

Cambridge City Council Community Development Service
Review of the Future Management of Community Centres 2012/13
Package of documents provided by Marilyn Taylor Associates:

1. Phase 1 Options Review
2. Summary of Survey of Centre operators
3. Workshop 1 20th Oct 2012
4. Workshop 2 22nd Jan 2013
5. Examples of provision at other Councils



FUTURE OPTIONS REVIEW

CAMBRIDGE COMMUNITY CENTRES

Phase One
May 2012



Marilyn Taylor Associates Limited

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Do you have young children?
 Come along and meet some new friends at The Meadows Children & Family Wing. Welcoming Family Support Drop-Ins are held on Tuesdays from 9.30 am - 12.30 pm with a community lunch and on Fridays from 9.30 am - 12.00 pm with a community play, arts and crafts along and enjoy games, parachute, play and help you with a wide range of issues, or perhaps just to offer a listening ear. We run a selection of groups throughout the year, such as: C.A.R.E. (Children and Adolescent Resilience) - a parenting course with a Massage - where you can bring your baby and Smiles - would like help giving your child a smile. Are your children a term time we offer Tuesdays. Local variety of fun activities.

English classes
 There are free classes at 82 Akeman St Community Centre. Please contact Dashlina for more details.


Breakfast and After School Club
 TJ Kids provides quality Breakfast and After School childcare provision for children aged 4 to 11 years operating from Ross Street Community Centre throughout the year. The after school service currently collects from two local primary schools - St Philips and Redfield but also offers a drop-in session for children who do not attend these schools.

Easter Holidays
 Week 1: Monday 2nd April to Thursday 5th April
 Tuesday 13th April to Friday 16th April
 Choose from action, packed fun games in our outdoor space, getting creative with Arts and Craft, to Singing and Dancing plus we have a wide range of activities and games available each day. Sessions are aimed at children aged 4 to 11 and are based at Ross Street Community Centre. Full day sessions are £20.00 but we also offer flexible packages to meet your needs.

Come and Play Parent and Toddler Group
 Sessions run on Mondays 10.30 to 12 at Ross Street Community Centre and aimed at 0-4 year olds. We have a wide range of toys and activities including soft play, refreshments are available. For more information on any of our services or to book a place contact TJ Kids on 07781 425789 or email tjkids@sky.com

TJ Kids
 COMMUNITY INTEREST CAN

Come and Celebrate International Women's Day 2012



Location: Ross Street Community Centre, off Mill Road, Cambridge.
Date: 3rd March 2012
Time: 10.30 pm - 7.30 pm

Activities: Indian and Bollywood dancing, poetry, and a WELCOME.

50 + Friends Group

The 50+ Friends groups is open to both men and women and welcomes everybody over the age of 50. The friendly group meets every third Thursday of the month 3:00pm - 4:15pm at 82 Akeman St Community Room. There is a fee of 50p per session which goes towards the group funds; when a significant amount has been collected the group decide what activities to spend the money on. You can come to chat and have some tea and cake, and if you would like to, join in the activities, which have so far included singing, BBQ, quiz, art and craft, and a boat trip along the River Cam.



Executive Summary & Recommendations

Background

This review has been commissioned by Cambridge City Council to explore future sustainable management and ownership options for both existing and planned community and neighbourhood centres to inform a long term management strategy. The review process is divided into three phases of work; this report presents information and conclusions from phase one and proposes a programme of further work for phase two.

Seven community facilities are currently under direct City Council management through the Community Development Team. Overall the total annual budget costs for seven buildings was £816,657 in 2011/12. 27% of these costs are offset by income from premises hire (noting that current management policies are not overtly focused on earning income from functions and other private hire).

Summary Findings

The review finds that the community buildings managed through the City Council are well-run, well-used and well-maintained. The activities within them are predominantly promoting health and wellbeing, and are aimed at disadvantaged and vulnerable residents in line with the mission for the service. Two of the centres have purpose-built youth wings (with substantial involvement by Chypps)¹. Community development expertise is a vital component within the staff teams operating the buildings, although building management responsibilities do tend to dominate staff time.

Community involvement in the management of the centres is not formalised, and is mainly restricted to the use of approved keyholders to enable activities to take place without Council staff being present (which facilitates greater access to the centres, and increases income). However, the Council operate one of the buildings on behalf of a Neighbourhood Partnership, and have also passed management responsibilities for another building – not included within this study – to a residents association. The report notes the increasing trend for community facilities to be transferred to community management, and also notes the current extent of community centre provision across the City which is managed through independent, charitable and social enterprise organisations. There are currently no formal mechanisms in place for liaison and partnership with this extensive independent network, although the managers of Council centres do liaise effectively with providers of centres that are adjacent to them within the local areas.

Planned New Provision

The new joint services/community facility proposed at Clay Farm is being commissioned through a multi-agency Project Team is currently moving to procurement of a design team. The design of the building will be a critical determinant of operational costs, but as yet no decisions have been made about how the building will be managed. It is noted that options for income generation are limited, given proposed uses and the restrictions on commercial activity. The report suggests three broad options that could be considered for the building's management:

¹ The City Council's Children and Young People's Participation Service

- 1) City Council own and manage in line with policies in place for all the other centres operated through the Community Development Team
- 2) City Council retain ownership and building maintenance responsibility but operational management is delivered by other occupying organisations (eg the County Council, NHS Cambridgeshire, the RSL or Trumpington Residents Association)
- 3) City Council own the freehold of the building, but put the operational management of the premises out to tender on the basis of a jointly prepared specification

The report also briefly explores another new community facility being proposed for the site known as NIAB1.² Again the future ownership and management arrangements for this building (currently proposed as predominantly a café facility) are not yet determined. However, given the premises are quite small, it is noted that this facility might lend itself more readily to externalised management, possibly through a social enterprise.

Future Management Options

It is suggested that there are three main categories of potential change to the way the Council's community centres currently operate (and which are equally applicable to the new planned provision):

- (a) Promoting wider involvement and partnership in community centre operations
- (b) Externalising management, or management functions
- (c) Exploring community management or social enterprise models

Conclusions and Proposals for Phase Two

There are three main conclusions arising from phase one of this review:

- 1) The Council's provision is well run and well used, targeted firmly on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities; apart from the need to ensure that management arrangements are cost effective and financially efficient, there is no overriding need for change.
- 2) Current government policy for 'localism' promotes the development of more proactive community involvement in delivering public provision such as community centres. Whilst there are several existing arrangements of this kind within the city, these approaches could perhaps be pursued more proactively, building stronger partnership with local people and tapping into expertise across the wider community and voluntary sector.
- 3) Given the planned expansion in community facilities to support housing growth, it may be timely to re-examine the management model in order to ensure that all facilities can thrive into the future, whichever organisation is responsible for the provision; both a city-wide and neighbourhood partnership approach is essential to facilitate this.

² National Institute of Agricultural Botany

Proposals for Phase Two of the work programme for this review are therefore recommended as follows:

(a) Existing Centres

Timing: complete by November 2012

- Hold community workshops, on a neighbourhood basis, to explore the issues and recommendations in this report with ward councillors, community development staff, community groups and residents.
Outputs:
 - *proposals for shared arrangements*
 - *assessment of community support for asset transfer and potential community partners*
- Include existing centres in this year's Leisure Management Tender to market test buildings maintenance and cleaning.
Outputs:
 - *clarity about whether contracting out this service is financially advantageous*
- Further explore the value of city-wide consultation on the issues explored in this report, preceded by a short survey questionnaire seeking information on how centres see their future development over the next 5 years, the major challenges they expect to encounter, and their interest in potential growth/expansion through asset transfer.
Outputs:
 - *a clearer picture of community centre provision and expertise available across the city*
 - *assessment of interest in asset transfer and potential community partners*
- Continue liaison with the County Council to assess potential development of community hubs linked to the provision of developer contributions towards capital costs of building adaptations.
Outputs:
 - *clarity on priority areas and potential linkages to this programme*

(b) Clay Farm Community Facility

Timing: complete by November 2012

- Hold community workshops to explore the issues and recommendations in this report with relevant stakeholders, ward councillors, community development staff, community groups and residents.
Outputs:
 - *appraisal of the support, practicalities and likely cost implications for each of the three options outlined in this report as suitable for future management of the new facility*
 - *recommendations to the Council on the preferred management arrangements*

(c) NIAB1 Community Facility

Timing: complete by April 2013

- Hold community workshops to explore the issues and recommendations in this report with ward councillors, community development staff, community groups and residents.

Outputs:

- *appraisal of the support, practicalities and likely cost for each of the two options suggested in this report as suitable for future management of the new facility*
- *recommendations to the Council on the preferred management arrangements*

Section One

Background to the Options Review

Cambridge City Council currently owns and manages seven premises as community centres, staffed and operated through a team within the Community Development section of the Customer and Community Services Division (one on behalf of Kings Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership).³ Consultants Marilyn Taylor Associates have been appointed, following a competitive tender process, to carry out an options appraisal study exploring future sustainable management and ownership options for both existing and planned community and neighbourhood centres to inform a long term management strategy.

What was the brief for the review?

The City Council established four objectives for the review, as follows:

- To protect access to the City Council's community centres for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents 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 the city's more vulnerable and disadvantaged residents and that are affordable and sustainable over the longer term.

What was done?

The programme of work has been divided into three phases:

Phase One: An initial review of community centre operations (and of planned new provision), working with the staff team to explore strengths and weaknesses of current management arrangements, and identifying options for improvement.

Phase Two: Wider consultation and further work to detail preferred options and prepare for implementation.

Phase Three: Preparation and management of an implementation plan.

³ Community Development is responsible for grants for leisure and sustainability projects, design and management of community centres, neighbourhood community development, and the Children and Young People's Participation Service (Chypps).

This report presents the findings from Phase One of the study, allowing for discussions with elected Members before further work on preferred approaches is taken forward through subsequent phases of work. Whilst some recommendations are proposed at this stage; the emphasis is on exploring the various options available for securing the future of both existing and planned new provision, and the potential risks involved in such approaches.

Why is this a timely review?

There are three main drivers for a review of centre provision and management arrangements at this time:

- a) the increasing importance of the 'neighbourhood' as an important layer of decision-making and service delivery, particularly through the Government's Localism agendas and their aim to support communities play a more active part in both these activities;
- b) achieving financial and resource efficiency;
- c) the projected increase in community provision to support new settlements being constructed in and around the city and the need to plan appropriate, and financially sustainable, management arrangements

The first of these, the implications of Localism, requires some explanation. Together with the Government's 'Open Public Services' reform agenda, they form an important policy backdrop to the review. The new provisions follow on from a period of rapid expansion in community asset transfer. Many local authorities already partner with local community organisations to manage their community buildings, usually through lease arrangements (as indeed Cambridge City Council does for the Trumpington Pavilion, where management is outsourced to the Trumpington Residents Association). Recent years have seen a shift to much more widespread transfer of council community buildings to community organisations to manage directly, either through freehold ownership or through lease arrangements (a recent example of a local authority outsourcing its community centre management functions is at Northampton; a brief summary of their approach is provided in Appendix 1 to this report).⁴ Such arrangements have also spread to include libraries, youth centres and leisure facilities such as swimming pools, particularly where services have been otherwise threatened by closure due to financial restraints.

A brief summary of relevant provisions now follows:

Localism Act

The Localism Act is the Government's principal mechanism for promoting their aims to decentralise power for decision-making and service delivery downwards and outwards to the lowest possible level, including individuals, neighbourhoods, professionals and communities as well as local councils and other local institutions. There are two new community 'rights' of particular relevance to the Council's current responsibilities for providing and managing community and neighbourhood centres:⁵

⁴ Many case studies, information and resources to support community asset transfer can be accessed at www.atu.org.uk

⁵ Further information about these new provisions can be found at www.communityrights.communities.gov.uk

Right to Bid: designed to provide communities with opportunities to bid to buy and take over the running of assets that are of value to the local community where the owner decides to sell them

- a 'list of assets of community value' will be compiled by local authorities⁶
- local communities can request for particular assets to be included on the list
- if the owner decides to sell a listed asset the authority must inform the community giving them 6 weeks to decide on whether to bid for it and 6 months to submit a bid to buy it

Right to Challenge: linked to the diversification of public services delivery, this new right is designed to provide organisations, or service staff, with opportunities to challenge councils to let them bid to run local services. If the council accepts the proposal, it must start a procurement exercise, inviting interested bodies to bid for the contract to run the service

Open Public Services 2012⁷

In July 2011, the Government published the Open Public Services White Paper, and has just published a progress report and plans for the ongoing programme of reform. This includes work on neighbourhood-level decision-making and service delivery, particularly:

- the Government is consulting on detailed proposals to make it easier to establish new Neighbourhood Councils, looking at how Neighbourhood Forums (for example those established to develop neighbourhood plans) can more easily and straightforwardly form Neighbourhood Councils
- work is also proposed on the development of model schemes for Neighbourhood Councils, making clear what powers can be devolved to neighbourhoods and the kinds of assets that can best be managed at community level

Community Budgets

A Community Budget gives local public service partners the freedom to work together to redesign services around the needs of citizens with the aim of improving outcomes, reducing duplication and waste. The initial focus is on services for 'troubled families' with 16 initial pilots now underway, 50 more expected in 2012 and a further 60 in 2013. These aim to include both statutory and voluntary sector providers. Rollout to all authorities is expected in 2015.⁸ It is perhaps too early to assess implications. However, some of the activities currently organised in the Council's community centres, and certainly the activities of some of the statutory and voluntary services using the centres, could be considered relevant to 'troubled family' community budget approaches.

⁶ It is assumed that all the City Council's community centres would be placed on the list.

⁷ http://files.openpublicservices.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/HMG_OpenPublicServices_web.pdf



⁸ There are also currently four areas piloting 'whole place community budgets', and ten areas piloting 'neighbourhood-level' community budgets. For more information see:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/communitybudgets/>




Section Two



Review of Current Operations

The seven community and neighbourhood centres currently operated directly by Cambridge City Council are briefly summarised in the Table below. It is important to note that the premises are widely varied – in size, in the localities they serve and in the provisions they offer. They are also predominantly clustered in neighbourhoods which house more disadvantaged or vulnerable residents, particularly housing estates or mixed residential areas with low-value housing.⁹

Name of Centre	Description/Commentary	Costs 2011/12
Arbury Ward		
<p>Meadows</p> 	<p>Largest of the purpose-built centres; widely used by groups and organisations from across the city, as well as more local use (particularly of the separate Youth and Children's Wings). The centre contains the popular Munchbox café (open 9-2pm M-F) and offers catering services for conferences/meetings etc. The building is in high demand, with constant use all day, and evenings to 10pm, with some Saturday use. The centre is always staffed when open; groups are not key holders here. Chypps run the Youth Centre 3 nights a week. The Children & Families Wing is shared by two community organisations.</p>	<p>Expenditure: £431,651</p> <p>Income: £142,805 (33% of costs)</p>
<p>Nuns Way Pavilion</p> 	<p>The pavilion (constructed in 2003) has a main meeting and activity room, kitchen area and office accommodation, located within playing fields. Changing rooms at the opposite end of the pavilion can cater for up to four football teams and officials. The premises are not staffed, and are currently managed through the Meadows team. Considered to be under-used, there have been negotiations to transfer the premises to the King's Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership (see Lawrence Way below).</p>	<p>Expenditure: £8,593</p> <p>Income: minimal</p>

⁹ Current valuations of the properties have not been made available to the consultant, but it is assumed that the buildings are included in the Council's Asset Management Strategy.

<p>82 Akeman Street</p> 	<p>This property (owned by the Council's Housing Department) is part of a row of shops and provides an accessible neighbourhood meeting space on the ground floor, with a garden at the rear and offices above. Used as a base by the Arbury Neighbourhood Community Project, and by a wide range of ethnic minority groups. Activities include language classes, Sure Start, parenting, internet access and Credit Union. Most of the users are key holders to the premises.</p>	<p>Expenditure: £22,897</p> <p>Income: £7,725 (34% of costs)</p>
<p>King's Hedges Ward</p>		
<p>Buchan Street</p> 	<p>Open since 1990, and recently refurbished, this purpose-built centre offers a large hall and several smaller meeting rooms, a welcoming foyer area and a small kitchen/servery. Main use is M-F, up to 9pm; limited weekend use currently. Regular users are key holders.</p> <p>This centre's manager works in close partnership with the nearby Orchard Park community centre operated through the recently established Neighbourhood Council there.</p>	<p>Expenditure: £87,806</p> <p>Income: £27,792 (32% of costs)</p>
<p>37 Lawrence Way</p> 	<p>This is a small house located next to neighbourhood shops (owned by the Council's Housing Department and leased to the King's Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership). It has a small meeting room (for about 20 persons) upstairs, office/reception and a rear garden area. The Community Worker for the Partnership is employed and managed by the Council as part of the Community Development team.</p>	<p>Expenditure: £5,396</p> <p>Income goes direct to King's Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership, towards the rental charge for the premises.</p>

<p>Romsey Ward</p> <p>Ross Street</p> 	<p>A former school, now run as a local neighbourhood centre, housing a good size hall with kitchen facilities, a community room and a meeting room.</p> <p>This is a thriving and busy centre – relatively cheap to hire, and popular for parties. Most regular users are key holders.</p>	<p>Expenditure: £40,070</p> <p>Income: £24,608 (61% of costs)</p>
<p>East Chesterton Ward</p> <p>Browns Field</p> 	<p>This innovatively designed building opened in 2005 following a community campaign for better facilities in the area. It has a large foyer, a hall with sprung floor, a family room, two meeting rooms and a youth wing, with generous kitchen/catering facilities. There is also an attractive outdoor and garden area at the rear of the centre. The centre is located within a small open space, not on a main thoroughfare. This premises is in substantial use by young people (with extensive input from Chypps) and is always staffed by a minimum of 2 persons; key holders are not used.</p>	<p>Expenditure: £220,244</p> <p>Income: £17,686 (8% of costs)</p>

Expenditure and Income

Overall the total annual budget costs for the seven buildings was **£816,657** in 2011 (adjusted to take account of income, costs totalled **£596,020**). The bulk of this expenditure is allocated towards staffing costs. All centres are currently up to their full staff complement, but many of these positions are part-time. There is also substantial input from the Children and Young People's Participation Service (Chypps) who run programmes at both Meadows and Browns Field.

Total income, as a proportion of overall costs, was 27% in the last full financial year, and is an improvement on previous years. Hire charges vary across the facilities, but are divided into 3 categories:

- **Business/Social:** This (the highest) rate is for groups, organisations or individuals making a profit from the booking, and where usually the organisers will be paid. This rate is also charged for weddings, discos, parties and other private hire.
- **Citywide Groups and Organisations:** This is the rate used for organisations whose users/members predominantly live outside the local area.
- **Local Community Groups:** This is a preferential lower rate for groups and organisations where the majority of their users/members (50% or more) live inside the local area.

Typical Weekly Activities:

Brown's Field Youth and Community Centre, 31a Green
End Road, East Chesterton, Cambridge CB4 1RU



Week Commencing 09/01/2012

Contact Number	Day & Activity	Time	Cost
Monday			
07808520576	Little learners Playgroup	9.15am – 12.15pm	£27pw
01223 361494	Shirley Toddler Group	9.30am – 11.30am	£1.50
01223 420309	The Sunshine Club (55+) (every other Monday)	1.30pm – 3.00pm	Free
01223 420309	Junior Club (Ages 7-11)	3.30pm – 5.00pm	Free
07769336369	Renaissance Fitness	7.30pm – 8.30pm	Free
01223 307488	Young Carers (every other Monday)	5.15pm – 7.45pm	Free
Tuesday			
01223 426710	Music and Movement for under 4's	9.30am – 10.30am	Free
01223 361494	Childminders Playtime	11.00am – 11.45am	£1.00
07909560794	Zumba!	1.00pm – 2.00pm	£4.00
01223 329293	Over 50's Folk Dance	2.00pm – 4.00pm	?
01223 420309	Youth Club (Ages 11-17)	7.00pm – 8.30pm	Free
Wednesday			
01223 423538	Over 60's	9am – 11am	£1.00
07808520576	Little learners Playgroup	9.15am – 12.15pm	£27pw
01223 361494	Childminders (only Childminders)	9.30am – 11.30am	£1.00
01223 420309	Family Fun!	3.15pm – 5.00pm	Free
07842627837	For Everyone! (Children must be accompanied by a parent/carer).	6.15pm – 7.15pm	£6.00
07769336369	Renaissance Fitness	7.30pm – 8.30pm	Free
Thursday			
01223 508144	Thursdays Together – Family Support	10.00am – 2.00pm	50p
07800566334	Over 50's Pilates	2.15pm – 3.15pm	£2.50
01223 420309	Forever Active Members £2.50 Non Members £3	2.15pm – 3.15pm	£3.00
01223 420309	BF Boys Group (Closed Group) Ages 11-16 Please Book a Place	4.30pm – 6.00pm	Free
01223 420309	BF Girls Group (Closed Group) Ages 11-16 Please Book a Place	4.30pm – 6.00pm	Free
01223 210900	KFA Moves	7.30pm – 8.30pm	£3.00
Friday			
07808520576	Little learners Playgroup	9.15am – 12.15pm	£27pw
01223 420309	BF Adult Art Group	9.30am – 11.00am	Free
01223 420309	Eat and Meet (over 50's and friends)	10.30am – 12.00	£1
Saturday			
01223 420309	Soft Play – Chesterton Parent Group	10.00 – 12.00pm	?
01223 420309	Brown's Field Film Club + Brunch (Ages 7+)	11.00am – 1.00pm	Free
Sunday			
01223 514313	Turkish Kurdish Speakers in Cambridge (Once a month)	12.00pm – 15.00pm	Free



Ross Street Community Centre
Regular Activities

Monday – Friday		
	Breakfast, After School and Holiday Clubs	Contact: Jo or Tanya (TJ Kids) tjkids@sky.com 07787 425799
Monday		
10.30am-12pm	Come and Play Parent and Toddler Group	Contact: Jo or Tanya (TJ Kids) tjkids@sky.com 07787 425799
5.30pm-7pm	Dance Offensive (Youth dance)	Contact: Paul Sadot 07880 787706
7pm-8.30pm	Yoga Class	Contact: Penny Lutoslawska 07957 104031
Tuesday		
1pm-3.30pm	Anchal Group (2nd Wed of month)	Contact: Jamila Rehman Jamila.rehman@hotmail.com
7pm-9pm	Romsey Garden Club (2nd Tues of month Sept-May)	Contact: Keith Jordan keithjordan@waitrose.com 07729 892519
8pm-10pm	Little Chairs Theatre Company	Contact: John Lawlor johnlawlor55@hotmail.com
Wednesday		
10am-12pm	Jim Knopf Spielgruppe (German toddler group)	Contact: Sibylle Hutter sib_bille@hotmail.com 01223 971127
Thursday		
10am-12pm	Semillitas (Spanish toddler group)	Contact: Mali Salazar socknort@googlemail.com
1.45pm-3.15pm	Talking in Tune (Singing workshop)	Contact: Rowena Whitehead 01223 573288
7pm-8.30pm	Singaway Singing for fun	Contact: Penny Lutoslawska 07957 104031
Friday		
9.30am-11am	Merry-Go-Round Toy Library (1st & 3rd Fri of month)	Contact: merrygoroundtoylibrary@googlemail.com
10.30am-11.30am	Baby Signing	Contact: Bethan Ellish cambridgebabysigning@gmail.com
4pm-6pm	Semillotas (Spanish after-school group)	Contact: Eva Figueroa eva.figueroa@ntlworld.com
Saturday		
10am-11.30am	Little Bookworms Family Library (Children's books & activities)	Contact: Dan Pitt dan_pitt@hotmail.co.uk
Sunday		
10.30am-12pm	Church of Christ	Contact: Cyril Weinman 01223 360948

Perceptions of the Centres and their Operation

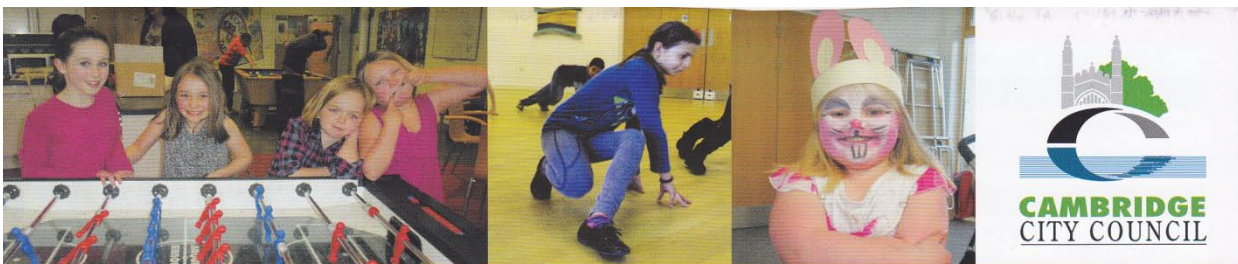
The consultant visited all the centres (except for Nuns Way Pavilion). These visits were instructive. The centres are without exception beautifully presented, clean and welcoming premises. They feel like valued and cared-for places, with excellent information displays, evident personal touches, photos and artwork from events and user groups all adding to a non-institutional atmosphere.

User Groups

The centres' provision is aimed at many of the city's most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents and whilst some of the facilities could be marketed more aggressively to bring in income, this would detract from this primary role. Viewed as a whole, the mission underpinning the centres' use is predominantly health and wellbeing focused. Some activities are organised directly by centre staff (like the Soft Play sessions at Buchan Street); others are run by people who hire the spaces to teach exercise and dance classes (charging a fee to cover their costs), for use by local services such as Sure Start, or for meetings of community organisations, a base for hobby or interest groups, and for social activities organised by local people. All the centres provide important meeting spaces for ethnic minority community groups, and support to minority communities forms a strong component within the outreach community development work of the relevant staff.

Only the Meadows functions as a major conference facility (its main hall can accommodate up to 150 persons) and private hire for weddings/parties etc is very low across most of the buildings, largely because the service focus is not, as noted above, on generating income from private hire or the conference market. Other community centre providers operating in Cambridge, which have a stronger need to self-finance, do cater more proactively for private hire, weddings and functions. A good example is the Centre at St Paul's on Hills Road, which is briefly described at Appendix 2.

Youth provision is also a strong component in several of the centres – particularly Browns Field and Meadows which have purpose-designed youth wings (although at Browns Field the wing is integral to the building, without the separate access and operation that the wing at Meadows allows).



Brown's Field Youth and Community Centre Easter Programme 2012

31A Green End Road, East Chesterton, Cambridge, CB4 1RU
Tel: 01223 420309 Email: brownsfield@cambridge.gov.uk www.cambridge.gov.uk

Many of the centres have regular users from within their surrounding neighbourhoods for whom they are a vital resource and opportunity for social connection (particularly parents with young children, and older people). For example, the café at Meadows has a core group of pensioners who eat their lunches there most days, and the Crochet/Knitting group at Lawrence Way provides genuine social support, checking up on absent members and offering informal care arrangements. It is hard to put a price on the value of many of these activities.

The King's Hedges Community News	Spring 2012
<p>THE HEALTHY LIVING PROJECT</p> <p>The Healthy Living project aims to improve the general health of residents who participate through social events and projects.</p> <p>Broaden Your Horizons ~ A Healthy Living Project for Over 55's</p> <p>Broaden Your Horizons arrange social events for over 55's including parties, outings, quizzes and walks.</p> <p>The New Year Cheer event was held on January 26th. We decided to move our annual Christmas party to the New Year as many of our local residents have a busy social schedule in December, but it all goes a bit quiet in January. What better way to cheer everyone up in the cold, dark month than a bit of singing and dancing? Over 40 people enjoyed the sing-a-long style of our entertainer who sang songs from the war period, the 60's and popular music everyone knew.</p>  <p>For more information about up and coming events, please contact us on 508149 or bsnc@cambridge.gov.uk to be added to our contact list.</p> <p>8</p>	<p>THE HEALTHY LIVING PROJECT</p> <p>Our holistic view means we aim to provide opportunities for residents to find fun, social activity, and exercise the mind and the body.</p> <p>The Soft Play Project ~ a Healthy Living Project for under 4's and their carers.</p> <p>The soft play project is held at Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre every Friday except Christmas and bank Holidays. We have three sessions from 9.15 – 10.15; 10.30 – 11.30; 11.30 – 12.30. Each session costs £2.50 or £4 for two siblings. There are concessionary rates for children of parents on key benefits including HB, IS, JSA.</p> <p>The play equipment is varied, colourful and great fun for small children. It's a perfect environment to help your child learn risk in a safe setting, to socialise, to play well, to share, to use their imagination and to let loose. We encourage carers to play with the children on the equipment.</p> <p>We also run a small, affordable café alongside the project from 9.30 until noon. We sell drinks and simple breakfast food and treats, so carers can make friends and encourage children to learn how to enjoy the experience of eating out socially.</p> <p>Some sessions get full, so booking ahead is advisable. We take booking up to one week in advance. To book a place or for more information, please telephone 508149.</p>  <p>The Tuesdays</p> <p>The Tuesdays meet (unsurprisingly!) on a Tuesday at Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre between 10.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. The group mainly attracts people between 40 and retirement age, but anyone is welcome.</p> <p>Coffee and a chat is enjoyed by all and is often followed by something fun. Lots of activities have been tried and shared by the group including card making, knitting, crochet, clay modelling, painting, quizzes and sometimes, just an old fashioned natter.</p> <p>For more information phone us on 508149 or pop in on a Tuesday!</p> <p>9</p>

Staff Roles and Flexibility

A key foundation for the smooth running and operation of the centres is the willingness and flexibility of their staff teams. Most of the Centre Managers combine the role with general community development responsibilities, although at times the needs of building management, sorting out maintenance, malfunctions, breakages etc can dominate and detract from their community outreach work. Buildings are 'hungry and demanding' of their time, and most say they would like to be able to do more community development work. The view was often expressed that with more time for community development, more community groups and activities could be supported and helped to make use of the centres (although it would then be correspondingly more difficult to accommodate additional use given that the centres are mostly operating at full capacity within current staffing levels).

Other staff within the centres, such as caretakers and administrators, take a flexible approach to their work, assisting with most tasks, and rearranging shifts to ensure cover when others are absent, etc. There is a strong and evident 'team' ethos within each centre, and this level of staff commitment and pride adds considerable value to not only the centres' general operation, but also represents exceptional value for money.

Centre managers also have quite longstanding ties with their neighbourhoods, and are highly knowledgeable about the fine grain of community groups and local issues. They are seen, and used, by other frontline service staff for information, help and advice, acting as first point of call for many queries. They are a vital 'networking' resource.

Community Involvement

With the exception of Lawrence Way (where the staff are managed on behalf of the King's Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership), there are no formal arrangements to involve local residents (or user groups) in the management arrangements for the centres. However, some centres do allow regular users to be 'keyholders', operating their activities within the centres without council staff being present. This enables greater use to be made of the buildings than might otherwise be possible within current staffing levels, and increases the income levels (this is most noticeable at Ross Street for example).

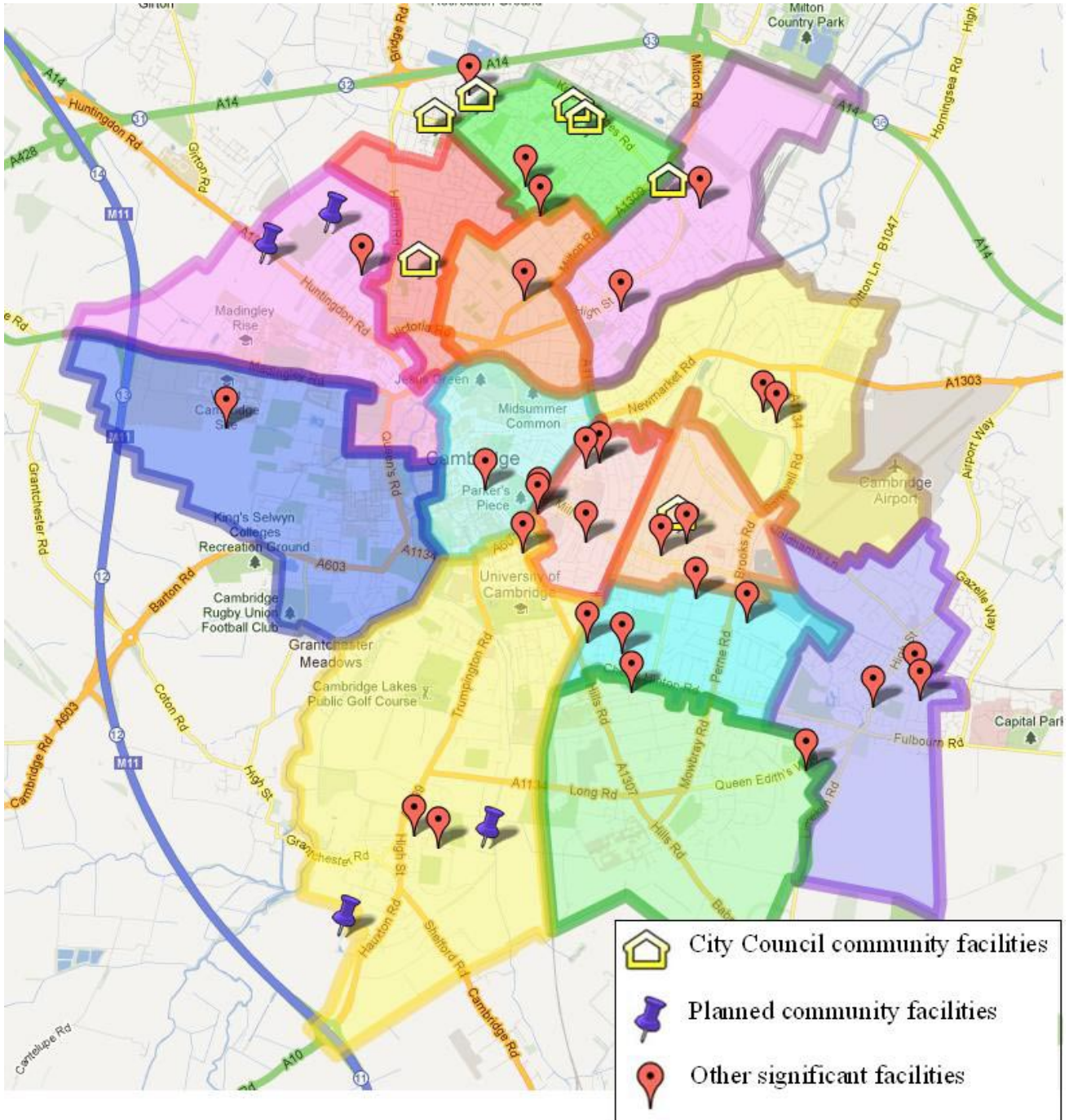
Liaison with other Community Centres

The City Council is not the only provider of multi-purpose community centres and there is a wide variety of other provision. Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service was recently commissioned to update the publication 'Cambridge Facilities in the City of Cambridge', originally compiled in 2004. This list of all community centre and community meeting space provision (eg that contained within schools, sheltered housing, provided by churches etc) contains a total of 187 different facilities - although the provision itself is highly varied. The map overleaf shows the main multi-use provision (ie that which is broadly similar to the Council's community centres) plotted across the city.

Council community centre managers have good informal liaison arrangements in place with other nearby centres which helps to ensure sensible use of the spaces available across the buildings, and also allows for publicity co-ordination through community newsletters such as 'Chesterton News'. For example, there is a strong relationship between Buchan Street and the new centre serving the Orchard Park community just over the city border in South Cambridgeshire (run under the auspices of the new Neighbourhood Council established there). Similarly there are good relationships with Arbury Community Centre in King's Hedges (which receives some grant funding from the City Council), and close co-operation between Browns Field and the St Andrews Hall in Chesterton, and Ross Street and Romsey Mill. There are many other examples.

However, liaison is not formalised across the neighbourhoods through any shared resource arrangements, and there is currently no opportunity for all community centre providers in Cambridge to come together for joint review, planning and support.

Community Provision in Cambridge



Section Three

Planned New Provision

Cambridge is a rapidly expanding city, accommodating several large residential development schemes over the next few years. Working together with partners, a high value is placed on the importance of enabling the rapid development of strong social and community networks through the early provision of community facilities, encouraging resident interaction (and building links with existing residents in surrounding neighbourhoods).

This approach is working particularly well within the Trumpington community, where the council (and its partners) have worked together with the Trumpington Residents Association to develop proposals for a multi-use community facility as part of the Clay Farm development. There are also emerging proposals for community facilities as part of the National Institute of Agricultural Botany (NIAB) site, which are also briefly examined in this section.¹⁰

1 Clay Farm Community Centre

Outline planning permission has been granted for the development of up to around 4,000 new homes on the Southern Fringe of Cambridge on three sites: Clay Farm (up to 2,300), Glebe Farm (350), and Trumpington Meadows (1,200). Bell School (350), the fourth site within the Southern Fringe, is not yet fully approved. Extensive discussions were held as part of the master-planning of the Southern Fringe about the need for community facilities to serve the new community. Experiences elsewhere have demonstrated the value of co-location and shared buildings between both service providers and community organisations. For example, the Cambridgeshire Library Services report 'Foundations for the Future: 20 Years of Library Redevelopment in Cambridgeshire states:

"The co-location of a library alongside other major service providers in a shared building brings advantages for all the services and users involved. The key to the success of co-location is a seamless design, offering shared entrances and integrated facilities, allowing customers and visitors to move between the services without unnecessary barriers. The advantages of co-location include:

- *maximum use made of one building*
- *funding focused on one building*
- *building maintenance costs shared*
- *additional customer footfall for shared services"*

It is now agreed that a new shared services and community facility will be provided at the heart of Clay Farm, fronting the new square, to be designed as a high profile building that reflects the Council's objectives for low carbon living, and containing the following facilities:

- community space comprising a multi-use hall with sprung floor, suitable for performance and exhibition, and flexible meeting rooms

¹⁰ A new community facility is also proposed as part of the North West Cambridge University site but discussions are at too early a stage to be included in this review. However, the conclusions and programme of work resulting from the review will provide an important context for future decisions about this site, and others in the future.

- a community café large enough to be viable
- a youth wing with games area, band & DJ room, and space for craft activities
- a public library with internet access and areas for lending and reading materials
- a health centre with consultation rooms for eight general practitioners, flexible spaces for primary care support services, waiting areas, and a minor surgery suite
- residential accommodation – up to 20 affordable flats
- touchdown facilities and accommodation for Police and social services and other providers
- car parking for essential staff and emergency vehicles with external areas for community use

The preliminary designs show a substantial four storey building with the community facilities occupying the ground and first floors of the building and sixteen affordable housing units on the upper floors.

The proposal to co-locate the library in a shared building with medical services is not untried in Cambridgeshire. The new library at Cambourne (pictured) is co-located with a GP practice, Primary Care Trust services and the County Council's Trading Standards team in an award winning building designed to promote the use of shared areas effectively. All involved report major benefits from co-location:

"It really works well having the library and the surgery in one building. I see on a day-to-day basis how books facilitate parenting. The library is very well used, as are the library books in the Medical Centre."

Dr Peter Bailey, Monkfield Medical Practice, Cambourne



Procurement Programme

A Project Group has been set up involving the key partners in the proposed facilities:

- Cambridge City Council (for the community space)
- Cambridgeshire County Council (Library, Social Care and Police)
- NHS Cambridgeshire and local GP (Health Centre)
- Cambridgeshire Partnerships Ltd (affordable housing provider)

The key milestones in the Programme to complete the new community centre (by December 2014) are as follows:

- January 2012 – Start procurement of Design Team
- September 2012 – Appoint Design Team
- October to December 2012 – Develop Design for the Community 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

A representative from the Trumpington Residents Association has agreed to participate in the process to select the Design Team. It will be a significant part of the Design Team's brief to engage effectively with all interested individuals and groups and bidders experience and their proposed approach to this will be tested in the procurement process.

Budget and Funding

The Clay Farm Community Centre is estimated to cost £8.2 million to construct. The project has been noted in the Council's Medium Term Strategy and appropriate provisions will be requested in the 2012/13 capital budget and thereafter. Developer Contributions are available to part fund the new Community Centre and have begun to be received. The cost of the provision of the sixteen Affordable Housing units will be met in full by the affordable housing provider, Cambridgeshire Partnerships Limited (CPL).¹¹

The revenue costs depend both on the overall design approach adopted, and on decisions about the staffing and management approach to the building and the potential for income generation from rentals and other usage. It is important to note that planning agreements with the developer specify that no 'commercial' activity is allowable within the community facility. This means that whilst it may be permissible to engage a social enterprise to run the café (or the community space), it rules out any fully commercial franchise. The library provision will only be charged a peppercorn rental, and the rental payments for the medical centre from the NHS are to be applied to the capital borrowing required for the construction. This means that income generation will be restricted to hire of the community space. As the analysis of the existing centres in the previous section shows, income levels are unlikely to be substantial if the aim is to provide a facility that is fully accessible to all residents including the most vulnerable and disadvantaged.

The Phoenix Centre Sutton



Houses a leisure centre (gym and sports hall), youth zone, library, cafe and a community hall all under one roof. Overall management is undertaken by leisure management company, SLM, with the Youth Centre and Library provision managed by the local authority.

"We haven't got a front entrance desk because that might have looked like a barrier - you come straight into a café and there's a walk-in library with no doors."

¹¹ Full details of the payment arrangements and amounts are provided in the January 2012 report to the Council's community Services Scrutiny Committee.

In line with good practice, the future management arrangements for the new building are to be considered in tandem with the design and commissioning process. It is therefore timely that this Future Options Review should include an initial exploration of the various management approaches that could be taken. The review consultant met briefly with the Project Group to explore current thinking, although no detailed analysis of how to approach management issues has yet been undertaken. For example, it is not yet decided whether the various building users will share a common reception function, or whether each of the different 'spaces' within the building will have separate heat, light and other service arrangements. All these, and many other issues impact on cost implications.

However, the space requirements for the various use areas within the building have been calculated, with the community and services areas as shown in the following table (excluding the residential accommodation):

Use	Baseline Area (sqm)
Health	953
Community	466
Youth Provision	182
Shared spaces, including plant, services, lifts, stairs, etc.	549
Library	337
Pharmacy	125
Café	128
Touchdown accommodation (for Police and Social Services)	135
TOTAL	2,875 sqm

The largest user of the building will be the GPs and medical services, potentially located on the 1st floor. Flexibility in the design of the community, youth and café spaces will be key to their useability. With regards to the proposed size of these spaces, as a point of comparison, the Munchbox café seating area at the Meadows is 120sqm, the Youth Wing 194sqm, and their main hall is 660sqm (all approximate). The latter is substantially larger than that proposed for Clay Farm, which probably weakens its potential for income generation from major conferences or functions.

Ownership and Management Options for Clay Farm

The options that could be considered fall broadly into two distinct categories:

- Ownership and direct management by the City Council through the existing Community Development team's responsibilities for community centres¹²
- Externalised management arrangements through partners/occupiers of the premises, by commercial organisations or by charitable/social enterprise bodies

In both categories, separate arrangements might be considered for different parts of the building, with a wide menu of varied permutations. The following table explores these in brief outline, although it cannot claim to be a comprehensive options analysis or appraisal:

¹² Although it should be noted that the Council could be challenged under the Localism Act's 'Right to Challenge' by community organisations who would like to run the centre themselves.

Options	Commentary	Risks
<p>Option One City Council own and manage in line with policies in place for all the other centres operated through the Community Development team</p>	<p>Responsibilities would include building maintenance, staffing for reception, bookings and activities in the community space and the Touchdown space, the café and operation of the youth facilities (potentially through Chypps), and space for the area's community development worker.</p>	<p>This option requires most of operational costs to be met from within City Council budgets, although some costs may be shared with partners through a service charge (eg if we have a shared reception).</p>
<p>Option Two City Council retain ownership and building maintenance responsibility but operational management is delivered by other occupying organisations (eg the County Council, NHS Cambridgeshire, the RSL or Trumpington Residents Association).</p>	<p>Responsibilities would be broadly similar to those above if overall operational, day-to-day functioning is taken over by one organisation.</p> <p>Alternatively, each different 'function area' within the building could be separately operated/managed. For example, the community space (and possibly also the youth wing and café) could be leased to the Trumpington Residents Association and managed directly by them.</p>	<p>The community development style/ethos of current community centre management could be lost through this option.</p> <p>If the building is not open on time, clean and well-presented, the vision of it as a welcoming multi-use base for services could be jeopardised.</p>
<p>Option Three City Council own the freehold of the building, but put the operational management of the premises out to tender on the basis of a jointly prepared specification</p>	<p>Building management could be put out to tender on the open market (or potentially added to the Council's existing leisure management contract).</p> <p>Alternatively, a restricted tender process could be undertaken to known/trusted independent community organisations or social enterprises to take responsibility for ongoing management on a leasehold basis.</p>	<p>Unknown capacity of contractor.</p>



The references to Trumpington Residents Association above respond to the close involvement the Association have with the development of the new facility, although there has been no consultation with them about their potential involvement in its management during the compilation of this Phase One report. The Association already manages the Trumpington Pavilion (pictured) on behalf of the City Council. The potential relationship between these two facilities will be important to consider in the future.

A final comment here concerns the 'type' of community facility that the Council and partners want to see operating within the new settlement at Clay Farm. The model of community centre provision offered by the Council is firmly targeted on vulnerable and disadvantaged people within the community, and indeed the terms for this review include this objective. But there are other models for community spaces, and cafes, which respond more dynamically to some of the evolving realities of today's economy, providing support for homeworkers, the self-employed and for entrepreneurs/business start-ups for example. Facilities such as super-fast broadband, hot-desk 'by the hour' rental, coupled with business support services are all in growing demand in many cities. The commissioning of a high value, centrepiece facility at Clay Farm should perhaps include for new ideas and new approaches to bringing people and communities together, looking ahead to the changing needs of communities settling into the new settlement areas of the city. However, this would have to be considered alongside the restrictions on commercial activity (as mentioned above).

Hub Kings Cross is a co-working space for social entrepreneurs based in London. Offering touchdown meeting and hot-desk space work spaces for social enterprises, environmental companies and sustainable businesses, alongside a flexible exhibition and events space; a fair-trade and organic cafe bar; and an evening programme of lectures, film, debate and music.



<http://kingscross.the-hub.net/>

2 NIAB1 Community Cafe

The site known as NIAB1 comprises approximately 50 hectares of land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road in Castle Ward, where development of up to 1,593 dwellings is proposed, plus a combined primary school and community hall, a shop and up to six retail or service units.

A park is also proposed in the centre of the development to cater for formal and informal sports provision and the potential location of a small (200 sq mtrs) community café is being considered here, although proposals are at a very early stage of development. The provisional position is that the developer would provide a shell building, with the City Council taking responsibility for the fit-out and for operational management. The precise details of the facility are therefore unknown at the time of compiling this report, but it is envisaged that there would be a strong youth component.

Ownership and Management Options for NIAB1 Community Café

As with Clay Farm, the options that could be considered fall broadly into two distinct categories:

- Ownership and management by the City Council
- Externalised management arrangements through either contract or lease provisions

The facility as currently envisaged is relatively small, and therefore could perhaps lend itself to community management more readily than the complex shared services building at Clay Farm. There may be income generation potential from the café (although not enough is known about the use estimates for the facility to make any judgement about its commercial viability). Otherwise, whoever takes on ownership/management of the proposed NIAB community facility will be responsible for covering the operational costs which are currently estimated as likely to be in the region of £55,000 per annum (although it is not clear what staffing capacity is included in this estimate).

Finally, it may be worth commenting that if managed directly by Cambridge City Council this facility (and the Clay Farm facility) mean that the Community Development team will be servicing the provision of 3 cafes (including the existing facility at the Meadows). This may offer opportunities to re-examine the business model for this provision, or even to externalize the service into a social enterprise. One example of a social enterprise café in Cambridge is shown below; another is the Cornerstone Café – a training kitchen and cafe to be operated by the Papworth Trust at St Philip's Church (Romsey) to provide employment and training for young people with physical and mental disabilities. It will be run as a fair trade social enterprise with the aim of enabling local disadvantaged young people gain greater independence in their lives.



Section Four

Options for the Future

Drawing on the foregoing review of existing and planned community centre provision, the following observations are proposed as highly relevant to any exploration of potential changes to management arrangements in the future:

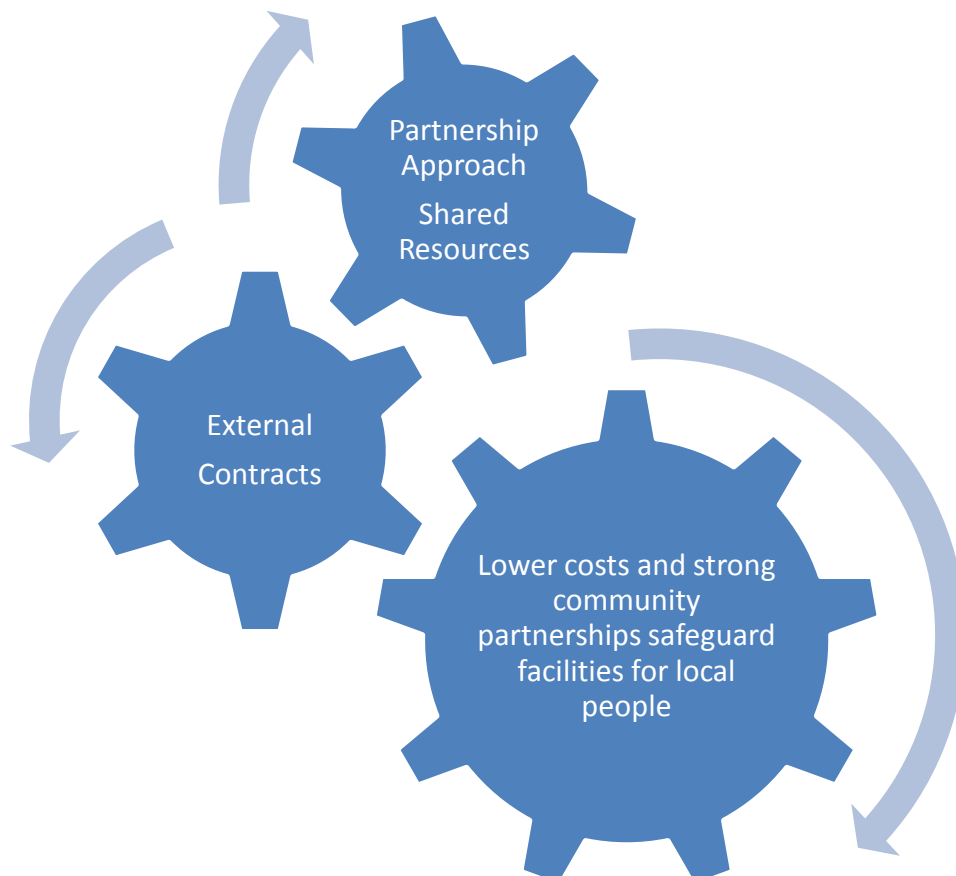
- 1) the Council's existing facilities focus on health and wellbeing provision for key groups within neighbourhoods, including young people, ethnic minorities, the elderly, families and children and target especially those who are disadvantaged or vulnerable
- 2) the centres are not currently marketed, or positioned, as private hire venues for weddings and other similar functions (although Meadows is in demand as a conference venue)
- 3) the facilities are well run, and provide attractive non-institutional environments; there is considerable expertise held within the staff teams, and a strong commitment to the service
- 4) building management responsibilities are currently inter-twined with community development functions and whilst staff comment that this places significant demands on their time and can detract from their outreach role, it is accepted that a community development approach to centre management is the core mission and both functions complement each other
- 5) whilst there is currently limited community involvement in the management and operation of the community centres (although some make use of keyholders to facilitate wider use within restrained staff availability), there are strong relationships with existing neighbourhood organisations (eg Romsey Action, King's Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership and Arbury Neighbourhood Community Project)
- 6) there is substantial involvement by the Chypps service in delivering youth activities within the centres and therefore some cross-subsidisation across budgets
- 7) there are strong informal liaison arrangements in place with the operators of other similar community centres, sometimes working across city and ward boundaries
- 8) there are no mechanisms currently in place to network the various community centre providers together for sharing information, expertise and plans or for developing support mechanisms to help them function effectively
- 9) planned new centres involve limited income-generation capability and will require substantial revenue financing by the City Council whichever management option is favoured

The last point is critical. If increased resources are going to be required for the City Council to manage the planned new facilities, Members will require assurances that existing management arrangements represent value for money, and are maximising their cost effectiveness, before agreeing their extension to flagship new facilities. The 'do-nothing/no change' option is therefore

discarded as there is always room for improvement. However, the other extreme option – centre closure – is also discounted here as it does nothing to contribute to the four objectives provided for the review (see page 7). However, there could be ‘selective’ closures, potentially enabling the Council to sell the asset or to transfer the ownership and/or management responsibility to other organisations (see below). Whether community organisations will want to make use of the new ‘Right to Buy’, or indeed the ‘Right to Challenge’ provisions of the Localism Act (see page 9) is presently unknown, although it is assumed that all the existing (and new) community centres will be included on the Council’s list of ‘Assets of Community Value’.

It is suggested that there are three main categories of potential change to the way the Council’s community centres currently operate (and which are potentially equally applicable to the new planned provision):

- (a) Promoting wider involvement and partnership in community centre operations
- (b) Externalising management, or management functions
- (c) Exploring community management or social enterprise models



Two workshops have been held with staff to explore these areas of change (which all overlap or inter-connect to some extent) which produced not only several excellent ideas and suggestions for increasing management efficiency, but also explored the value of the team’s expertise and its wider application both within existing communities and in relation to the planned new facilities coming on

stream. Using information and ideas from these sessions, the above categories can be further described as follows:

(a) Promoting wider involvement and partnership in community centre operations

The first observation to make here concerns the use of volunteers, and particularly allowing approved 'key holders' to operate activities within the centres without council staff needing to be present. This approach is working well at several of the Council's centres (eg at Ross Street, which is currently bringing in over 60% of its costs from hire charges) and could be extended to others, particularly if some improvements are made to security arrangements in order to limit access to different parts of the buildings.

All community centre providers face similar challenges in maintaining vibrant, well-cared for facilities that are managed to ensure affordable access by those most in need of their services. Community centres are operated as 'social businesses' right across the city, by churches, charitable organisations and trusts or by other neighbourhood organisations such as the Neighbourhood Council established for Orchard Park. The latter is an example of where political boundaries (the City Council boundary, or ward boundaries for example) don't always fit with 'natural neighbourhoods' and the way residents access facilities across these boundaries.¹³

It is suggested that the City Council's Community Development team could build on existing informal liaison arrangements with adjacent, similar premises and begin a phased, cautious, exploration of joint challenges and the potential for shared arrangements (eg for contract services, see below), reducing costs across organisations and ensuring a more coherent 'offer' to local communities. There may be interest in this approach, especially if access to regular specialist briefings and other services from the Community Development team were offered. However, there is of course the risk that other providers see no reason for, or benefit from, partnering with the Council in this way.

It may also be fruitful to organise some city-wide consultation on these issues. There seems to be little knowledge currently about the circumstances of many of the important facility providers. Whilst the list of facilities has been updated recently by the CVS (which notes a small decline in numbers since 2004) perhaps a short survey questionnaire could explore how centres see their future development over the next 5 years, the major challenges they expect to encounter, and indeed their interest in potential growth/expansion (see below). It could also provide a mechanism for capturing a clearer picture of the expertise available across the city, given that many organisations are actively demonstrating tremendous innovation and skill in balancing their need for income generation with their core mission.

A further relevant area of work is the initiative underway by the County Council to explore the potential for establishing community hubs, bringing public sector provision together - for example, in Abbey around East Barnwell Community Centre and in Cherry Hinton around the local library (and indeed similar to the grouping of facilities proposed for the new facility at Clay Farm as described in the previous section of this report). Capital is potentially available through developer contributions

¹³ It is also interesting to note that the Meadows community centre is not actually on land within the City Council's boundary, sitting just within South Cambridgeshire District Council.

to make improvements to the existing centres and/or to facilitate community hubs where this delivers additional or improved community space and greater community involvement in the running of the space.

Finally, there may be scope to develop community involvement in the general operation of the Council's community centres through reporting/consultation arrangements with the four Area Committees, or as appropriate. Again, such approaches could be developed in partnership with other facility providers.

(b) Externalising facilities management, or management functions

The Community Development team responsible for community centres have recently employed an Asset Manager with experience of building maintenance contracting. He has been reviewing the existing arrangements for building maintenance and examining options for improving efficiency through greater use of external contracting for some core functions. The staff workshop developed some further thinking about the potential of this option, dividing services into three 'risk' categories:

Group 1 - less risk to core business

cleaning
building maintenance
grounds maintenance

Group 2 - more risky – potential impact on community development ethos

admin/booking procedures
publicity and promotion

Group 3 – high risk - impact on community development ethos

cafe function
band and sound room
community development and outreach functions
overall centre management and staffing
centre supervisor duties

There is potential to consider the inclusion of Group 1 functions within the arrangements for retendering the Council's leisure facilities management contract - which is being retendered during 2012 - given that this would increase the potential for economies of scale. This option would also offer the opportunity for market testing. (NB Use of existing Council services or preferred suppliers could also be considered through this option, subject to performance issues, and noting that such approaches are not necessarily cheaper.)

Finally, the tendering of particular building management functions does offer the potential to free up or ease current time constraints on Centre Managers and allow more time for general community development. But there are also risks. For example, cleaning contractors may be less thorough than is currently the standard, or maintenance contractors may not act sufficiently promptly to avoid disruption to centre users.

(c) Exploring community management or social enterprise potential

As noted in the introductory section, many local authorities are increasing transferring community and youth centres (and other community facilities) to direct management by community organisations. This approach is being implemented in Cambridge for the Trumpington Pavilion (which is managed by the Trumpington Residents Association) and has been proposed by the King's Hedges Neighbourhood Partnership in respect of the Nuns Way Pavilion. As previously noted, there are also many different types of organisations already managing community centre provision across the City, but there has as yet been no consultation with them about their potential interest in such an agenda of change. The Case Study on Northampton (provided in Appendix 1) summarises one authority's approach to transfer, indicating at least a 2-3 year lead-in period and the need for careful safeguards, and organisational support, through the tendering and contracting process.

Financial savings may not initially be substantial, as realistic management costs need to be reflected in the contract. However, charities, trusts and other forms of social enterprise bring a more entrepreneurial approach to their work, often making extensive use of volunteers, or accessing external funding that is not available to statutory organisations. Contract funding can taper, allowing for gradual development of these other resource opportunities.

As noted previously (see p.23), there are also several community cafes operating with Cambridge, and there may be opportunities for them to grow through tendering the operation of new café facilities potentially coming on stream at Clay Farm and at the NIAB site.

An alternative approach to social enterprise would be to explore options for externalising the existing community development team, or discrete elements of it (such as the catering team at Meadows). However, there is currently little evidence of a substantial appetite for such a radical approach, but options could be further explored, as appropriate, as part of Phase Two.

Conclusions and Proposals for Phase Two

There are three main conclusions arising from phase one of this review:

- 1) The Council's provision is well run and well used, targeted firmly on the most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities; apart from the need to ensure that management arrangements are cost effective and financially efficient, there is no overriding need for change.
- 2) Current government policy for 'localism' promotes the development of more proactive community involvement in delivering public provision such as community centres. Whilst there are several existing arrangements of this kind within the city, these approaches could perhaps be pursued more proactively, building stronger partnership with local people and tapping into expertise across the wider community and voluntary sector.
- 3) Given the planned expansion in community facilities to support housing growth, it may be timely to re-examine the management model in order to ensure that all facilities can thrive into the future, whichever organisation is responsible for the provision; both a city-wide and neighbourhood partnership approach is essential to facilitate this.

Proposals for phase two of the work programme for this review are therefore recommended as follows:

(a) Existing Centres

Timing: complete by November 2012

- Hold community workshops, on a neighbourhood basis, to explore the issues and recommendations in this report with ward councillors, community development staff, community groups and residents.
Outputs:
 - *proposals for shared arrangements*
 - *assessment of community support for asset transfer and potential community partners*
- Include existing centres in this year's Leisure Management Tender to market test buildings maintenance and cleaning.
Outputs:
 - *clarity about whether contracting out this service is financially advantageous*
- Further explore the value of city-wide consultation on the issues explored in this report, preceded by a short survey questionnaire seeking information on how centres see their future development over the next 5 years, the major challenges they expect to encounter, and their interest in potential growth/expansion through asset transfer.
Outputs:
 - *a clearer picture of community centre provision and expertise available across the city*
 - *assessment of interest in asset transfer and potential community partners*
- Continue liaison with the County Council to assess potential development of community hubs linked to the provision of developer contributions towards capital costs of building adaptations.
Outputs:
 - *clarity on priority areas and potential linkages to this programme*

(b) Clay Farm Community Facility

Timing: complete by November 2012

- Hold community workshops to explore the issues and recommendations in this report with relevant stakeholders, ward councillors, community development staff, community groups and residents.
Outputs:
 - *appraisal of the support, practicalities and likely cost implications for each of the three options outlined in this report as suitable for future management of the new facility*
 - *recommendations to the Council on the preferred management arrangements*

(c) NIAB1 Community Facility

Timing: complete by April 2013

- Hold community workshops to explore the issues and recommendations in this report with ward councillors, community development staff, community groups and residents.

Outputs:

- *appraisal of the support, practicalities and likely cost for each of the two options suggested in this report as suitable for future management of the new facility*
- *recommendations to the Council on the preferred management arrangements*

APPENDIX 1: Northampton Community Centre Management Outsourcing

Case Study by the Asset Transfer Unit: www.atu.org.uk

The story starts in 2009 when Northampton Borough Council were seeking significant savings in the Community Centres budget. The Council brought existing management committees together to tell them that the Council wished where possible to transfer community centres to existing management committees or other interested operators as quickly as possible. Due to the speed of events, little information was available to help inform decision making and in most cases there was a feeling that the Council was unlikely to go ahead with the transfers anyhow. Changes to the caretaking operations did go ahead which realised some of the financial savings needed, but there appeared to be little appetite for change amongst management committees and it became clear that a different approach was needed. At the same time a member Scrutiny process took place which endorsed the overall goal of transfer but recognised the need for proper financial and management support along the way. The identified support included tapering grant, dedicated resource to focus on transition arrangements and a procedure to begin a process of dialogue and planned transfer to willing transferees. During the process the emphasis was placed on the expected community benefits rather than the financial savings, and this opened the door to a better conversation. Community Matters, the DTA and the local CVS all advised on the design of the new course of action and were able to offer support along the way with business planning, lease negotiations and so on.

Ten existing Management Committees were offered first refusal in taking over their Centres. A further eleven were directly managed by the Council and eight of these were subject to a public offer. Expressions of interest were received from sixteen organisations. Interest was received for each of the eight centres, and six organisations expressed interest in all eight centres. An Invitation To Apply (ITA) was issued to each of these 16 organisations on 28 March 2011 and they were given a ten week period to prepare a Business Plan Application and financial projections.

The Council received seven applications to run the eight centres and of these a number were for more than one centre. Bids came from a wide variety of organisations including:

- existing users such as a martial art group,
- potential new users such as faith groups,
- neighbours
- a local school
- service providers –
- national charitable organisations
- a partnership of two existing community centres seeking to run several centres.

The bids were assessed and evaluated against the criteria below by a panel of NBC officers with Locality's Regional Manager representing the community perspective.

	Criteria	How assessed/Priority
1	Legal governance, including legal set-up, policies, licensing, power to hold land/property	Pass/Fail
2	Current financial viability	Pass/Fail
3	Public Access experience	Medium
4	Community Engagement experience	High
Quality of Business Plan:		
5	Community Engagement plans	Medium

	Criteria	How assessed/Priority
6	Community Activity plans	High
7	Achieving management agreement objectives	Low
8	Sustainable 5-year financial forecasts	High
9	Adequate processes/procedures/systems	Low

Two bidders were selected at the end of this process, one bidder to take over one centre and the partnership to take over the remaining seven.

The new partnership, now named Community Spaces Northampton (CSN), was appointed to run seven centres; Bellinge, Briar Hill, Kingsthorpe, Rectory Farm, Southfields, Standens Barn and Vernon Terrace. At this point CSN was a new partnership led by the Alliston Garden Youth & Community Centre (AGYCC), which proposed to set up a new company limited by guarantee, and register as a charity or Community Interest Company. This was therefore a high risk strategy for NBC, but the bid was considered to be strong with key strengths identified as:

- o very credible application
- o local organisation
- o good community engagement experience
- o considerable community centre management experience
- o considerable community development experience
- o considerable analysis of each centre and detailed plans for improvement
- o good use of centre manager and community development resource across the 7 centres
- o good staff costs to room hire income ratios
- o sensible room hire income increase
- o good build up of reserves
- o level of grants required were within the budget

The intention at this point was for the board of CSN to be formed from trustees of AGYCC, and staff or trustees of the Doddridge Centre, another well-established community centre. In addition, professional board members would be recruited as well as experienced community practitioners. There would also be full opportunity for user groups' views to be fairly and accurately reported back to the board – either through direct election to the board or via other mechanisms.

The partners began work immediately with advisors from Locality and Northamptonshire Social Enterprise Development Agency to make decisions about the governance and structure of the new organisation. The new company was registered in August 2011. An organisation development plan was put in place with £20,000 funding from the Asset Transfer Unit and Northampton Borough Council. The grant seed funded a programme of start up support to set up the organisation and get it ready for the transfer of the buildings and two caretaking staff who will be transferred to the new company. The first £20,000 has since been supplemented by a further £10,000 (£5,000 from the Asset Transfer Unit and £5,000 from NBC).

The complete schedule of pre-development support provided from this source of grant includes (or will include):

- o formation of Community Spaces Northampton;
- o legal support in lease and management agreement negotiations;
- o visit to Fresh Horizons in Huddersfield to see first hand a community business managing community centres and other buildings such as libraries;
- o HR support in developing job descriptions for new posts and recruiting to those posts

- conditions surveys of all buildings
- accountancy support in setting up finance systems
- purchase and installation of room booking software.

Further work will be needed following transfer to; recruit and train further trustees, raise finance to undertake capital improvements to the buildings, including implementing security and remote caretaking options, develop marketing materials, community engagement, develop new job descriptions and implement staffing changes where necessary having undertaken a thorough organisational restructure.

There have been regular meetings with NBC officers to track progress, identify sticking points and find solutions. This has been critical to the process.

The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations (TUPE) protects employees' terms and conditions of employment when a business is transferred from one owner to another. The TUPE considerations for the two caretakers have been the most difficult, time consuming and expensive to work through. Two caretakers spend more than 50% of their time working at the seven centres and therefore are due to transfer. CSN's intention is to change the role and duties of the caretakers, separating the cleaning aspects of the role and requiring the caretakers to take on day to day maintenance responsibilities. The submitted business plan did not make consideration for the additional expenses by way of pension contributions, generous holiday allowances and sickness benefits, as the full details were not provided to applicants. As a consequence further work has been required to re-calculate and evaluate the viability of on-going staffing costs. CSN want to be a good employer but may not be able to match the benefits and some of the terms and conditions to new staff, which will lead to significant differentials within a small organisation. The Council has generously offered an indemnity and have drafted an agreement enabling the caretakers to remain in the Council's pension scheme. The TUPE process is a statutory obligation and failure to comply can result in a case for constructive dismissal. This is an area that is often quite intimidating for charity trustees to tackle, and can result in significant costs for legal fees and employment advice.

One outstanding issue that has yet to be resolved is around proposals for a house that is adjacent to one of the Centres. This has previously been in community use and at one point NBC wished to sell it for residential use. CSN and the local community would prefer it to stay in community use and it would make a good base for CSN's proposed catering operation. Following representation to the Council, CSN is now negotiating with them to agree a lease for the building. This has positive implications for the business plan and the location of CSN's office base.

In general good progress is being made, although the actual date of handover has been put back twice from November to February and now the start of March. £45,000 in support costs was originally budgeted, and £30,000 of that has now been earmarked with the majority spent on legal costs. There has been a considerable amount of unpaid work for the three individuals taking on the bulk of the set up work, and some of it has been very stressful. NBC officers have provided a good level of support, but the pace has been constrained by the involvement of many different departments and in particular the backdrop of cuts and reorganisation.

What has kept everyone going has been the determination to offer a better community centre service to local people than the Council has been able to do in recent years. Coupled with the belief that there are economies of scale to be made in taking on multiple community use buildings in, for example, the deployment of staff, sharing of marketing and potential to raise funding and investment.

Contacts:

Community Spaces Northampton - communityspacesnorthampton@gmail.com

Northampton Borough Council - thall@northampton.gov.uk

APPENDIX 2: The Centre at St Paul's

Summary taken from: www.centrestpauls.org.uk

The Centre at St Paul's is a registered charity. Income generated from room hire is used to maintain and improve the building, pay staff and subsidise non income generating activities.

The Centre at St Paul's was created in 1996 when the Victorian church, built in 1841, was divided into two. From the outside the building looks the same. Inside, the worship area (Main Hall) now occupies half the original space. It is used for church services on Sundays and for Centre activities during the rest of the week. The Main Hall is increasingly popular as a weekend venue for dinners, fund-raising events, concerts and ceilidhs. In 2012, it will be extensively refurbished by the removal of outmoded fittings to create a flexible setting for church services and community events.



The Centre's own activities for members of the community include a baby and toddler group (run in partnership with Homerton Children's Centre), free internet classes (in conjunction with Cambridge Online), a seated exercise class as part of the city council's "Forever Active" programme, lunch for people with mental health issues and Friday lunch for older people. These events are coordinated by a member of staff and run by volunteers. The Centre acts as a distribution centre twice a week for Cambridge City Foodbank which is organised in partnership with Our Lady and the English Martyrs catholic church and Cambridge Community Church. On Saturdays it hosts a community lunch cooked and served by Cambridge FoodCycle volunteers using food that would otherwise be thrown away. Centre representatives play a leading role in Newtown Community Forum which meets regularly to discuss issues of concern to residents' associations and other members of the Newtown community. It also features prominently in the Newtown Newsletter, produced in conjunction with Cambridge City Council, which is distributed to 1,500 Newtown addresses four times a year.



COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN CAMBRIDGE: SURVEY (SEPTEMBER 2012)

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

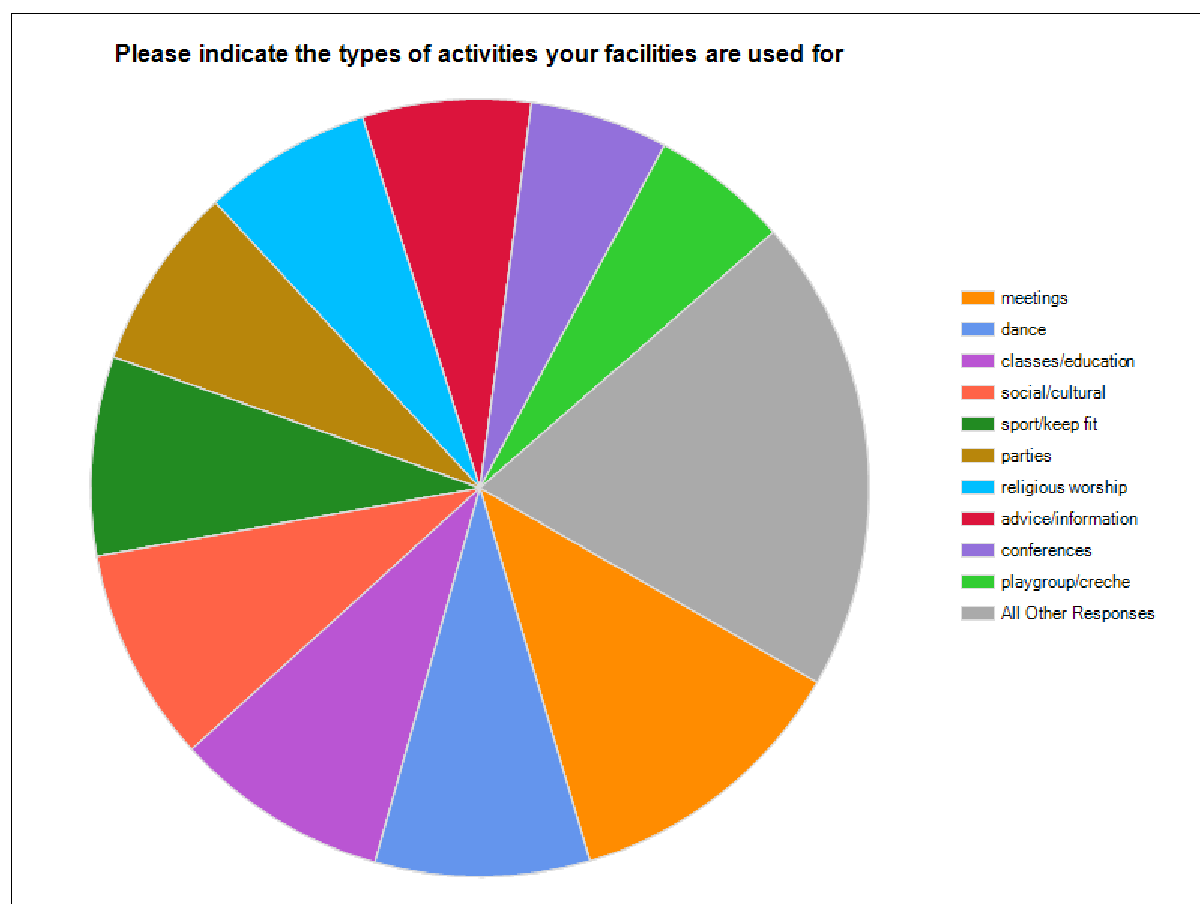
Total responses received: 25 (approx 23% of those invited)

Of the total 25 responses, 5 were completed anonymously and 20 provided details about their organisation. Responses reflected the wide diversity of types of provision operating across the city, and included primary schools and church facilities as well as purpose-built community centres.

ANALYSIS

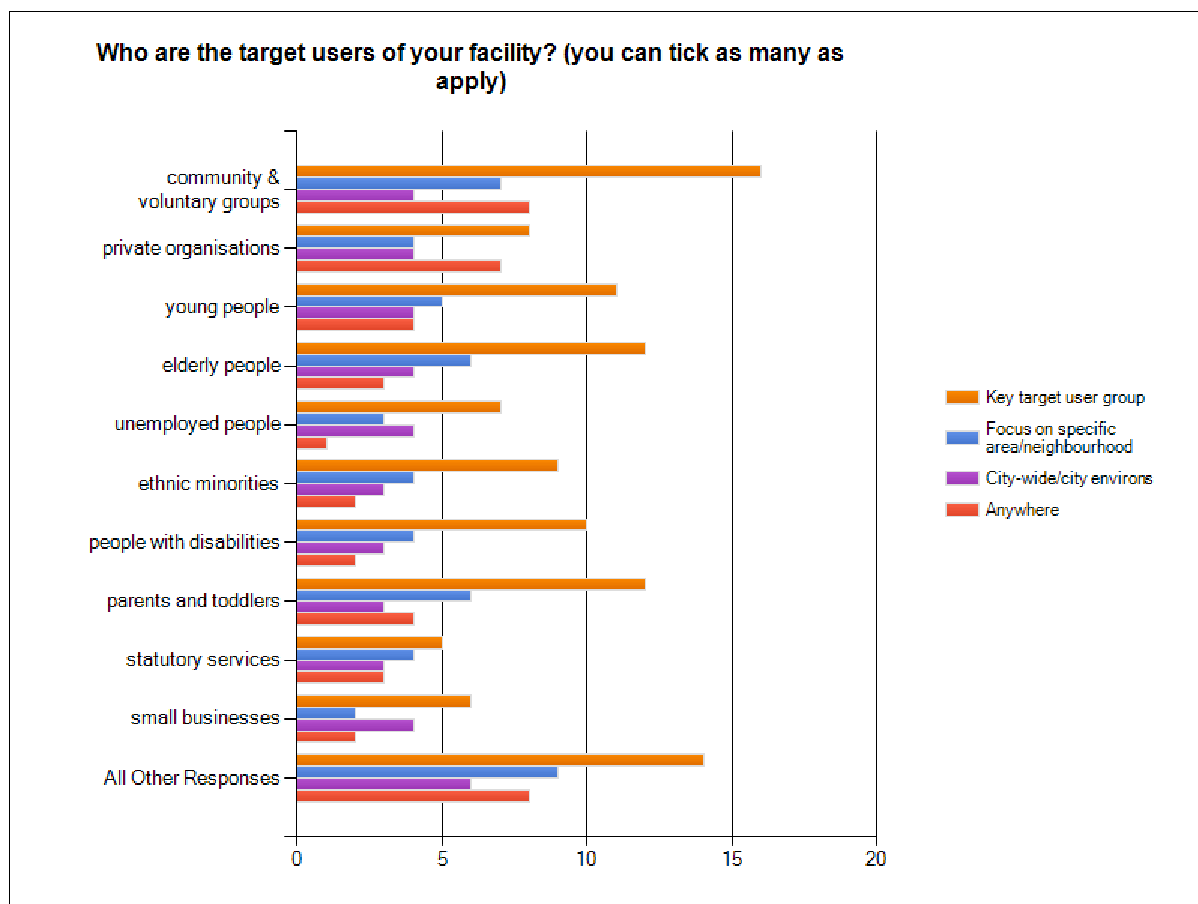
1. Activities taking place in community facilities:

Activities taking place are fairly evenly spread, with the largest common component being 'meetings' (19), and only 1 with a licensed bar. (answers based on 23 responses)



2. Who uses them:

Again, a fairly even spread, with most quite generally targeted across both their surrounding neighbourhood and the wider city/environs. (answers based on 24 responses)



3. Average Turnover/Profitability:

20 organisations responded to this question about turnover in the 2011/12 financial year. The majority (45%) had a turnover of between £20,000-£50,000. 2 organisations had a turnover of between £50,000-£100,000; 4 were above £100,000; 5 were below £20,000.

21 organisations responded to the question about profitability. Most (12 organisations) reported that they had made a profit the same, or greater than the previous year. Only 1 organisation reported that they had made a loss, and 8 organisations reported that they more or less broke even.

Encouragingly, of the 22 organisations that responded to the question about future turnover expectations (for the next three years), 6 believed their turnover would be steadily increasing; 13 that it would remain about the same; and only 2 thought their turnover would decline. Given the economic background, most organisations seem to be managing their income reasonably well and - as the next chart illustrates - most are not finding it too difficult to maintain income from hire charges.

4. Challenges of Facility Management:

Not surprisingly, the hardest aspect is fundraising (19 find this hard, or very hard), followed by the challenges of keeping up with repairs and maintenance (15 find this hard or very hard) and finding reliable/affordable contractors (12 find this hard or very hard). Another quite common challenge for voluntary organisations is finding/managing volunteers, and 14 respondents reported this as being hard or very hard.

Of note is the survey finding about balancing demand between private or commercial hirers and the needs of community organisations. Only 8 organisations said they found this hard or very hard, and 10 said it was not a problem at all.



5. Future Plans:

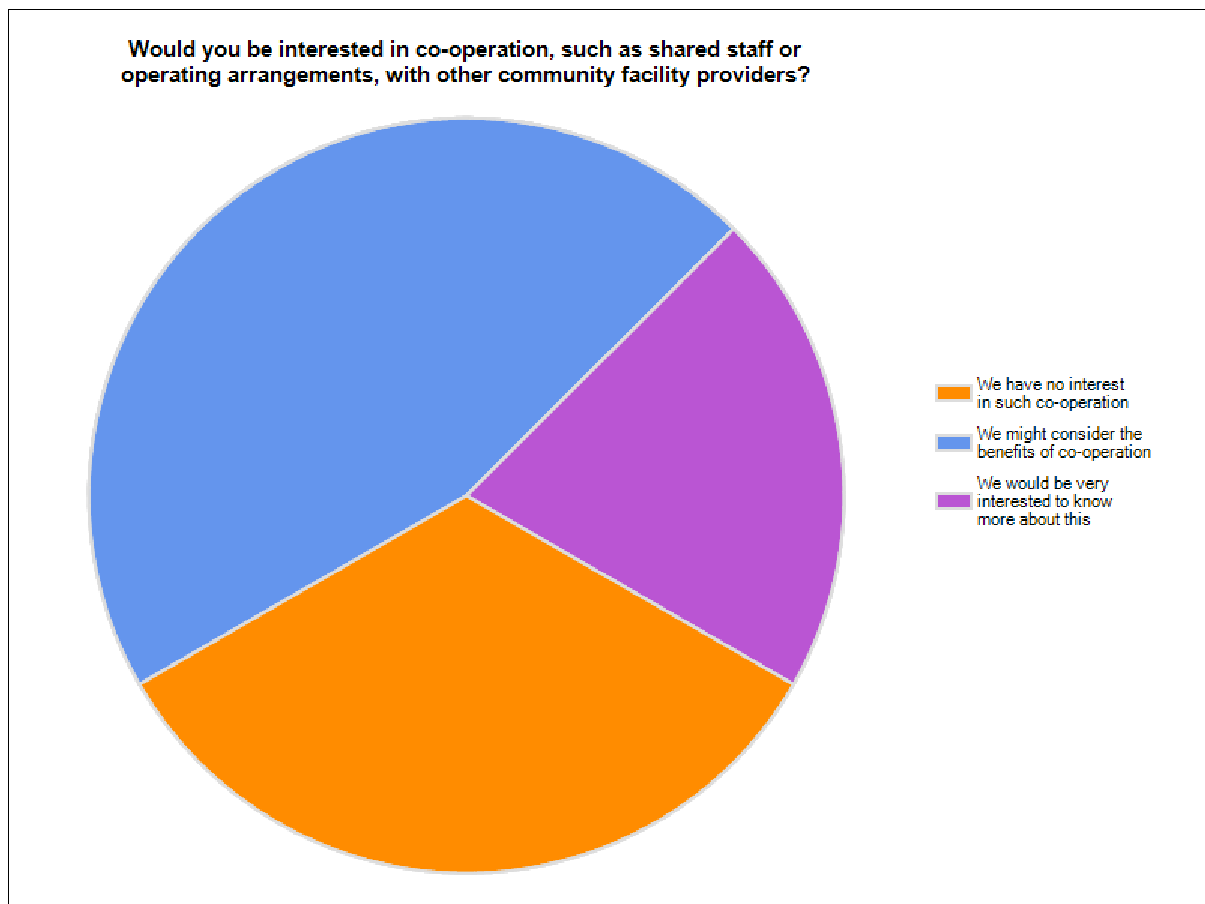
The survey asked organisations to look ahead over the next five years and indicate whether they have plans for significant changes to their current operation (17 responses were received to this question). 13 organisations reported that they plan to expand or improve their existing facilities; 12 reported that they were planning to offer more or different activities; 9 were planning to make more use of volunteers; and 9 were planning to increase community involvement in facility management.

Expanding Management Responsibilities

Of particular note, whilst 15 organisations said they have no interest in managing additional facilities in the future, 4 organisations said they might consider taking on management responsibility for additional premises; and 3 stated they were very keen to expand the number of facilities they manage.

Partnership and Co-operation in Management

On the general question of increased co-operation and partnership in the management of community facilities in Cambridge, 11 organisations would potentially consider the benefits of this, 5 would be interested to know more and 8 were clearly not interested in such approaches.



THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO TOOK PART

COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN CAMBRIDGE DEVELOPING A SHARED APPROACH TO THE FUTURE

WORKSHOP HELD 20th October 2012

Working together to improve effectiveness ?
Sustaining facilities cost-effectively ?
Encouraging community involvement/volunteering ?
Responding to 'Localism' opportunities ?
Supporting community management ?
Using the opportunities of growth and investment ?

Summary Report of Workshop

This workshop brought together representatives from various organisations operating community facilities across the city to share expertise and debate ideas and suggestions for improving collaboration. The workshop forms part of the Community Centres Review being co-ordinated for Cambridge City Council by Marilyn Taylor Associates. The Council is examining the management model for its own community centres, particularly seeking to ensure they operate cost-effectively at a time of resource constraint.

The Council recognises that many of the issues and challenges involved, especially looking ahead, are shared with other facility providers. By working together to explore future approaches, the aim is to support and sustain community access to good quality facilities, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged residents. The Council also wishes to be guided in exploring potential management models for the new community facilities planned to support housing growth.

The backdrop to the workshop included:

- the council community centres review report (Phase One May 2012)
- the results of the on-line community facility providers survey (September 2012)
- the policies of localism (including the new community rights)
- the commissioning of new facilities to support housing growth
- the continuing constraints on public and voluntary sector resources

As part of the introduction to the event delegates were encouraged to celebrate the excellent range and quality of provision available in the city but were also urged that there was no place for complacency about the potential insecurities of the future. In many areas across the country public sector management of community facilities is in sharp decline, leaving communities to respond to the challenge of finding new and innovative ways to keep services operational. Whilst the situation in Cambridge is far from such a crisis, building strong partnership and dialogue about effective ways forward takes time to mature and it is important to start now.

Ideas for Strengthening Collaboration and Effectiveness

There was considerable support for the Council's interest in improving collaboration across different providers in the city, recognising that many of the challenges of building management were shared across sectors. It was felt to be important to work at building trust and capacity incrementally, rather than waiting until providers were in a crisis situation.

In the morning the discussion groups focused on debating some practical suggestions for strengthening effectiveness and service delivery for local residents. Quite a few of the main ideas were quite similar, and a crude voting exercise at the conclusion of the morning provided a very clear picture of those people felt would work best:

1 Community Centres Web-based Information (& Booking)

- This was by far the most widely supported suggestion. At its simplest level the idea would be to create a web-based resource indicating the various community centres across the city, with details of their activities, the spaces they have available for hire, and their costs. At this basic level, this would essentially be a marketing and information tool.
- However, taking the idea further, several people were interested in the idea of potential hirers being able to see what was available when (ie entering dates, and seeing at a glance what spaces available), and possibly even being able to book on-line through the site (or being able to simply click through to the chosen centre's own site for this purpose).
- Or set up the site so that users interested in a particular activity could see where it was on offer, on different/days times (eg this would work well for popular fitness and other sports/leisure activities).
- It was also felt that the site could encourage people to get involved as volunteers, with centres 'advertising' any need for volunteers and what would be involved.
- Several suggestions were made about the potential for using www.Cambridgeshire.net (where for example there is already a page dedicated to volunteering activities).
- There was also support for a simple Directory of all the centres and facilities.

2 Networking and Knowledge Exchange

- Also popular were ideas relating to the creation of regular opportunities for centre providers to network and share knowledge and information. For example, sharing information about good contractors for specific repairs and maintenance jobs; sharing information about projects and what's working well, community needs and requirements, etc.
- Some felt that networking would work best at neighbourhood levels, rather than city-wide.
- Others were also keen for sharing learning about different approaches, looking both within and outside the city, especially across the parishes.

3 Joint Procurement Approaches

- Several discussions focused on the potential for savings through joining together in procurement for 'requirements in common', for example:
 - bulk buying materials and supplies
 - licenses, eg entertainment etc
 - insurances
 - energy supplies
 - back room functions

4 Protect Staff Rights and Jobs

- There was strong encouragement for the active involvement of staff in centre management decisions and support for jobs and rights to be protected.

Looking Ahead: Planned New Community Centre Provision

Another important element of the Council's community centres review concerns the approach that should be taken to determining management arrangements for the several new facilities being commissioned to support housing developments across the city. Trevor Woollams provided a brief overview of the facilities planned:

- **for the Clay Farm development:**
a large and complex building, envisaged as an integrated 'hub' housing several services and partners, including health/GP provision, a library, a café area and general community and youth spaces (and with housing on the upper storeys)
- **on the University development site**
here the University are responsible for building a facility (of a similar scale to that at Browns Field), and the Council is working with them to ensure that residents are involved and contributing to design and operational ideas; there is a proposal emerging to establish a Joint Venture Company (between the University and the Council) to own and manage the facility
- **at NIAB 1 site**
here a small building is planned (similar in size to that at Michealhouse), comprising a community café space and youth facility; this building may be appropriate for management and operation through a social enterprise or community organisation

Trevor stressed that all plans are at an early stage. A specific Workshop is being held with partners involved at Clay Farm in November to take forward discussions about the potential management model that might work best for the facility. Comments were made about the need to recognise the cross-boundary nature of Clay Farm/Trumpington Meadows and that very different community centre management arrangements apply in South Cambridgeshire where Parishes are mainly responsible for community facilities. Reference was also made to the need to plan in conjunction with arrangements for the community room proposed for the new school.

In thinking ahead about the management models for the new facilities, the Council is keen to share views about the potential for independent, community-management arrangements. To what extent are existing organisations interested in expanding their work, and what the key learning points from organisations who are already managing community facilities? In discussion, the following key points were raised for the Council to consider:

- always design for maximum flexibility in the way the uses, and users, of the space might change over time
- start as you mean to go on; its hard to change a facility from public sector management to voluntary sector management
- it is possible to both meet need and raise income; these two aims are not mutually exclusive
- there is no single 'right' model for management, only what works best for each facility in each specific location/community
- define the purpose of the facility clearly, both for design and for choosing the management model

- if building management costs are subsidised, care is needed not to create dependency; the tapering over time of the subsidy amount can be a sensible and helpful approach
- potential liabilities need to be made clear through careful and realistic business planning
- community cafes are not easy businesses to run, unless staffed by volunteers
- but there are considerable risks involved in reliance on volunteers; many facilities need paid staff (especially for management)
- the council might need to make clear that community management is going to be the norm in future and begin to build the framework of support that such an approach needs to underpin its success, working incrementally and ensuring a supported, and supportive, process

General Conclusions & Next Steps

The day was not for decision-making – the emphasis was on gathering and sharing views, and ‘testing the waters’ about any future changes and any decision to promote a community management model for new provision.

The enthusiasm and willingness of all participants to help the Council’s understanding was much appreciated. In turn, the opportunity for closer collaboration and the development of a partnership approach was welcomed.

The next steps include the specific workshop for considering management options for the Clay Farm facility taking place in November, for which the conclusions and points from this debate will be immensely valuable. The Head of Community Development will not be taking a final report to Members until March 2013, and he suggested it would be helpful to reconvene another event to discuss its emerging recommendations in the New Year.

APPENDIX: Delegate List

Attendance	Organisation
Liz Collinson	Good Shepherd Church Hall
Alan Soar	Arbury Community Centre
Marie Cassidy	King's Hedges Neighbourhood Ptns
Eleanor Whalley	St Andrew C of E Church and Church Hall
Ann Tait	Age UK Cambridgeshire
John Quysner	Centre at St Paul's
Peter Cavanna	Kings Church
Andrew Roberts	Trumpington Residents Asstn
Philippa Slatter	Trumpington Residents Asstn
Elizabeth Cox	Trumpington Residents Asstn
Jez Reeve	Cambridge CVS
Sharon Murray	Cherry Hinton Residents Asstn
Tracy Saunders	Cherry Hinton Residents Asstn
Christine May	Cambridgeshire County Council
Ian Douglas	Cambridgeshire County Council
Christine Norman	Cambridgeshire County Council
Rasik Kotecha	Indian Community & Cultural Association
Swati Ogale	Indian Community & Cultural Association
Thakor Patel	Indian Community & Cultural Association
Gerry Robinson	Branch Organiser of Unison
Andy Blackhurst	Trumpington Ward Councillor
Mike Pitt	Executive Councillor for Community Development and Health
Liz Bisset	Director of Customer & Community Service, City Council
Sally Roden	Neighbourhood CD Manager, City Council
Jackie Hanson	Operations & Resources Manager, City Council
Dashlina Souleeyo	Senior Community Worker, City Council
Eve Dziura	Assistant Manager, City Council
Jonathon Church	Asset and Facilities Manager, City Council
Graham Moseley	Centre Supervisor BSNC
Becky Thomas	Centre Supervisor, City Council
Jane Coston	Operations Manager, City Council
Andrea Butler	Sen Programme and Project Worker
Simon Cassidy	Centre Supervisor
Marie Cassidy	Senior Community Worker
Rachel Balment	Centre Supervisor / Project Worker
Binnie Pickard	Community Development Officer – North
Rachal Creek	Centre Administrator
Vicky Hathrell	Community Development Officer (Southern Fringe)

Caroline Biggs	Community Development Officer - South
Edward Westrip	Churchwarden at St James
Marilyn Taylor	Marilyn Taylor Associates
Carina O'Reiley	Arbury Ward Councillor
Kevin Price	King's Hedges Ward Councillor
Trevor Woollams	Head of Community Development, City Council
Michael Bond	Chesterton Community Association
Ruby Leyshon	Church of the Good Shepherd
Clare Blair	OCRA
Cherie Short	

COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN CAMBRIDGE

DEVELOPING A SHARED APPROACH TO THE FUTURE

SUMMARY REPORT OF WORKSHOP 22nd January 2013

*taking forward ideas for strengthening community collaboration
in a time of continued financial constraint*

This workshop, held during the evening of 22nd January 2013, was organised as a follow-up session to the October event which had brought together representatives from various organisations operating community facilities across the city to share expertise and debate ideas and suggestions for improving collaboration and strengthening partnership. All centre operators face challenges in ensuring that their facilities are resilient to current financial pressures and operating effectively. The aim of this second workshop was to further explore three of the most popular ideas that had been put forward in October, looking at how best these could now be implemented (without incurring additional costs), and also to review the current position regarding Council resources for operating their community centres.

1 DEVELOPING COLLABORATION ACROSS AND BETWEEN COMMUNITY CENTRES

The three most popular proposals identified at the October event were debated further in groups, with the following summary observations put forward:

(a) Web-based Directory of Centres

This was the most widely supported suggestion made at the October event. The proposal aims to provide improved web-access to information about all available centres in Cambridge. At the moment the Council's webpage only gives details for the Council's own centres, and there isn't a single portal accessible to the public looking to hire space (or join in activities).

Implementation ideas:

- The function of the site will be mainly to signpost people so that they can make more detailed enquiries directly with centres relevant to their needs
- Use Cambridgeshire.net as host (with a link to this site on the Council's community centres webpage) – and/or expand Council's own community centres page
- All centres in (and around the immediate outskirts of) the city to be invited to have their information on the site, but it's up to them to provide the information
- Information to be to a standard format (with a simple template provided for completion by each centre) and to include quite basic information and contact details
- If possible, a 'comparative table' might be shown as a quick reference guide
- Definitely needs to have some sort of geographic or area display system and search capacity
- Search engine/system absolutely essential to get right
- System to 'prompt' centres to update their information at least annually

(b) Quarterly Network Meetings

Also popular at the October meeting were suggestions relating to the creation of regular opportunities for centre managers and others involved in managing and operating community facilities to network together on issues of common interest.

Implementation ideas:

- The suggestion that Eve Dziura (from the Meadows) act as the initial convener of the Network was universally welcomed
- Whilst some thought a network might operate best across small geographic clusters, initially the plan should be to operate on a city-wide (and environs) basis, just once or twice a year
- The aim should be to offer a couple of initial, friendly, informal but useful and informative sessions, and let it build naturally if people are enthusiastic
- Any network is only as good, and as active, as the participants want to make it
- The network could move around different venues, offering different opportunities to see other facilities and talk to the people managing it (eg Orchard Park might be willing to host a session)
- Speakers on specific topics might be helpful, and there should be a spread of practical topics, opportunities to share good practice and also some inspirational items too
- The CVS should be invited to be involved in the initiative, so that their expertise is harnessed
- Centre managers are very busy, and so agendas must clearly set out the topics being addressed; sessions should be purposeful and offer some 'early wins', some clear tangible benefits for peoples' time inputs

(c) Network Exchange Group

This is a further idea for enabling knowledge exchange, although opinions were more divided on whether centre managers would find it useful. Essentially it would involve an email group, through which people could 'post' queries, share information or raise issues of common interest or concern (or to pass on booking enquiries).

Implementation ideas:

- Could easily be set up as a 'Linked-In' group (an on-line forum), or just a circulated list of names, organisations and email addresses
- Might grow incrementally from the Network Meetings above, as people get to know one-another
- Might develop into specific geographic clusters of centres
- Probably best to trial it, and review usage demand after 6-9 months or so
- Might be useful to establish a few 'rules', so that peoples' Inboxes are not inundated (eg not 'reply to all'; reply only if can help etc)
- List of contacts needs to be kept updated

2 COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The second part of the meeting heard from Liz Bisset, Director of Customer and Community Services, summarising the current financial position of the Council and the need to identify some £6M of savings over the next four or five years. Whilst radical reductions, or closures, of the community centres were neither required nor supported, there would need to be some incremental cost savings achieved over the next three years and/or ways found to increase the centres' income returns.

It was noted that Cambridge City Council is unusual in still directly managing its centres. Marilyn Taylor's research into the management practices of other City Councils has found that it is more common for council centres to be under day-to-day management responsibility of voluntary community associations on peppercorn lease arrangements (some full repairing, others where the council is still responsible for fabric repair and maintenance). Cambridge City Council believes it should be actively working to increase the involvement of local communities in the operation of their community centres, and asked the meeting to share ideas and good practice experience about how this should be approached. In summary, the discussion groups raised the following points:

- Important to stress the need to involve local residents, rather than user groups in the centre (which are more transient); experience at Trumpington demonstrates the value of local residents' involvement
- Some areas already have active residents associations, which could be a very useful resource and starting point
- Start by calling a meeting for local people in and around the community centre (or clusters of centres); without scaremongering, it may well be the case that this period of financial constraint may galvanise interest as people do rally round facilities they value if any threat is perceived or major change proposed
- Identify local people who use the centres and who are already active in their communities
- Centres with a café or social area perhaps help community input more than those without
- It can be harder to recruit volunteers in more disadvantaged communities
- A new idea: perhaps set up a city-wide group of local people which could act as a feedback board for all the council's centres, and review/assess management approaches etc
- Above all people need to know that getting involved is an option, so publicity and outreach is very important
- Offer lots of ways to get involved, not just sitting on a committee!

Ideas for reducing running costs, or increasing income, included:

- Having active volunteers/keyholders in the local community can both reduce staff costs, and increase income as the building can be open for more hours or at weekends (eg as at Ross Street)
- Opening on few days, and for more hours on the open days, might make better use of staff time; more weekend opening would help bring in income from weddings and social uses like children's parties etc (may need to think about restructuring staff rotas to accommodate this)
- Can external spaces be hired out?
- Use local surveys to find out more about what activities people would like to see
- Improve publicity about available space for hire
- Non-replacement of staff that leave
- More promotion to local businesses
- Share staff across centres in cluster areas
- May need some initial investment in improved furniture/equipment to bring in more private hire or business use

NEXT STEPS

Councillor Mike Pitt thanked everyone for their contributions. This workshop concludes the inputs to the Council's community centres review. A report proposing a three-year management strategy, and an update on proposed arrangements for the new centres being commissioned as part of the housing growth areas, will be reported to Scrutiny in early March.

Community Centre Provision and Management Arrangements

Comparison Examples with other Local Authorities

Based on web research and telephone contact, the following is a brief summary of the management approach to the community centres owned by six city authorities:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| 1 Norwich | 4 Bristol |
| 2 Peterborough | 5 Lincoln |
| 3 Oxford | 6 Newcastle |

The picture presented is predominantly one of management through local, voluntary associations based on lease arrangements, usually at peppercorn rates (with a more varied picture regarding responsibilities for building repair and maintenance).

1 Norwich (Deborah Harris 01603 213180; deborah.harris@norwich.go.uk)

Norwich City Council has 16 community centres, all run and managed day-to-day by local community associations of volunteers. These voluntary associations are responsible for ensuring that the centres are accessible and affordable; the council is responsible for external maintenance, heating systems and fixtures/fittings. Some are operated on a hire-out basis only, whilst other associations organise community activities directly such as bingo, lunchclubs etc. All have a cleaner, some have caretakers, and one or two employ management staff.

All the centres have either a licence or a lease arrangement (the latter used when organisations have an opportunity to access external funding which requires a lease of usually a minimum of 25 yrs).

The community associations are supported by a small team of 4 Community Engagement Officers, who provide general advice and assistance. This support is considerably less than it used to be, because of other demands on staff time, so that they no longer attend all the committee meetings across all the centres or provide much day-to-day support.

The Council's Scrutiny Committee is currently carrying out a review of community centres and management arrangements with a report due at the end of February. This is exploring the current operating environment for the centres at a time of 'austerity' – eg issues such as the impact of service closures, like Surestart, or changes within the voluntary sector generally which may impact on centre lettings. It is also exploring the outcomes to be expected from community centre provision, value for money, the need for such provision in different communities, and potential prioritisation of major repairs. The aim is for the council to explore a more strategic approach to support for the community associations, particularly to help bring in new volunteers as many of the current associations are run by people quite senior in their years. Different partnership models may be required to help maximise the contribution of the centres and their volunteers.

2 Peterborough (Cate Harding 01733 863887; cate.harding@peterborough.gov.uk)

Peterborough own a very large number of community centres – 57 – all of which are managed by voluntary associations with peppercorn leases, some of which are full-repairing. Most of the associations receive a small grant from the Council to help with their costs (approx £400 per centre), and most do cover their costs through a combination of this grant and lettings income. Some of the more enterprising organisations are making more income, and a few employ staff as well.

There are no community development workers now employed by the Council, and so there is minimal support for the voluntary associations. The Council is currently undertaking an audit of the provision, and looking to find ways to encourage the Associations to be as enterprising as possible in their management approach. They are exploring transfer of ownership, provided the organisation is fully charitable and stable.

3 Oxford (Angela Cristofoli 01865 252688; a.cristofoli@oxford.gov.uk)

Oxford City Council has 19 facilities across the city, 17 of which are managed by independent community associations at nil rental charge, with major repairs remaining the responsibility of the Council (approx £1.8M earmarked for maintenance/repairs over the next 5 years). 2 centres are currently managed directly through the Council (having been taken back into control after the collapse of management groups), and they are finding this has been quite difficult and costly. Generally speaking, the community centres in the more affluent parts of the city are managing quite well, whilst those in deprived areas find it harder to attract volunteers and run efficiently.

The Council is currently conducting a review of arrangements for the management and operation of their community centres. The review is seeking to clarify occupational lease agreements for the centres with each of the community associations, and improve and strengthen relationships and generally to formalise arrangements for the way the Council expects the centres to be operated. Consideration is being given to the establishment of a standard Operational Agreement, which is being jointly developed with the Oxford Federation of Community Associations. This might be known as the 'Oxford Standard for Community Centres, with an agreed route for assessment on a gold, silver and bronze scale and covering the legal and safe minimum for operation, and developmental needs.

The centres come under the responsibility of the 'Communities and Neighbourhoods' team within the Council, and part of their work involves providing development support to the centres' voluntary committees. Audits of all the centres' governance, health and safety and financial procedures were conducted in 2012, against Community Matters' national standards. Weaknesses were found in health and safety practices and procedures, including fire bell checks and knowledge of safeguarding procedures. A programme of support to ensure all centres achieve the minimum standards required is underway, alongside a programme of Trustee training, run in partnership with Community Matters.

4 Bristol (John Bos 0117 9036440; john.bos@bristol.gov.uk)

Bristol City Council own some 30 community centre premises, all of which are under direct community management, mostly on leases (at peppercorn rents) which stipulate all responsibilities, including repair and maintenance, rest with the voluntary association (the council only retains repair responsibilities for 3 of the centres). This arrangement is historic and long-standing in the city. Many of the leases were established during the 1950s/60s, for 99 years. The council is gradually working towards the principle that the peppercorn leases are effectively 'help in kind' and should be therefore be subject to the same conditions that apply to grant-funded organisations – taking the form of a 'Service Agreement'. The leases allow for the Council to move to a market rent charge should usage of the buildings change substantially. Every lease is monitored and reviewed every 5 years. Many of the community associations are successful at accessing external grant support, such as Lottery funding, and are also able to apply for Council grant funding support if their activities are eligible.

Central Council staff support for the centres is limited to less than 1 F/T, based within the Neighbourhoods Department. The City Council is not pursuing the transfer of ownership of these buildings at the present time.

5 Lincoln (Antony Angus 01522 873515; antony.angus@lincoln.gov.uk)

Lincoln City Council operate 4 purpose-built community centres (and one other building), none of which are under local voluntary management. Most bookings and management arrangements are handled centrally through the Council's Recreation Team, although one is partly a Surestart centre for which the County Council pay a revenue contribution and provide a reception service during weekdays.

Staffing support for the centres has reduced, and there is now only 1 f/t and 1 p/t Caretaker employed directly by the Council for these buildings, and sports pavilions. They handle the H&S and maintenance issues at the centres (and other recreation premises). Responsibilities for opening centres (when there is a booking), cleaning, on-site H&S etc are contracted out to Agency staff at a cost of £10 per hour currently. The arrangement allows for staff to be present for 30 mins prior to the commencement of a booking, throughout its duration, and for 30 minutes at the close. This contract is long-standing and may have to be competitively tendered, in which case it is probable that these costs might rise. If bookings are to internal departments, keys are provided and they make their own arrangements.

The community centres all operate at a loss.

The Council is not pursuing the transfer of ownership of these buildings at the present time.

6 Newcastle (Neil Quinn 01912 773615; neil.quinn@newcastle.gov.uk)

Newcastle City Council own some 29 community facilities, of considerable variation in size, age and general condition. Most are currently managed by community organisations (volunteers), some with paid staff such as caretakers/cleaners. Some centres receive grant support from Council to help towards running costs (the largest grant is currently £12,000). The Council does currently carry out repair works to maintain the general safety of the buildings for which they have responsibility, but the capital budget is quite constrained, and reducing.

The current financial challenges facing Newcastle City Council have led to a policy decision to actively pursue the transfer of these assets to wholesale community management, mainly through the renegotiation of appropriate longterm leases, and the provision of support and help to develop improved management capacity and financial independence. This work is at a very early stage, and will require careful support and negotiation with residents and local elected members. Many local associations are finding it increasingly difficult to operate the centres on a voluntary basis, especially in the larger buildings where there is high demand for use. Some local committees have been wound up, others are struggling, and whilst there have been considerable efforts to develop local resident-led management committees for some of the centres, these efforts have not succeeded. Experience indicates that residents typically get involved because they want to be more involved in the direction of centres, yet find themselves considerably burdened with day-to-day operational issues which are often not those they volunteered to do.

Recent management challenges at centres where local committees have collapsed have led to the deployment of external management arrangements, and this approach is now being further developed through the establishment of a Framework Agreement. This will enable the appointment of appropriate external management contractors in situations where there is no local community association in place to operate a centre, or where existing community associations (in conjunction with local elected members) feel that this is their preferred option for the longer term running of their building. The aim is to offer volunteer management committees the option to focus on overall management, with a trusted contractor responsible for day-to-day operation.

The proposed Framework Agreement is to run from April 2013 for 4 years at a potential annual cost of an estimated £1.2M. It is anticipated that part of this cost will be offset by increased income generation. It is the Council's longterm aim to remove the need for longterm financial support, and a package of measures designed to assist and enable communities to develop and skills and identify alternative sources of funding for community centres is being developed. The whole approach is being designed to offer opportunities for a wide range of local organisations and social enterprises to become involved in supporting local community centres to thrive, and become independent from Council support. Despite the financial challenges, there is a great deal of interest from the established voluntary sector, and considerable creativity being shown in the opportunities for developing greater community control. All contracts will require the provision of support and capacity building to promote and enable local community involvement. There is also the potential for some centres to be managed in appropriate clusters, or for consortium arrangements between management contractors. Flexibility will be key, as there is no one solution and every local circumstance is different.