Fund (LUF) was first announced in the spring budget of 2021. A submission of up to £20m grant could be made for a priority capital infrastructure project within a local constituency that would have a lasting impact and had strong local support. Any project had to meet a set of gateway criteria and score well against what was an extremely competitive funding process.
- 2.3 The Council submitted the Marple Active Communities Hub business case in June 2021 under the fund’s Culture theme. However, the submission was not successful. Following feedback from Government, the Council resubmitted in

August 2022 to Round 2 of the LUF. The project design and costs were reviewed, and business case altered to include more health and inclusivity benefits in line with the updated funding guidance. The submission was for £19.7m LUF monies with £2.2m local co-funding. Again, this submission was not supported by Government, however feedback was that the business case was strong, and the Government wished to support the project through Capital Levelling Up monies. Following some initial clarifications the funding support for the full £19.7m grant was formally announced on 15th March 2023.

- 2.4 The Council is working with Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to submit quarterly reporting capturing project-level data for each reporting period.
- 2.5 A key driver for the project is sustainability and the drive to decarbonise the Council's leisure estate. As such the new facility has been designed to be net zero in terms of Carbon in operation, with significant investment being made in walking and cycling, a sustainable water cycle approach and adopting a fabric first approach to energy usage and loss.
- 2.6 The project is also part of the Council Plan's ambition to deliver wellbeing in neighbourhoods. At the heart of this approach is working with residents and communities to improve local areas and promote health and wellbeing. It means understanding and responding to different strengths and needs, reflecting the diversity of our borough. It is also about connecting public services so that they work better together and have strong relationships with businesses and the Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector.
- 2.7 Since the previous Cabinet Report Reference CAB401 of the 27th June, 2023 significant work has taken place on the project. Officers in the Council have worked at extreme pace to deliver the project. All the below summarised actions have been implemented.
 - 2.7.1 A project Board was established with key stakeholders including those from the Library Service, Leisure Service, Estates and Asset Management, Children's Services and Life Leisure.
 - 2.7.2 A full external design team has been appointed to carry out the detailed design of the works.
 - 2.7.3 Extensive community engagement has taken place with local community stakeholder groups (see section 5 of this report). This engagement has captured comments and feedback which informed the final design that was submitted to planning.
 - 2.7.4 A planning application went before Marple Area Committee on the 31st July 2024 and subsequently went before the Planning and Highways Regulation Committee on the 15th August 2024 with a recommendation to grant planning permission.
 - 2.7.5 A procurement process took place to appoint a contractor under a Pre-Construction Services Agreement. This agreement has enabled the appointed contractor, Willmott Dixon, and their design team to

undertake all required surveys, design, submission of the planning application and undertake costings of the scheme.

2.7.6 The existing Marple Swimming Pool was demolished under an enabling works package. It is proposed that this site be temporarily utilised for contractor parking for the duration of the build to mitigate impact of contractor's vehicles on existing local car parks.

2.7.7 Agreement has been reached with Greater Manchester Police and Greater Manchester Combined Authority for the police to vacate the current Marple Police station and relocate into Hollins House. Detailed discussions have been undertaken with NHS Property Services and Stockport NHS Foundation Trust to agree the services of the current Marple Clinic being relocated during the works. This is required later in the project and discussions for this element of the site assembly are therefore still ongoing.

2.7.8 A strategy for a library relocation proposal for the duration of the build has been explored concluding in the following proposal, the details of which are being finalised;

- Marple Scouts Hut have kindly agreed to allow for a pop-up library accessible to the public in their hall.
- There will be a selection of books for the public to browse along with two public access PC's.
- Remote Lockers will be installed outside the Scouts Hut to allow for a convenient drop off and pick up area for residents during out of hours.
- Officers are exploring options to have Remote Lockers in Etherow Park and Brabyns Park.

3. CURRENT PROJECT STATUS

3.1 Designs have progressed through RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Stage 3 following the appointment of Willmott Dixon and their design team under a Pre- Construction Services Agreement (PCSA) Contract.

3.2 Willmott Dixon have engaged a full design team consisting of the following professional services design team including;

- Architect,
- Structural/Civil Engineer,
- Mechanical, Electrical and Public Health consultant.
- Landscape Architecture
- Additional specialists to advise on specific elements on the scheme and surveys required.

3.3 The Council have engaged a client-side team consisting of the following disciplines;

- Project and programme manager

- Cost consultant and employer's agent.
- Planning consultant
- Principal designer (H&S)

3.4 The Council have retained and appointed the following professional consultant services in a client-side technical advisory capacity;

- Architect
- Mechanical & Electrical engineers
- Acoustician

3.5 The Planning Application was submitted in March 2024 and has been presented for approval at Marple Area Committee on the 31st July, and then the Planning and Highways Regulation Committee on the 15th August 2024.

3.6 To ensure that the expenditure of the Grant Funding is ahead of the deadline (31st March 2026) contained within the funding agreement, the Capital Delivery Team have determined that the Project must enter an enabling works contract in September 2024 whilst the Design and Delivery partner conclude the RIBA Stage 4 design period.

3.7 The enabling works contract allows the contractor to commence works including site fencing, site set up, services disconnections and diversions, soft strip of buildings and asbestos removal. This period will also allow the contractor to carry out significant service diversions around the wider site to ensure that Hollins House and buildings in the immediate vicinity of the new hub remain live, in terms of Power, Water and Telecommunications, throughout the build period.

3.8 An agreement has been reached with the Police and the services being provided in Marple Library, to allow for these two buildings to be vacated on the 13th September 2024, to allow a main contractor to commence the Enabling Works Package of works.

3.9 The RIBA Stage 4 submission will conclude during the enabling works period, concluding with a set of contractor's proposals. This will then allow the Council to enter a main works contract in November 2024 with a start on site date for the main building phase in January 2025.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Extensive engagement has been carried out with the public and key stakeholders since project inception in 2019. This process has been an overwhelmingly positive and meaningful undertaking which has influenced the design development of the scheme.

4.2 Community engagement and consultation took place in 2019 and 2020. This engagement was led by GT3, the Architects for the scheme appointed by the council in 2019. This included workshops with Stockport Council's key services and stakeholders.

- 4.3 Since 2023 several engagement workshops and design workshops have been held by Stockport Council with key services and stakeholders, including; Life Leisure, Library Service, Family Hubs & NHS Foundation Trust.
- 4.4 A notification letter of the public engagement sessions was sent to residents within the Marple North and Marple South & High Lane wards. A total of 11,100 letters were issued to households.
- 4.5 A public statement was issued on the Council's Newsroom on the 21st of August 2023 to coincide with the letter drop.
- 4.6 Two public engagement drop-in sessions were held at Marple Library on the 12th September 2023 and 19th September 2023. These engagement sessions were attended by the Council's project officers and included representatives of the project team including Planning Consultant, Highways representatives and project Architects. There was a fantastic level of engagement and response from local residents to both drop-in sessions.
- 4.7 An online public engagement was live on the Council's Consultation Website for members of the public to view the information and provide feedback from the 4th September 2023 to 9th October 2023.
- 4.8 A total of 771 responses were received during this period with an 80% of respondents in favour of the proposals.
- 4.9 The engagement asked the public to provide details of how the proposed development could be improved. Following a thorough review of feedback from residents and key stakeholders several design alterations were implemented to improve the scheme. Some examples of these changes are summarised below:
- 4.9.1 Improved the accessibility of the Health Clinic from the second floor to the first floor to make it more accessible for members of the public.
- 4.9.2 The proposed internal level change within the library was omitted from the scheme to allow the area to be fully accessible internally.
- 4.9.3 The building entrance was moved closer to the park opposite Hollins House to improve access from the park following feedback from key stakeholders.
- 4.10 There are a wide variety of key stakeholders for this project with a particular interest in Marple Memorial Park. The Project Team held workshops on the 30th August 2023, 7th February 2024, and 8th February 2024 at Marple Library. Representatives from the following community groups and organisations attended the workshop:
- Marple Park Veterans Bowling Club
 - Marple Senior Citizens Association
 - Marple Scouts
 - Friends of Marple Memorial Park
 - Marple Civic Society
 - The Marple Neighbourhood Forum

- 4.11 The workshops held on the 7th and 8th February 2024 were very positively received as the representatives could see key design changes had been implemented to improve the development.
- 4.12 On the 29th February 2024, the Council received a letter from Marple Civic Society thanking the project team on the collaborative engagement and consultation process; *'we'd like to thank all concerned for demonstrating so clearly that community engagement is not just a box ticking exercise but is now a genuine attempt to secure the best outcomes for all of us.'*
- 4.13 The Council's Project team would like to thank the community within Marple for their significant help and support in developing the project as it stands today.

5. PROCUREMENT

- 5.1 The Council worked with STaR procurement, our procurement service, to establish the most effective way to appoint the required delivery partner in line with Public Procurement rules and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.
- 5.2 Following an extensive procurement appraisal in July 2023, the Procure Northwest Framework was selected as the most appropriate route to market. A competitive tender process was followed, which involved the assessment of cost, quality, and social value.
- 5.3 Four contractors responded to the tender. Following scoring, Willmott Dixon Construction Limited were established as the preferred supplier with whom the council subsequently entered into a pre-construction services agreement (PCSA).
- 5.4 The design has evolved through planning and is currently at the RIBA Design Stage 4 – Technical Design phase, focussing on the technical design and costs and will conclude with contractor's proposals.
- 5.5 To ensure that the expenditure of the Grant Funding is ahead of the deadline (31st March 2026), the Capital Delivery Team have determined that the Project must enter an enabling works contract. This enabling works contract will need to be instructed whilst Wilmot Dixon and their design team conclude RIBA Work Stage 4.

6. KEY RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

- 6.1 Grant Conditions: The Council is acting as the accountable body for the grant. We have a requirement to fulfil our governance role as set out in the grant conditions. The key risks in relation to the grant are under performance, ineligible spend or breach of any conditions. These risks will form part of a wider project risk register and are not unusual for grant funded projects.
- 6.2 In terms of project performance, the Council will mitigate risk through its robust project management function and its quarterly monitoring and progress reporting to MHCLG which will cover progress, outputs and spend. If there is a need to revise the spend profile across financial years then this will be addressed through

consultation with MHCLG and a Project Adjustment Request, if required, which is the formal process to request changes to MHCLG.

- 6.3 The main risks to the funding are around a significant change in project scope, and hence outcomes, or delays in delivery taking spend beyond the grant availability period. Again, this will be mitigated through the project management processes and contingency built into the timetable. Ineligible expenditure, resulting in grant recovery, is highly unlikely. Spend must be capital, relate to the project scope and be within the grant period. The Project Management Team will track expenditure, and this will be assured by the Council's Financial Services Team and the grant manager. Before reporting to MHCLG the project Management Team will ensure that grant conditions are adhered to, this includes the purpose of the grant, branding, Subsidy Control, and other legal requirements.
- 6.4 Progressing and obtaining planning permission, and having a contractor appointed, are key milestone events that MHCLG will wish to see achieved as soon as possible to de-risk the project. The progression of this report through the Council's governance process to obtain Cabinet approval allows these requirements to be met and significantly reduces project risk.
- 6.5 It is likely that the grant funding is the maximum amount of support that the Council will receive from MHCLG. Should the overall project cost exceed the grant allocation there would be a requirement for the council to reduce overall project costs or self-fund any shortfalls. This potential issue will be mitigated through stringent design and budget management, budget monitoring and value engineering should the need arise.

7. NEXT STEPS

- 7.1 Vacant possession of the Police Station and Library by mid-September 2024 will take place in line with the project programme to hand over to the contractor, allowing commencement of the enabling works package in advance of the main build.
- 7.2 An enabling works package of works will take place, to allow for asbestos survey and removal in the existing buildings, site hoardings and site welfare to be set up and existing services disconnections and diversions to take place.
- 7.3 To enter a main building contract for the demolition of the library and police station to allow the commencement of the construction of the main building works of the new hub.
- 7.4 Ongoing project monitoring and quarterly reporting to MHCLG will continue for the duration of the enabling works package and main build.
- 7.5 Officers will continue to engage with stakeholders throughout the Council on the further development of the scheme and will ensure that the Cabinet Member for Communities, Culture and Sport is updated on the progress of the project.

8. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Please refer to the Confidential Appendix 1 for the Financial and Commercial update.

9. LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 Legal considerations relating to proposed contracts and agreements will be reviewed as part of the development of the scheme with the support and advice of the Council's Legal Services team.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

- 10.1 It is not envisaged there are any direct Human Resources Impacts to consider as a result of the scheme.

11. EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 11.1 As part of the funding business case an Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken that assessed the project, its design, and its operation against those with protected characteristics. Earlier this year a Public Sector Equalities Duty (PSED) assessment was also submitted to MHCLG for their review. This sets out the positive and negative impacts that the Marple Hub might have on groups by reference to the relevant protected characteristics and any mitigations, if applicable. The assessment also covered any impacts on the relations between those with different protected characteristics. Both these assessments will be kept live during the detailed project design process and implementation to ensure that the Council's PSED is being achieved.

12. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 12.1 Refer to the Environmental Impact document appendix.
- 12.2 The development of the new Marple Community Hub provides the Council with the opportunity to develop a sustainable leisure offer.
- 12.3 As part of the LUF bid a commitment was made that the building would achieve Net Zero Operational Carbon Emissions, and the design of the building reflects this. A fabric first approach has been adopted with a focus on the reduction of energy demand, active management of the internal environment, the use of ultra-low energy plant, and the use of non-fossil fuel heat sources for both building and pool heating.
- 12.4 Focus is also being directed at achieving a sustainable water cycle for the building with plant and equipment used to limit the amount of water required to operate the building, and in particular the pool itself.
- 12.5 As part of the LUF outcomes significant investment is proposed in the locality to improve connectivity and encourage walking and cycling. The Hub is a community facility, with the aim being that the communities it serves will be able to access the facility without the need to use private vehicles.

- 12.6 Officers and the wider design team are currently exploring opportunities and constraints for a Ground Source Heat Pump solution alongside the currently proposed Air Source Heat Pump solution currently proposed for the scheme.
- 12.7 Finally, significant focus is being spent on reducing wherever possible the embodied carbon within the building itself. This will include the carrying out of life cycle carbon analysis, as well as cost analysis; the use of local and ethical materials wherever possible, use of offsite modular construction for key pieces of equipment and plant and ensuring that all materials that are used are robust and long lasting.

13. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 13.1.1 Note the contents of this report and progress on the Marple Active Communities Hub..
- 13.1.2 Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Housing to enter into any Grant Funding Agreement or Memorandums of Understanding with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, or any other government department or government organisation required to deliver the scheme.
- 13.1.3 Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and the Assistant Director (Legal & Democratic Governance), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Housing, to take such steps and complete such agreements as are necessary to implement the resolutions recommended in this report and any decisions properly made under authority delegated by these resolutions, including the necessary Works or Services contracts, providing the funding for such contracts sits within the overall funding envelope for the project.
- 13.1.4 approve the release of the full grant funding package to allow the scheme to progress to completion.
- 13.1.5 Approval the development and implementation of an enabling works package, and delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Housing, to approve the Council entering into any Works or Services contracts to enable this works package to progress, to facilitate the demolition of the current Marple Library, police, and clinic buildings enabling the Marple Community Hub project to be delivered.
- 13.1.6 Approve the establishment of an interim Marple Library provision during the construction phase of the project.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none.

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Sarah Mulligan by email on:
sarah.mulligan@stockport.gov.uk