
Subject:	RENOVATION OF FORMER HAIR SALON TO PROVIDE EXTENDED FACILITIES FOR CROSSLINKS COMMUNITY HUB AT 9 SHERIDAN ROAD, DOVER
Meeting and Date:	Cabinet – 6 November 2023
Report of:	David Parish, Head of Property Assets
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Charlotte Zosseder, Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property
Decision Type:	Non-Key Decision
Classification:	Unrestricted

Purpose of the report: To seek Cabinet approval to expand the existing Crosslinks Community Hub across units 9 and 13 Sheridan Road.
This includes approval of works to 9 and 13 Sheridan Road and the grant of a new lease to No.13 and extension of the existing lease to No 9.

Recommendation:

- (a) Approve use of £80,000 from the Special Reserve Fund for Corporate Assets Repairs and Maintenance for works at 9 and 13 Sheridan Road.
- (b) Approve the transfer of 2 disused housing stores adjoining 13 Sheridan Road for use by the Crosslinks Community Hub.
- (c) Grant a lease for 13 Sheridan Road to Crosslinks Community Hub for a 5-year term and confirm acceptance to the early renewal of the lease of 9 Sheridan Road to Crosslinks Community Hub to align with the above term.
- (d) Authorise the Strategic Director (Place and Environment) to agree the terms of the leases.

1. Summary

1.1 This report updates cabinet on the current situation of units 9 and 13 Sheridan Road. Seeking authorisation to proceed with renovation works at no 13 to bring a vacant unit back into use. These works will provide a larger facility for Crosslinks Youth & Community Hub who already occupy 9 Sheridan Road. The works will benefit the wider community by increasing activities and training available, create a more attractive shopfront, improve visual amenity, help reduce vandalism and stop the building falling into further disrepair.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 13 Sheridan Road is a neighbouring commercial unit that was historically a hair salon until January 2021 but has since been vacant. There are two disused stores that adjoin to the premises that are currently under the operation of housing, which are proposed to be converted as part of the renovation project to provide general and waste storage facilities.
- 2.2 Crosslinks Community Hub, who currently lease unit 9 Sheridan Road, have been running communal activities since 1997 primarily working with children and young people. It is staffed by a part-time youth leader and a group of enthusiastic volunteers, many who have graduated from being recipients of the service to helpers within it. The hub provides a safe space for young people to socialise, learn new skills and get involved with activities including afterschool clubs, youth clubs and one to one support with job hunting. It also provides an outreach programme with external youth partnerships including Kent Police and Social Services.
- In total, Crosslinks currently works with approximately 150 to 200 young people through their on-site activities, outreach programmes and regular contact with local families.
- 2.3 The community hub is keen to extend and provide expansive activities including (I) an extended kitchen to operate a communal café, run by volunteers/ users of the community hub (II) a computer learning suite to provide basic IT skills and (III) a new dedicated art studio. These proposals therefore would not only continue to provide a safe space for young people, but also help tackle unemployment, promote independence, and help to develop core skills within a working environment. Hub usage is expected to double in users because of these proposals as it would also attract other user groups.
- 2.4 The current lease for Crosslinks Youth & Community Hub at unit 9 Sheridan Road is set to expire during 2024. It is proposed to renew the lease early for an extended 4 years in order to run in conjunction with the new proposed lease at unit 13 Sheridan Road for a term of 5 years.
- 2.5 It is proposed to charge a market rent for 13 Sheridan Road, however it is anticipated that this lease will be given a 100% annual grant towards payment of the rent, subject to annual approval.
- 2.6 The list of works proposed below considers the need for renovations to both 9 & 13 Sheridan Road in order to comply with statutory landlord obligations and the latest building regulations; there are also additional renovations to the shop fronts and windows to the rear courtyards to heighten security provision for the facilities, as well as essential repair works to the rear of the properties through insurance.
- 2.7 The works also take into account any future operational changes with minimal changes to bring the shops back into separate dwellings.
- 2.8 Proposed works to be undertaken and funded by DDC:
- Miscellaneous Renovations to 13 Sheridan Road where required to comply with the latest building regulations.

* works as detailed in planning application reference DOV/23/01008

2.9 Proposed works to be undertaken by DDC and funded by Crosslinks Community Hub:

- Install new shop front to 9 Sheridan Road with aluminium based framework**
- Install new rear brick wall to 9 Sheridan Road to match existing alongside new metal-based door.
- Install new GRP Flat based roof with insulation to 9 Sheridan Road rear courtyard**
- Install new extended kitchen to 9 Sheridan Road and new servery to provide facilities for the proposed communal café.
- Install new fixtures and fittings to existing rear WCs at 9 Sheridan Road.
- New internal opening between 9 and 13 Sheridan Road.
- Miscellaneous Renovations to 9 Sheridan Road where required to comply with the latest building regulations including updating and rewiring existing electrics.

**works as detailed in planning application approved reference DOV/21/01235

2.10 Proposed works to be undertaken by DDC and funded through insurance:

- Replacement of rear wall of external toilets of 9 and 13 Sheridan Road caused by historic damage.
- Replacement of existing windows within courtyard of 13 Sheridan Road caused by historic vandalism.
- Install new fixtures and fittings to existing rear WCs at 13 Sheridan Road.

3. Identification of Options

3.1 Option 1: To proceed and deliver all aspects of works including the conversion of 2 external store for community hub use and provide new leases to the Crosslinks Community Hub.

3.2 Option 2: To proceed and deliver all aspects of works to 9 & 13 Sheridan Road and retrospective leases, but not convert the 2 vacant external stores for community hub use.

3.3 Option 3: Not to proceed with any works and leave the shop unit vacant.

4 Evaluation of Options

4.1 Option 1 is the recommended option. The Crosslinks Community Hub is a key asset in the Buckland ward as well as the Dover District with youth groups in general; therefore, the proposed renovation to both shops will enhance youth facilities and benefit the community by providing additional training and core skills within a working environment. It provides an opportunity to tenant a currently unoccupied commercial facility and will reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour. The conversion of two external stores also will provide an appropriate space for waste management across the two facilities.

4.2 Option 2 - The renovation will keep the same benefits as per option 1. However, the external stores will remain unused and at risk of further vandalism, flytipping and general disrepair.

4.3 Option 3 is not the recommended option as it fails to take advantage of a good opportunity to enhance communal facilities within the Buckland area. Without the use of the additional building, it would limit what the Community Hub and provide the extra services that the community are in desperate need of.

The vacant commercial unit at 13 Sheridan Road would remain untenanted and at risk of future vandalism, flytipping and general disrepair with no other tenancy interest at the time of this report.

We have also received a letter from planning regarding the present state of the frontage to number 13 with a possible improvement notice being served.

5 Resource Implications

- 5.1 The new lease following the renovation of 13 Sheridan Road would result in a vacant facility being taken on and reduce the liabilities to the council.
- 5.2 Funding to the total of £80,000 is required to deliver works as referenced in 2.8 allocated funding from the Special Reserve Fund for Corporate Assets and Maintenance Repairs Provision. This funding is primarily required to bring 13 Sheridan Road back into operational use in order to comply with statutory landlord obligations with the latest building regulations and improve security provision, therefore this would require similar investment to bring the facility back into operational use regardless of the future tenant and funding source.
- 5.3 Funding to the total of £25,000 will be provided by Crosslinks for works relating to 9 Sheridan Road as referenced in 2.9 made up from various grants and general income. This funding stream also provides the relevant works for new facilities required for the community hub to deliver their proposed new activities to the community.
- 5.4 Funding will be provided for insurance works as referenced in 2.10, although no internal funding is required, however DDC as part of the whole renovation will be responsible to procure and deliver the works.

6 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 6.1 Where possible long lasting or recyclable materials will be explored for work, thus contributing to the Councils Climate Change objectives including appropriate insulation to the new roofing system on the rear courtyards, new LED lights to replace existing system and double glazing to the new shop fronts for increased energy efficiency measures.
- 6.2 The council will continue to work with Crosslinks Community Centre to find suitable solutions for Low carbon heating system.

7 Corporate Implications

- 7.1 Comment from the Director of Finance (linked to the MTFP): Members are reminded that the Council's revenue and capital resources are under pressure and so they will wish to assure themselves that all proposals progress the Council's priorities, are the best option available and will deliver value for money (SK)
- 7.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make (HR).
- 7.3 Comment from the Equalities Officer: This report outlining the proposals to expand the existing Crosslinks Community Hub across units 9 and 13 Sheridan Road, does not specifically highlight any equality implications, however in discharging their duties members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149> (KM)
- 7.4 Other Officers (as appropriate): The valuation team have been consulted in the preparation of this report and have no further comments to make (RC,RRE).

8 **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Site Plan

Appendix 2 – Existing Layout Plan

Appendix 3 – Proposed Layout Plan

Appendix 4 – Existing Elevations

Appendix 5 – Proposed Elevations

9 **Background Papers**

Relevant papers on Property Services file – Sheridan Road Shops, Crosslinks

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