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Minehead Town Council
Draft For Discussion

Draft letter from Minehead Town Council to NHS Somerset & copy addressees inc Somerset Council on behalf of Minehead Town Council

Confirm that it is acceptable to Ian Liddell-Grainger and Mr Mohammed Saddiq that they be included as copy addressees. Confirm other copy addresses are content with the draft letter.

MTC Town Crest

Dear.... NHS Somerset Foundation Trust Chief Executive (Peter Lewis) – **addressee to be confirmed**....

Subject: West Somerset Multi Activity Centre (MAC) – Investment Proposal

Following (unanimous) support at the Minehead Town Council (MTC), Full Council meeting on (Date) I write to seek guidance on the optimum approach to achieve a successful executive programme and funding strategy for the subject investment.

MAC Vision Statement

A comprehensive activity centre for people of all ages and abilities to: improve user Health and Fitness; be part of the GP referral system; improve residents' sense of Wellbeing and Social Cohesion; reduce long term therapeutic and preventive NHS budgets; improve the Somerset economy; enhance local business development and tourism and help deliver cross-party political commitments.

This proposal fully aligns with the current NHS Somerset Health and Care Strategy and the latest issue of the Somerset Council Plan vision and priorities for 2023 – 2027.

MAC Description

In alignment with Sport England advice, it is proposed that the MAC would comprise a 25M 5 lane swimming pool; a small hydrotherapy / learner pool; a 30-station gymnasium; showers and lockers; a cafe with flexible use meeting space; a disability support transport system; assigned parking for MAC users and a Customer Support Booking Coordination and Sales capability.

General design requirements would feature access and optimisation for people of all abilities. The MAC design would have a 50-year operational life with updates at year 15 and year 30. Operating costs and environmental threats would be minimised via Green Energy provisions including ground and air source heat pumps, solar energy, solar gain and high efficiency insulation systems.

The MAC would be on a recently cleared brownfield site in the Minehead Recreation Ground (owned by MTC) and interconnected with the existing Community Centre.

The MAC design brief would be to support the towns and villages of West Somerset, within the Local Community Network 13, excluding those villages that are physically closer to Taunton. However, in practice the MAC facilities would be available to be booked by any visitor and this would be encouraged and enabled via the Customer Support booking system.

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The MAC brief for the design competition invitations would include professional and technical inputs from NHS Somerset and LCN interest groups and societies. At an appropriate point, as directed by Somerset Council and NHS Somerset and following completion of the investment case and funding strategy, a needs assessment and public consultation would be conducted. It is noteworthy that Minehead is the largest town in Somerset without a public swimming pool.

Local Community Network (LCN) 13

It is further proposed that facilities in LCN 13 towns/villages, for example Equestrian Centre(s), should from the outset be considered a component of the MAC and integrated into the overall capability and booking system.

Financial Considerations

Including £1M for Risk provisions, build cost budgets have been approximated to total within £10M over a three-year design, build and commissioning programme. Annual operating cost budgets have been approximated to be within £1.3M. Subject to thorough examination of build costs, grants, precept(s) and usage income (ticket sales) from residents and visitors, it is anticipated that the MAC should be delivering net financial benefits and a cash surplus within the first 10 operational years.

Grant funding / guarantees are suggested to be provided by: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; Somerset Council; NHS Somerset; Sport England (National Lottery); local businesses.

MAC Users / Transport

The LCN 13 resident communities within 13 miles of Minehead total circa 28,000 people. A disability friendly scheduled bus service would be developed and integrated with the MAC schedules (including other towns villages) so that access and economic development was provided for all the target LCN 13 West Somerset towns and villages. The MAC would be actively marketed and open to visitors and tourists.

Investment Case and Governance

A comprehensive investment case and associated workbook analysis has been drafted to support the above considerations. The investment case proposes the optimum legal / governance structure to be a Community Investment Company (CIC) led by Somerset Council in partnership with NHS Somerset. In any event, MTC Councillors and Officers may be available to provide support to Somerset Council and NHS Somerset as required for the generation of appropriate documents to support applications and communication with other organisations.

Summary of Anecdotal Resident Support

Ahead of a formal needs assessment and public consultation, informal discussions with Minehead residents have invariably produced a very positive response to the idea of a MAC – specifically a public pool.

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Recommendations

The MAC is a significant project proposed against a background of difficult central and local government budget constraints.

It is therefore recommended that Somerset Council and NHS Somerset, as appropriate:

1. Provide advice and guidance to help complete the project study.
2. Provide broad executive support together with an indicative funding and investment programme.
3. Fund a Public Consultation and Needs Study.

Yours etc

CC:

Ian Liddell-Grainger MP
His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant Mr Mohammed Saddiq
Somerset Council Leader (Bill Revans)
Cllr Christine Lawrence
Cllr Mandy Chilcott
Cllr Andrew Hadley
Cllr Marcus Kravis
Minehead Town Councillors

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