

Report to	Resources & Performance Committee
Date	5 September 2012
By	Director of Corporate Services
Title of Report	South Downs Centre Update
Purpose of Report	To update the Committee on recent progress on the South Downs Centre project

Recommendation: The Committee is recommended to
1) note progress on the South Downs Centre project since the last meeting.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an update on progress of the design and building works to procure a new South Downs Centre in the northern part of Capron House and the Memorial Hall in Midhurst.

2. Background

- 2.1 This Report provides an update of progress on the South Downs Centre project since the last meeting.

3. Design and Survey Work

- 3.1 Since the appointment of the main contractor, Morgan Sindall, detailed design work is now proceeding with the aim of completing it sufficiently to start obtaining quotations for the various works packages in early September 2012.
- 3.2 Various surveys have been organised to be completed between 16 August and 24 August 2012. These include a full intrusive asbestos survey, which is required before other works (including the other intrusive surveys) can be completed.
- 3.3 Discussions are underway with Chichester District Council about co-locating the Tourist Information Centre in the new entrance foyer to develop an information and interpretation centre for the South Downs.
- 3.4 Discussions are also being held with various community organisations who may be interested in sharing space in the buildings to develop a community hub.

4. Planning and Listed Building Applications

- 4.1 The Planning and Listed Buildings Applications were submitted in mid July 2012; they have been validated and are now available on the Planning Portal.
- 4.2 It is intended that the Listed Building Applications will be considered at the September 2012 Planning Committee. They will then need to be sent for approval to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government (CLG) as local authorities cannot approve their own Listed Buildings Applications.
- 4.3 It is intended that the Planning Application will be considered at the October 2012 Planning Committee.
- 4.4 A public exhibition was held in the Memorial Hall on 22 August 2012 from 3.30 to 7.30pm for members of the public to view the plans. Letters were distributed to residents of neighbouring properties, posters fixed and invitations were sent to community organisations, partners and volunteers advising of the plans and the exhibition.

- 4.5 In total 60 visitors attended the exhibition and feedback was overwhelmingly positive; particular themes that emerged were satisfaction that we would be conserving two important local historic buildings and that we would be providing much needed community facilities in the Memorial Hall. We will now be analysing and considering the comments received in relation to the design work.
- 4.5 A Travel Plan, which was a condition of West Sussex Highways at the time of grant of the original planning consent, is being produced. It will include a survey of staff's means of travel to Midhurst. It is intended to broaden the scope of the survey to obtain data beneficial to the Authority in improving sustainability.
- 5. Purchase of the Buildings**
- 5.1 The completion of the purchase of the buildings is targeted for 3 September 2012, although the vendors have further legal issues existing owners to complete before this can be confirmed. A delay of a few weeks beyond this date is unlikely to affect the programme for the works.
- 6. Programme**
- 6.1 Morgan Sindall is developing a detailed programme for the works that currently indicates a start on site on 5 November 2012. This allows sufficient time to tender all the necessary works packages and confirm a total price for the project, prior to the mobilisation period. It is also dependent on having obtained Listed Building consent for the works, which is on the critical path.
- 7. Resources**
- 7.1 The overall budget remains unchanged at £2.8 m.
- 7.2 A further detailed cost check will be undertaken as the design is issued for tender purposes, so that a pre-tender estimate of costs is provided. The subcontract tenders will then be compared against these figures.
- 8. Risk management**
- 8.1 The main risks remain those associated with gaining Planning and Listed Building Consents and completion of the purchase.
- 8.2 The Planning risks have been mitigated so far as practicable by holding discussions prior to the applications with Planning Officers from both Chichester District Council and SDNPA and with the Highways Department of West Sussex County Council. The public exhibition should also help with progress of the applications. A letter to CLG will be formulated to try to expedite progress of the Listed Building Applications through CLG.
- 8.3 Purchase of the buildings is not expected to delay the project, although discussions are being held both locally and between lawyers to try to make sure no last minute issues arise so that the purchase can be completed in early September 2012. However, access to the buildings for the surveys was not available until mid-August, and some elements of the design are dependent on these.
- 8.4 Any significant changes to the design from this stage have the potential to cause additional cost and delay and a formal change control process will therefore be put in place from this point onwards.
- 9. Human Rights, Equalities, Health and Safety**
- 9.1 There are no implications arising from this report.
- 10. External Consultees**
- 10.1 None.

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Appendices	None
SDNPA Consultees	Director of Corporate Services, Director of Planning, Director of Strategy and Partnerships, Head of Operations, Chief Finance Officer, Deputy Chief Finance Officer, Monitoring Officer & Senior Solicitor.