

Corporate Policy and Resources

Date of meeting **Monday 11 September 2023**

Title	<i>Laleham Nursery improvements</i>
Purpose of the report	To make a decision
Report Author	<i>Jackie Taylor Group Head Neighbourhood Services</i>
Ward(s) Affected	Laleham and Shepperton Green
Exempt	No
Exemption Reason	<i>n/a</i>
Corporate Priority	Service delivery
Recommendations	Committee is asked to: Agree that the funding allocated for replacement porta cabins used as office space by the Joint Enforcement Team (JET) is reallocated to be used to create new permanent office and meeting space within the existing nursery building and provide improved facilities for Surrey Choices.
Reason for Recommendation	<i>A full tender exercise for replacement portacabins to be situated in the nursery as offices was conducted and came in over budget. The exercise also highlighted that the power supply into the nursery would not be sufficient to power three new portacabins. Options for office accommodation were then reviewed which showed that it is possible to use an open void in the existing nursery building to create new office and meeting space for JET and improve facilities for Surrey Choices, thereby removing the need to purchase new temporary buildings.</i>

1. Summary of the report

- 1.1 Capital funding to replace the dilapidated temporary office space (portacabins) at the nursery which are used by the Joint Enforcement Team was agreed as a growth bid.
- 1.2 This report seeks to review existing provision of Capital funding for portacabins and reallocate the same pot of funding to create more permanent office accommodation and meeting space at the Laleham Nursery as well as improve facilities for Surrey Choices.

2. Key issues

- 2.1 Laleham Nursery which is situated on the outskirts of Laleham Park has had a variety of uses since the 1940s as can be seen in the table at 2.2.

2.2 Laleham Nursery Site timeline of use

1940-1953	Farm fields
1953-1961	Tree nursery developed
1961-1971	Tree nursery and greenhouses/potting sheds developed
1971-1981	Floral displays including Spelthorne in Bloom and tree nursery
1981-1992	Floral displays including Spelthorne in Bloom and tree nursery
1992-1998	Floral displays including Spelthorne in Bloom and tree nursery
1998-2003	Old greenhouses demolished & new green house built
2003-2009	Floral displays including Spelthorne in Bloom
2009-2017	Grounds maintenance was contracted out in 2009 & old portacabins installed 2010
2017 to date	Grounds maintenance activities all undertaken from the nursery by in house teams

- 2.3 In 1998 the Head of Direct Services Steve Connor, developed the opportunity for greater use of the nursery site and an agreement was put in place for what was then known as Fairways Day Centre (now Surrey Choices) to use part of the nursery site for people with learning disabilities living in Spelthorne. The main purpose of this use was to teach students horticulture skills in preparation for employment and for high dependency students as a leisure/education activity.
- 2.4 This project also involved the horticultural therapy charity who were also involved in collaborating with people who have disabilities at the nursery.
- 2.5 Overtime the project has gone from strength to strength and increased its activities which includes assisting the grounds maintenance team with preparation for Spelthorne in Bloom.
- 2.6 In 2016 as part of the Council's Towards a Sustainable Future programme there was a need for the Council depot to make space for the sustainability & parking teams and to facilitate this the JET were moved from the depot to the portacabins in the Nursery site which were at that time being used as kitchen and storage areas.
- 2.7 The team have been working in the old portacabins since 2016. Between then and now the portacabins have been in a period of rapid decline with roof leaks and holes in the floor. The portacabins are also extremely poor at retaining heat and keeping cool and the working environment is no longer acceptable for this team. Please see a sample of pictures at **Appendix A**.
- 2.8 In 2022 a procurement exercise was undertaken by the Group Head Neighbourhood Services for replacement of all the portacabins. The exercise exposed several issues in replacing the cabins most importantly that the power supply into the nursery would not be sufficient to accommodate new portacabins. Added to this the tendered price came in way over budget.
- 2.9 Due to other work pressures and the wait time experienced in looking at options and costs to increase the power supply at the nursery this project lost some traction.
- 2.10 The wait time and at a minimum cost of over £100k to increase the power supply into the nursery required officers to change their thought process and work out how best to deliver this much needed new workspace without the need to increase the power supply and within budget.

- 2.11 Officers then looked at best use of all the space across the entire fixed building and with the help of officers in Spelthorne's facilities management team came up with a proposal to use an open space which had little purpose to create a new building which would then become office and meeting space and accommodate the JET officers as well as the existing grounds maintenance officers. The proposal will not affect the operational staff.
- 2.12 The proposal also enables better use of the facilities used by Surrey Choices and created a new shared area for meetings.
- 2.13 The proposal was put out to tender with three bidders providing costings, the most cost effective of which came in within budget.

3. Options analysis and proposal

3.1 Option 1 preferred option

Agree that the growth bid for the procurement of new porta cabins be reallocated within this budget year to enable new and permanent workspaces to be created within the nursery building. This will enable the JET officers to continue working from the nursery and provide new meeting facilities which will be shared between the grounds team and Surrey Choices.

Option 2

Do nothing which will mean that the current budget allocation will go back into reserves and the JET officers will have no operating base to work out of.

Option 3

Seek alternative accommodation within the Council offices for five staff members and office capacity to store CCTV monitoring equipment, evidence collected from fly tipping offences and confidential data related to enforcement activities undertaken by JET.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 Existing budget of £116k has already been allocated to the original project of replacing the portacabins. The tender exercise which was conducted to create a permanent building rather than supply portacabins has come back within budget.
- 4.2 If reasonable office accommodation is not provided within a reasonable timescale for the JET officers, they will have nowhere to work from as the old portacabins are unlikely to last beyond this winter.
- 4.3 If it is agreed the portacabin funding can be repurposed to create permanent workspace, the team will work with the nursery team and ourselves to temporarily share workspace working around other officers hybrid working days.
- 4.4 The old portacabins are made up of board and metal, the depot team will dismantle them, and the recyclable elements will be taken for scrap.

5. Risk considerations

- 5.1 The costs related to the proposed alterations to the fixed nursery building have already been costed and it is unlikely there will be any additional unforeseen costs.

- 5.2 The risk is that if we do nothing the JET officers will have no place of work which will impact their daily routines and working practices and their ability to manage deployable CCTV images and store evidence related to anti-social behaviour.

6. Procurement considerations

- 6.1 A compliant tender exercise has been conducted by facilities management. The Building Services team have worked with Corporate Procurement to procure the contractor for the works. A compliant tender exercise was carried out, with two tenders received on time and a third outside of the advised timeframes and over budget.
- 6.2 The successful tenderers bid was received in the required timeframe and within budget.

7. Legal considerations

- 7.1 The legal team have been consulted and have no further comments.

8. Other considerations

- 8.1 The planning team have been consulted on this proposal and have confirmed that as we are not altering or enlarging the structure of the building planning consent is not required.
- 8.2 The building control team have also been consulted on the proposals and have no issues to report.
- 8.3 Once the portacabins are removed the grounds maintenance staff will start to create a new tree nursery within the space to facilitate the growing on and planting out of borough trees. Funding has already been sourced for a tree irrigation system and we are seeking grants for suitable trees to nurture within the nursery until they are ready for planting out.
- 8.4 The green initiatives fund is providing the funding for solar panels to be placed on the Surrey Choices side of the nursery building which will tie in with the existing panels.
- 8.5 An additional application for funding was put before the CIL board to enhance the area used by Surrey Choices but this was not forthcoming.
- 8.6 Due to the unsociable hours worked by the JET officers which can include very early mornings, late evening, and weekends it is challenging to find suitable alternative accommodation, parking & storage space for them outside of the depot or Laleham nursery.

9. Equality and Diversity

- 9.1 Providing a new meeting space for Spelthorne and Surrey Choices to share ensures that we are including them within our proposals to provide a better environment for all.

10. Sustainability/Climate Change Implications

- 10.1 The portacabins do not hold any heat in the winter and retain heat during the summer. To provide some heat and cool air the heaters and air con units are constantly running. If we create new workspaces within the current building that run on the existing oil heating system, we will reduce use of electricity related to heating and cooling the three old portacabins.

11. Timetable for implementation

- 11.1 If this proposal to repurpose the budget is agreed, we will contact the preferred bidder and make arrangements for the work to commence asap.

12. Contact

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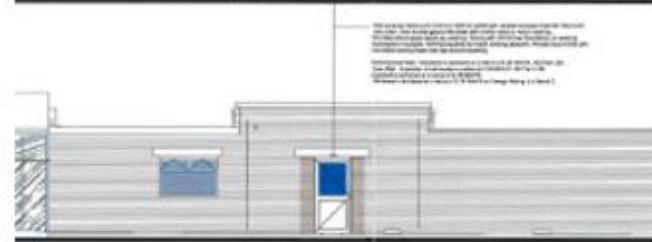
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There are none.

Appendices:

Appendix A pictures for reference

Appendix A
Laleham Nursery



Legend:
1. All windows and doors are to be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
2. All windows and doors are to be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
3. All windows and doors are to be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
4. All windows and doors are to be installed in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

