



To: Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health: Councillor Mike Pitt
Report by: Head of Community Development
Relevant scrutiny committee: Community Services Scrutiny Committee 28/6/2012
Wards affected: All Wards

Existing and Planned Community Centres – Future Management Options
Not a Key Decision

1. Executive summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the context for work to explore future management options for the Council's existing community centres and planned facilities in the growth areas.
- 1.2 The report makes recommendations from the first phase of this work which has focused on engagement with our community development staff who work in our existing centres. The recommendations about which management options should be explored have been shaped by the objectives listed at paragraph 4.4 and very much informed by our staff through 2 workshops.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended:

- 2.1 To confirm the overall objectives for any future management arrangements for the Council's community centres set out at paragraph 4.4.
- 2.2 To agree the options highlighted in the report by Marilyn Taylor Associates and set out in paragraphs 5.7, 5.13 and 5.14 be taken forward in Phase 2.
- 2.3 To ask officers to report back in January 2013 with recommendations about future management of the Council's existing community centres and management of the planned Clay Farm centre.

3. Background

- 4.1 The Community Development and Health Portfolio Plan for 2012/13 includes a commitment to review future management options for the Council's existing community centres and those planned in the growth sites. A report to this committee in January informed members that £20,000 had been secured from the Council's Efficiency Fund to undertake the work. This report provides an update on the first phase of this work and seeks agreement from the Executive Councillor on proposed options to explore in more detail as we move forward. The report also gives an update on progress with the procurement of the new Community Facility at Clay Farm.
- 4.2 The main drivers for the review of future centre management are:
- The need to ensure that the services provided through our centres are financially sustainable in the medium to long term in the context of reduced resources and the need for the Council to find significant savings over the next 3 years.
 - Growth of the City.
 - The Localism Act, in particular the 'Right to Challenge' which will allow voluntary and community groups, charities, parish councils, and local authority staff to bid to express an interest in the running of services that the Council currently provides.
 - The general shift towards more community involvement and neighbourhood working.
- 4.3 Given the financial, legislative and social drivers for more community and voluntary sector involvement in the running of local facilities, it is important that we explore options for reducing costs and increasing community involvement. We also need to understand the implications of the new Community Right to Challenge (contained within the Localism Act) and be ready to respond in an appropriate manner if we are challenged, especially if a challenge comes from a large charity or community trust to take over all the community centres that we currently run ourselves. A separate report covering the Community Right to Challenge will be considered by Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Committee on 9th July
- 4.4 Marilyn Taylor Associates (MTA) were appointed to undertake the study using a set of objectives to guide the work. These are shown on page 7 of their Phase 1 report. Having now completed Phase 1, officers propose that they are amended slightly to read as follows:

- To protect access to the City Council’s community centres for all residents, including our most vulnerable and disadvantaged, into the future.
 - To build upon and strengthen the sense of ‘community ownership’ for each centre currently owned and managed by the City Council.
 - To ensure the community centres currently owned and managed by the city council have strong governance and management arrangements that are affordable and sustainable over the longer term.
 - To ensure new community facilities planned for the growth sites at Clay Farm and NIAB1 have management arrangements that ensure the facilities are accessible to all residents, including our most vulnerable and disadvantaged, and that are affordable and sustainable over the longer term.
- 4.5 MTA have now completed the first phase of this work which is set out in their report at Appendix 1. Phase 1 comprised an assessment of how the existing centres are run and 2 workshops with centre staff to help them understand why we need to look at future management options and to ask for their thoughts and ideas. It also included an initial assessment of the management options for the planned centres Clay Farm and the NIAB1 site in north west Cambridge. The planned centre on the University site in north west Cambridge was not included in the study as management options for this centre are currently being discussed under a separate process. However, this study could help to inform those discussions.
- 4.6 The work so far with centre staff has been very important in acknowledging the fantastic work they are doing whilst also being open about the need look to the future and involving them in shaping the options to take forward.

5 Findings from Phase 1

Existing Centres

- 5.1 MTA’s findings were that the Council’s centres are well run, clean and welcoming and valued by those who use them. The willingness and flexibility of centre staff was seen as key. Most centre staff combine their ‘community’ role with a buildings management role. The building’s management role takes a lot of their time and detracts from the amount of time they can spend on community development activities.

5.2 On average across the 7 existing centres, 27% of their cost is recovered through income generation. This varies considerably by centre with Ross Street Community Centre achieving 61% and Brown's Field Youth and Community Centre achieving 8%. In 2011/12 managers were set a challenging target to increase income by 10% which was achieved at each of the main centres. Figures are shown in the table below for 2011/12. Income is actual achieved:

Centre	Expenditure £	Income £	Income as % £
Meadows	431,651	142,805	33%
Brown's Field	220,244	17,686	8%
Buchan Street	87,806	27,792	32%
Ross Street	40,070	24,608	61%
82 Akeman Street	22,897	7,725	34%
Nuns Way	8,593	900*	10%
37 Lawrence Way	5,396	0*	0

* Income is for hire of sports pitches

**Managed by Kings Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership

5.3 It must be recognised that the centres are very different and cater for different needs. For example, Brown's Field was built with young people in mind and has a very strong focus on activities for young people. These types of activities generate very little income. However, we need to look at what we can learn from Ross Street Community Centre which achieves a much higher relative income than any of the other centres.

5.4 Community involvement in the management of the centres is not formalised except for 37 Lawrence Way which is run by Kings Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership with the part time support of a Community Development Officer employed by the Council. The Partnership has expressed an interest in running Nun's Way Pavilion which is situated close to 37 Lawrence Way. It should also be noted that the management of Trumpington Pavilion has already been transferred to Trumpington Residents Association through a long term lease and Service Level Agreement. Some of the centres have a limited number of key holders to enable activities to be run without Council staff present. This works particularly well at Ross Street and means we do not always have to have staff on hand when there are activities at the centre.

5.5 There are many other facilities across the City that are owned and managed by social enterprises, independent or charitable organisations and which provide community space for residents and

local groups. Some of these (e.g. St.Philips Church and Romsey Mill in Mill Road, The Centre at St.Pauls in Hills Road and Squeaky Gate in Norfolk Street) have received capital grants from the City Council through developer contributions. This is often an effective way for the Council to increase community space without committing to future revenue costs. The area needs assessments, which are an integral part of the proposals to devolve decision making about spending of developer contributions to area committees (see report from the Director of Environment elsewhere on this committee's agenda), will enable members and local community groups to identify local need and prioritise how this resource should be used.

5.6 Officers are also engaged with the County Council in exploring the potential to bring some services together in 'community hubs'. For example, it may be feasible to bring together a flexible community space and a library.

5.7 The MTA Phase 1 report recommends that we explore 3 options in Phase 2 of this work:

- Promoting wider community involvement and partnership
 - Greater use of keyholders
 - Closer work and shared resources with other providers
 - Community involvement in the operation of centres
- Externalising facilities management (buildings maintenance and cleaning)

The report highlights 3 groups or levels of externalisation. This recommendation (group 1) is considered the level that presents the least risk to the core business
- Community / social enterprise management

This could be a wholesale transfer to a single trust, individual centre transfers to suitable community organisations (in a similar way to Trumpington Pavilion), or the transfer of a cluster of centres (e.g. in the north of the City).

Planned Centres

5.8 The MTA Phase 1 report noted that the revenue costs for the planned Clay Farm centre will depend on the overall design and on decisions about the management approach and potential for income generation. Planning conditions mean the Council is restricted to non-commercial activity within the centre. However, this does leave the potential to engage a social enterprise to run elements of, or all, the community space (for example, a community café). There will also be

opportunities to consider sharing some of the management costs with our partners, such as a shared cleaning contract, shared reception area etc.

5.9 A design partner for the Clay Farm centre is currently being procured to take forward the design process. This will include extensive consultation with stakeholders and the existing local community. A representative of Trumpington Residents Association is working with us on the procurement of the design team.

5.10 The programme for delivery of the Clay Farm centre is:

- January 2012 – Start procurement of Design Team
- September 2012 – Appoint Design Team
- October to December 2012 – Develop Design for the Centre
- January 2013 – Start procurement of Building Contractor
- March 2013 Secure Planning Approval
- June 2013 – Appoint Building Contractor
- November 2013 - Start on Site
- December 2014 – Complete new Clay Farm Community Centre

5.11 This programme may slip into 2015 as financing will be reliant on developer contributions from the southern fringe sites which are linked to triggers relating to the number of housing completions.

5.12 Proposals for a community facility on the NIAB1 site are still at a very early stage of development but it is anticipated that there will be a community café with a strong youth element. The facility will be provided by developers but the Council will need to decide how the facility will be fitted out and managed. There may be opportunities to bring together management of the existing café at the Meadows Community Centre, which is managed directly by Council staff, with the new café at NIAB1. This could either be retained in-house or potentially contracted or leased to a social enterprise or other provider.

5.13 The MTA Phase 1 report recommends that we explore 3 options for the management of the planned Clay Farm centre in Phase 2 of this work:

- i) The City Council retain ownership and manage the centre
- ii) The City Council retain ownership and building maintenance but operational management is delivered by another partner.

This could include (subject to any legal considerations) an option for Trumpington Residents Association to manage some or all of the 'community use' elements as they do at Trumpington Pavilion.

- iii) The City Council retain ownership but contract out building maintenance. Operational management could be retained, contracted out or delivered as per (ii) above.
This could include contracting out both building maintenance and operational management through an existing contract such as the Leisure Management contract (in a similar way to Cherry Hinton Village Centre).

5.14 The MTA Phase 1 report recommends that we explore 2 options for the management of the planned Community Café at the NIAB1 site in Phase 2 of this work:

- i) The City Council retain ownership and manage the centre
- ii) City Council retain ownership but the centre is leased to a social enterprise or charity

6. Phase 2

6.1 If, following consideration by scrutiny, the Executive Councillor supports the recommendations in this report it is proposed to take forward work as set out in the MTA report. The allocated budget includes further support from MTA to involve ward councillors, staff and community groups to help explore the options further and start to shape proposals.

6.2 It must be emphasised that at this stage in the process, officers are just seeking agreement to explore various options in more detail (with the involvement of ward councillors, staff and local residents). Officers are not, at this stage, asking for any firm decision to be made on management arrangements for the planned centres or any changes to management arrangements in our existing centres. The aim is to present members with a more detailed assessment of each option including the degree of support that it has from stakeholders, the likely cost and the risks.

6.3 The outputs from Phase 2 will be as follows:

Existing Centres November 2012

- i) Proposals for any shared arrangements
- ii) Assessment of community support for asset transfer of any centres and potential community partners (Kings Hedges Neighbourhood

- Partnership have expressed an interest in running Nun's Way Pavilion)
- iii) A clearer picture of community centre provision and expertise available across the city
 - iv) Progress towards market testing buildings maintenance and cleaning for centres through the Leisure Management contract re-tender and/or the proposed buildings cleaning contract.

Clay Farm Centre November 2012

- i) Appraisal of the support, practicalities and likely cost for each of the three options.
- ii) Recommendation on the preferred management arrangements.

NIAB1 Community Café April 2013

- i) Appraisal of the support, practicalities and likely cost for the 2 options.

7. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

These are unclear at present but the work will identify and shape options for members to consider that will:

- Reduce revenue costs and/or raise income across our existing community centres
- Enable the Council to budget for the future revenue costs of the planned centres

(b) Staffing Implications (if not covered in Consultations Section)

Depending upon the options eventually agreed by members, there could be significant implications for staff working in our existing community centres. Centre staff have been fully involved in shaping the initial options in the Phase 1 work and will be involved in exploring them in more detail in Phase 2.

Any robust bid made by organisations under the new Community Right to Challenge to run the Council's community centres would trigger a procurement exercise.

(c) Equal Opportunities Implications

The Council's community centres and the community centres and rooms owned by others in the city are instrumental in providing safe and affordable community space for residents and groups to meet. The Council's existing centres are situated in areas of the city where

income is often low and where many people are vulnerable. They are often used by BME groups, elderly residents and young people.

An Equalities Impact Assessment will need to be carried out as work progresses to inform decisions about any changes.

(d) **Environmental Implications**

Any environmental implications will be highlighted when proposals are brought forward for consideration.

(e) **Consultation**

There has been involvement of centre staff during Phase 1 of this work and they will continue to be fully involved during Phase 2 along with ward councillors, residents and other stakeholders.

(f) **Community Safety**

Any community safety implications will be highlighted when proposals are brought forward for consideration. The planned Clay Farm centre will include touch down space for the Police.

8. **Background papers**

These background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

8.1 Report to Community Services Scrutiny Committee on Clay Farm Community Centre, January 2012

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8.2 Community Development and Health Portfolio Plan 2012/13

9. **Appendices**

9.1 Future Options Review - Cambridge Community Centres Phase 1 May 2012

10. **Inspection of papers**

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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