

ENVIRONMENT TRUST PRESS RELEASE RIVER CENTRE BUSINESS PLAN

The Environment Trust is the lead partner in the development of the River Centre at Twickenham Riverside. In recent days there has been some concern expressed about the status of the Business Plan for the River Centre.

A full business plan is in place for the project. It was produced in September 2008 and has been reviewed by the Council and its Finance scrutiny committee as well as a significant number of advisors from the Trust and other organisations. A 32 page version of this plan is available to the public at www.rivercentre.org.uk This document sets out the approach to the development and operational phases of the project and includes a full financial assessment.

Since it was posted on the web-site this plan has been downloaded some 500 times and the Trust has responded to several concerns and requests for further information. The Trust welcomes comments on this plan and other aspects of the project from local people.

The Trust has presented two update reports on this plan to the council this year and these are also available on the web-site for downloading. The original project schedule proposed the signature of the Development Agreement with the developer in the summer followed by the Trust producing a full update of the Business Plan in October. There has subsequently been a delay of several months in the signature of the Development Agreement and as a result some components of the River Centre project, notably discussions with the developer regarding the building design and fit out, have also been delayed.

As a result of these delays to the overall project programme it has been agreed with the council that publication of an updated full business plan will be delayed so that the project phasing moves forward as originally envisaged.

The Trust has not been idle during this period however. In particular it has been very busy developing its environmental education programmes. Key agreements have been signed with two major education providers as follows:

- Capel Manor college to develop environmental education courses
- Kingston University to develop courses in sustainable living

The first courses with Kingston University are starting this autumn and the Trust plans to start running joint courses with Capel Manor from next spring. In addition, the Trust has expanded its range of short courses for adults and continues to support environmental education in many of the borough's schools. More information on all the Trust's activities can be found at www.environmenttrust.co.uk

Oct 2009