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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Lord Roberts Centre was built for the 2002 Commonwealth games, initially as a temporary structure. It has now been modified in order to become a permanent facility.

The ground floor boasts 1183m<sup>2</sup> of events space and the first floor another 594m<sup>2</sup>, with a further 126m<sup>2</sup> of meeting room space. Currently it has been estimated that the venue has approximately 12-15 large events a year which contribute approximately £50,000 in income. No financial targets have been suggested although detailed within this report are some feasible projections. This initial report offers recommendations that would help increase events revenue at the site.

At this stage we have not carried out in depth market research into the local business community but Zenith Consultants already has a significant database of companies within the area as we are working with a venue outside of Guildford.

Currently there are no events staff at the venue and one of the factors preventing the growth of this particular area of the business is the inability for staff to devote adequate time outside of their normal roles. A clear process by

which events are taken from the initial enquiry through to booking and execution is also required. Much of the problem also stems from no clear marketing strategy that would drive business to the venue.

We have suggested a three year plan to drive sales towards a projected target of £150,000 which would include formulating a clear events process along with recruiting an events manager after six to twelve months. There would be a strategic partnership with Vanilla Bean who would take over the running of the cafe which forms an integral part of the venue and who would be the in-house caterers at the venue.

Investment would be needed over the next twelve months. This would include marketing and some structural changes to the layout of the cafe space and the kitchen facilities as well as the resulting staff costs from bringing on an events manager.

It is our belief that given the unique size of the space along with possible developments on the Bisley site such as the addition of a hotel that growing the events business to this level would be achievable.



# The Lord Roberts Centre - ENHANCING THE LEGACY



## INTRODUCTION

The aim of this report is to layout initial recommendations for the Lord Roberts Centre so that events are managed better and to drive business towards the venue through targeted marketing and therefore boost this revenue stream as far as possible.

The venue has 1903m<sup>2</sup> of events and meeting room space over two floors and a permanent cafe catering for those that use the multi purpose facility.

It is situated inside the 3000 acre Bisley site and lies approximately 30 miles south west of London. The venue is available for hire throughout the year although on occasion priority is given to shooting events due to the nature of the facility. These events are booked well in advance and therefore should not represent any barrier to event bookings.

The venue is unique within Surrey given its capacity and this is therefore a significant factor when marketing it to potential clients. On the Bisley site itself there is competition from some of the club houses for smaller events but given the irregular nature of their opening times and the ability for the Lord Roberts centre to offer a far more versatile and higher quality product, we believe that the venue would be in a better position to win business.

In nearby Woking there are two venues that offer large capacities which are the Woking Leisure Centre (capacity 1400) and the H.G Wells Conference and Events Centre (capacity 600). These venues offer more convenience in terms of location but Bisley can offer free onsite parking.

The Asian and African wedding market would form a central feature to the marketing and sales strategy along with conferencing for defence companies and the M.O.D.



## OBJECTIVES

Zenith Consultants have been authorised to explore and suggest ways in which the Lord Roberts Centre might present themselves in a more commercial way to increase revenue from events and conferences.

Our involvement, at this stage, is to provide an objective and experienced point of view on the subject of marketing and developing events venues. Zenith Consultants hopes to win the opportunity to implement and manage the recommendations laid out in this report as well as work closely with the team at the Lord Roberts Centre to develop further strategies.

The specific aims are:

- ➔ Formulate and implement an events process
- ➔ Provide a clear and feasible marketing strategy
- ➔ Grow events and conferencing sales from approximately £50,000 to £150,000 (over three years)
- ➔ Ensure that the Lord Roberts Centre is one of the leading conference & events venues in Surrey area



# INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

## FINANCIAL

### Venue Cost

- ➔ The venue price must be standardized subsequent to market research to determine the correct price point within the market
- ➔ A special rate would be created for government departments such as the M.O.D.
- ➔ Events packages could also be considered which would include venue hire

### Commission

- ➔ A commission would be charge to all caterers using the venue excluding the in-house caterer.

### Wine List

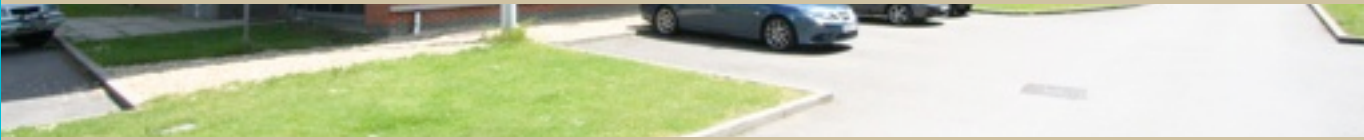
- ➔ Consider providing alcoholic drinks for events which would generate further income

### Estimated Projections

Per Event (Based on average of 750)	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3
Venue Hire = £3,500	12 events	18 events	24 events
Commission (assumes £20 per head) = £1,500	<b>£76,800</b>	<b>£115,200</b>	<b>£153,600</b>
Wine sales (assumes £2 per head profit) = £1,400			
TOTAL (Per event average) £6,400			



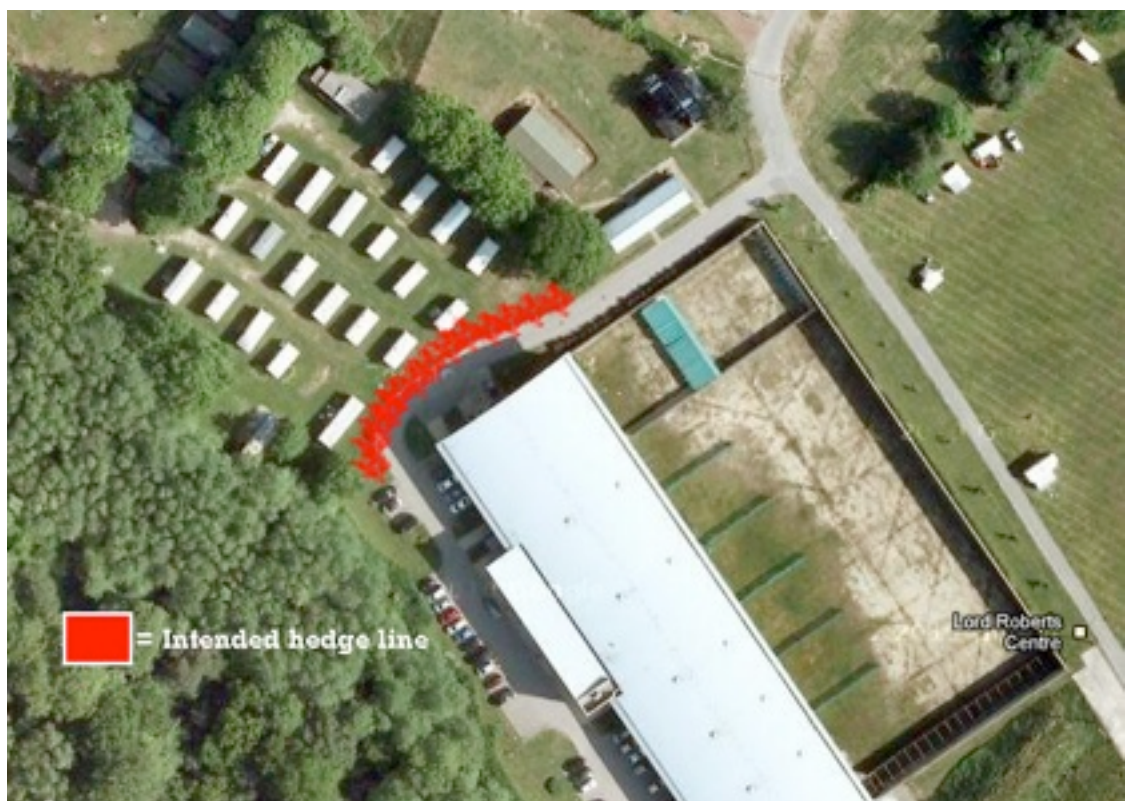
## INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS



### INFRASTRUCTURE

#### Site Improvements (Internal and External)

- ➔ The driveway could be lined with an evergreen hedge to cover the caravan site adjacent to the venue (approximately 100m)
- ➔ Better signage to aid the guest's/client's arrival at the venue



- ➔ Maintain one section of the Windsor area fully carpeted and draped so that clients can experience the venue as it would be for an event
- ➔ Utilise the small space at the front of the centre, currently empty, as a display with a table and chairs as if in a wedding or corporate event dependent on who was visiting the site
- ➔ Improve the kitchen facilities



# INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

## MARKETING

### Research

- ➔ Market research into the local business community and its needs would be paramount

### Website

- ➔ It is understood that a new website is about to come online
- ➔ We would recommend that this system have a content management system included to allow for updates such as event imagery and news.

### Brochure

- ➔ Simple and smart events brochures to be designed and printed with a coherent look reflecting the website
- ➔ Both corporate and wedding

### Accredited suppliers

- ➔ We agree that Vanilla Bean would be most suited to manage catering operations inside the venue as both in-house caterers and in the cafe
- ➔ For larger events (over 500 guests) we recommend support for Vanilla Bean from a larger company but under the management of Vanilla Bean.
- ➔ Lighting and production companies would be sourced through a tender process



# INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

## MARKETING

### Focused Campaign

- ➔ Regular promotional events for previous clients and potential clients
- ➔ Regular dialogue through an email newsletter
- ➔ Time set aside to call companies and promote the venues
- ➔ Targeted advertising to niche markets such as Asian and African weddings
- ➔ Wedding packages
- ➔ Theming for Christmas events



# INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

## ADMINISTRATION

### **Dedicated Events Phone Number**

- ➔ This allows for better customer service
- ➔ Regular clients are recognised and dealt with quickly
- ➔ Promotes the events side of the business as a core business which translates as professionalism to a potential client

### **Formulate Events Process**

- ➔ Determine how events will be handled from initial enquiry through to management
- ➔ Support process with correct documentation and IT



## INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

### HUMAN RESOURCES

#### Event Sales Manager

- ➔ It is our belief that there should be at least one member of staff whose sole responsibility would be the sales and marketing of the events spaces at the Lord Roberts Centre.
- ➔ We would suggest someone with at least 3 years experience in a similar role with a proven track record of events sales at a venue. (See appendix i for suggested job description)
- ➔ The concept would be an individual tasked with actively selling the venue spaces.
- ➔ There would also be an element of events management but having Vanilla Bean on site for events the combined experience of the two organisations would enable effective management and shared responsibility.
- ➔ Site visits would be conducted by the event sales manager. Crucially the sales manager would need effective operational knowledge of the venue in order to deal with enquiries.
- ➔ We would advise that an additional sales executive could be employed in 2013/14 in order to further boost sales.



## ESTIMATED INVESTMENT COSTS

At this stage these costs are estimates and are subject to negotiation or in some cases further research. At this stage the salary of the event sales manager has **not** been included.

### Site development

- ➔ Evergreen hedge - £2,000 - £3,000
- ➔ Improvement of signage - £800

### Internal Improvements

- ➔ Permanent display section to Windsor space - £1,000
- ➔ Tasting room display - £500
- ➔ Improve kitchen facilities - £4,500 - £8,000

### Marketing Costs

- ➔ Website development - £1,000 - £2,000
- ➔ IT/Comms - £1,500
- ➔ Brochure printing - £500-£1,500
- ➔ Mailing costs - £300
- ➔ Promotional event - £5,000
- ➔ Market research £1,200
- ➔ Venue listings - £500

TOTAL VENUE INVESTMENT (Over 3 years): £16,000 - £21,500



## CONCLUSION

The underlying concept is one of a methodical and structured approach to manoeuvre the Lord Roberts Centre into the strongest market position in the area.

Additions of a wine list along with commission payments would contribute to the venue hire that would initially start at the lower end of the existing price range.

Initially with some investment into the site infrastructure and improvements in the marketing material the venue could be in a suitable and stable position to begin the marketing process. There would need to be an efficient enquiry process in place to then deal with the events as they came.

The marketing strategy to support growth is one of constant, but not overbearing, dialogue. At strategic points throughout the year newsletters are emailed to existing and potential clients from the database. Promotional events would provide a way to network with clients as well as gain valuable contact information for the database.

Adverts would be placed in niche publications connected with previous events. There would be a concerted effort to court government departments and defense contractors.

The recruitment of an event sales manager and then possibly, at a later date, a sales executive provides a strong foundation to grow the business and allow other members of staff to focus on the logistics and administration.

The potential to earn the projected revenue of £150,000 is almost certainly possible although it would require investment in infrastructure and staff, not to mention time. However in the mid to long-term these investments would be recouped and potential profits increased.

<b>Job Title:</b> Events Sales Manager	<b>Department:</b> Meetings and Events
<b>Reporting to:</b> TBC	
<b>Budget controlled:</b> None <b>Staff reports:</b> No	
<b>Main Purpose of the Job:</b> Responsibility, as a senior team member, for the sales of the Meetings and Events spaces inside the Lord Roberts Centre. This includes targeting of key clients, identifying possible future clients and subsequent account management with regards to retention and expansion of existing business. Focus on financial delivery and quality standards.	
<b>Main Tasks and Accountabilities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To drive the retention and expansion of client business (in line with and in order to achieve overall Meetings and Events annual financial targets).           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify possible new clients and opportunities and actively engage in converting new business</li> <li>▪ Key account management: Responsibility for maintaining and increasing revenue from allocated existing client accounts.</li> <li>▪ Maximise all up-selling potentials.</li> <li>▪ Follow up events, obtain and record feedback with a view to building client relationships and improve the Lord Roberts Centre’s offering.</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ To have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the venue with regards to its offering (including costs and capacities) in order to advise clients of all options available relevant to their particular requirements.</li> <li>▪ To have an in-depth knowledge of the food and beverage offerings.</li> <li>▪ To ensure confirmation of bookings by contracting and invoicing clients within agreed timescales and as per the specified terms and conditions.</li> <li>▪ To manage and oversee events by communicating with clients by phone, email or in person to agree the event details.</li> <li>▪ To ensure that all relevant departments in the Lord Roberts Centre are continually updated with all relevant information to ensure the delivery of a successful event.</li> <li>▪ To attend events when required both during the day and evening.</li> <li>▪ To assist with relevant staff in the development of the Meetings &amp; Events co-ordination process.</li> <li>▪ Have an in-depth knowledge of competitor venues and take part in Meetings &amp; Events exhibitions and promotional events as required.</li> <li>▪ To carry out any other reasonable request as directed by the manager.</li> </ul>	

**Person Spec: Skills & qualifications, experience, attitudes/competencies:**

- Strong sales and business development background
- Passionate about working in the events industry with the ability to achieve and maintain an exceptional level of service at all times
- At least 2/3 years experience at a venue in a similar role.
- To have worked at a large capacity venue, i.e. 200 plus with 4/5\* standards.
- Excellent communication & interpersonal skills.
- High level of initiative, with administrative and organisational ability.
- Understanding of the importance of customer service/satisfaction.
- Tact, discretion and the ability to work quickly under pressure maintaining a high level of accuracy and detail.
- Ability to create relationships with all levels of team - catering, wider team & clients.
- IT literate, including Word, Excel, Outlook & PowerPoint.
- High standard of personal presentation.
- Flexibility in working hours.

**Package:**

Salary of £xxxxx + performance related bonus + benefits