



To: Executive Councillor for Communities:  
Councillor Richard Johnson

Report by: Head of Community Services, Debbie Kaye

Relevant scrutiny committee: Community Services Scrutiny Committee 19/1/17

Wards affected: Abbey Arbury Castle Cherry Hinton Coleridge East  
Chesterton King's Hedges Market Newnham  
Petersfield Queen Edith's Romsey Trumpington  
West Chesterton

## **STRATEGIC REVIEW OF COMMUNITY PROVISION - BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES: COMMUNITY CENTRES STRATEGY**

### **Key decision**

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#### **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 In October 2015 the Executive Councillor for Communities, Arts & Recreation made a decision to undertake a strategic review of community provision. Subsequent decisions have been taken to agree progress at each stage (refer to section 8 of this report).
- 1.2 Following a review of existing provision and a needs assessment, a draft Community Centres Strategy has been developed with the overarching theme of 'Building Stronger Communities'. A review of community development resources and funding will follow. The Council is now in a position to consult more widely on the draft Community Centres Strategy, and to begin detailed work to develop specific, deliverable proposals.
- 1.3 The draft strategy seeks to achieve the following vision:
  - Council supported community centres are located in the right areas of the city to address the greatest needs
    - They are financially sustainable and provide accessible, joined up services to residents
    - They effectively contribute to the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities in a cost efficient way
    - The Council has successful partnership arrangements in place with the voluntary sector and other agencies, that meet the needs of local communities

- Council community development resource and activities are flexible to meet changing needs of the city

- 1.4 The Council's vision 'One Cambridge – Fair for All' highlights an ambition for the City  
*'to be a great place to live learn and work...where all local households can secure a suitable, affordable local home, close to jobs and neighbourhood facilities'.*

As such, meeting housing need is a high priority for the Council, and the local devolution deal offers an opportunity over the next five years to deliver 500 new Council homes.

Therefore, whilst this is a review of community provision, there is also opportunity for corporate consideration about making best use of Council assets. This review has looked at options for best use of land, and whether opportunities can be created for the provision of new affordable Council housing without loss of essential community provision.

- 1.5 The draft strategy is attached as Appendix A. It contains recommendations affecting a number of current centres and proposals to enhance facilities in certain areas (pages 32-45).

## **2. Recommendations**

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- 2.1 Agree to consultation with stakeholders and the wider community on the draft Community Centre Strategy (Appendix A) and the recommendations in section 3, pages 32-45. The Executive Councillor for Communities, the Chair of the Community Services Committee and the Opposition Spokesperson will be consulted on the design of the consultation.
- 2.2 Agree to further work and detailed feasibility studies of individual sites where changes are proposed in the draft strategy. This work will also seek to mitigate against any instability that could be caused as any changes are implemented.
- 2.3 The feedback and findings from 2.1 and 2.2 will inform further recommendations which will be brought back to the relevant committee for scrutiny before any final decisions are made by the appropriate Executive Councillor.

### **3. A summary of the draft Building Stronger Communities - Community Centres Strategy**

#### 3.1 Four key principles underpin the recommendations:

- They will provide the Council with a clear corporate steer now and for the future
- They are supported by robust evidence
- They will support change from current provision to the future vision in a supportive way
- They have been developed in a way which will seek to avoid creating instability for the local community as changes are implemented

#### 3.2 The recommendations have been developed to make sure that community provision meets changing needs of the city as it evolves and continues to grow. The emerging proposals are not set in stone, and will be consulted on to seek comments and feedback that will help shape final recommendations.

#### 3.3 The proposals for community centres include:

- a) Developing a new community hub on the site of the existing Meadows Community Centre site in Arbury, to provide the services currently offered by The Meadows and the nearby Buchan Street Community Centre as well as considering the potential for other co-located services and opportunity for housing.
- b) Improving facilities at Akeman Street or a more suitable redeveloped site nearby.
- c) Exploring opportunities to enhance facilities in Kings Hedges, as current provision is restrictive in terms of its size and accessibility.
- d) Inviting voluntary sector organisations to consider taking on the management of community facilities in some areas such as Ross Street Community Centre.
- e) Looking into the feasibility of being able to also provide more affordable housing through the redevelopment of Council owned land.
- f) Addressing gaps in the provision of community facilities in Abbey, Cherry Hinton, East Chesterton and Queen Edith's wards.

## 4. Background

4.1 Community centres meet a wide range of community needs across the city, including providing spaces for a range of local groups to meet, youth facilities, advice services, and community development work. Whilst the Council owns a number of community centres, residents also benefit from buildings owned and/or managed by a range of organisations.

The Council currently owns eight community centres<sup>1</sup>, of which:

- Five are managed directly (The Meadows, Buchan Street, Brown's Field, Ross Street, and 82 Akeman Street).
- Three are managed by local groups (Trumpington Pavilion, 37 Lawrence Way and Nun's Way Pavilion).

4.2 Three new community centres are under development, two of which are expected to open in 2017-18:

- Clay Farm - new provision for the Southern Fringe growth area. The centre will be run in a joint enterprise with the County Council, providing a multi-agency community hub.
- Storey's Field – new provision for the North West Cambridge growth area. The centre will be run jointly by the University of Cambridge and Cambridge City Council via a joint venture, the Storey's Field Community Trust.

Darwin Green will be new facility provision for the NIAB North West Cambridge growth area. The building start date is not yet confirmed.

4.3 There are many other independent organisations providing a wide range of valuable community facilities across the city, some of which have been supported through Section 106 developer contributions to mitigate the impact of development.

4.4 In October 2015 the Executive Councillor for Communities agreed the following brief for a strategic review of community provision:

- The approach - an evidenced-based, strategic assessment of community provision to achieve agreed outcomes.
- Outcomes:
  - Stronger communities (e.g. inclusive, connected, resilient, vibrant, good places to live).
  - Council resources are targeted to known need.
  - Savings - with a focus on reducing net cost by opportunity for further efficiency and generating increased income with the possibility of redirecting resources.

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<sup>1</sup> Arbury Community Centre is owned by the Council and leased to Arbury Community Association, a local charity and so has not been included as a Council venue for the purpose of this review.

- Scope - Council run centres, community development resource and support for communities, other community facilities, major growth sites, County Council libraries and the Council's digital, transformation and customer access strategies.

#### 4.5 The work programme includes:

- Audit of facility provision across the city.
- Examination of the Council's community centres i.e. profile of catchment, users, type of visits and financial analysis.
- Anti-poverty strategy (APS) priorities.
- A Building Stronger Communities approach with County Council and other agencies.
- Opportunity for collaboration with other stakeholders
- Management approaches for Clay Farm, Storey's Field and Darwin Green.
- Opportunity for redirection of resource
- Options appraisal for the longer term arrangements for centre management.
- The work programme has not yet included detailed planning for the community development resource, or the role which may be played by County Council libraries and other facilities in the future. The County Council are currently reviewing their service provision, and we hope to include more options for joint working and multi-agency hubs in the final version of the strategy.

## 5. Methodology – the Community Facilities Audit, Mapping and Analysis

- 5.1 Audit work has been undertaken to develop a comprehensive evidence base of community facility provision across the city. For the purpose of this review, a community centre or community facility is defined as being “a building that is available for use by the wider community, and/or for hire by local groups for a range of community/social activities and meetings, for at least some of their opening hours each week. The facilities have to be accessible to everyone, particularly those covered by the protected characteristics of the Equalities Act 2010<sup>2</sup>.”
- 5.2 The audit included surveys, follow up calls, and drop-ins at Area Committee meetings. Full details of the audit are in the draft strategy attached at Appendix A (pages 14-15).
- 5.3 Including the Council's community centres, 107 facilities met the criteria in 5.1, to be included as a community centre or facility for the purposes of this review. This is a cautious estimate of provision across the city as some facilities did not respond to the verification process.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights/types-of-discrimination>

- 5.4 The audit identified that many groups are unaware of the community facility offer across the city. The strategy recommends further work to improve the promotion of facilities.
- 5.5 The 107 verified community facilities were mapped by postcode and colour coded to distinguish:
- City Council community centres
  - Other dedicated community facilities
  - Other community facilities whose primary purpose is not community facility provision e.g. church, school
- 5.6 Maps were overlaid with data on population density and on needs. This is based on concentrations of low income households and benefits claimants (Appendix A, pages 16-18).
- 5.7 GIS<sup>3</sup> Network Modelling was used to identify 15-minute walk time<sup>4</sup> catchments for dedicated community facilities, whether owned by the Council or not (Appendix A, pages 19-20). Non-dedicated facilities were not mapped at this stage as their availability and offer for community use varied significantly. However, it is recognised that in some communities these provide important capacity.
- 5.8 New facilities under development were not mapped for real walk-time as no road or pavement network information is available yet for these sites. The analysis for these has been based on a 15 minute walking radius around the facility.
- 5.9 The walk-time catchments maps were analysed to identify:
- Geographic needs (no community facility within a 15 minute walk-time)
  - Demographic needs (high concentrations of low income families and benefit claimants)
- 5.10 Further stakeholder analysis was used to understand the strategic importance of Council-owned centres in meeting Council priorities.
- 5.11 Alternative land uses were considered, including options for commercial or housing development as well as enhanced community provision. In considering alternative site uses, the mapping of provision without centres was re-run to understand the impact of 'switching off' Council centres.

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<sup>3</sup> Geographic Information System

<sup>4</sup> Travel time of 3mph, covering 0.75 miles in 15 minutes Reference: <https://www.bhf.org.uk/get-involved/events/training-zone/walking-training-zone/walking-faqs>

- 5.12 This identified inter-dependencies between facilities serving similar catchment areas. Additional risk assessment and scenario planning was therefore undertaken for three sets of Council community centres identified with inter-dependencies. This is detailed in the draft strategy (Appendix A, pages 21-28). These have been considered jointly and the findings presented as packages:
- Package 1 - The Meadows and Buchan Street
  - Package 2 - Nun's Way and 37 Lawrence Way
  - Package 3 - Trumpington Pavilion and Clay Farm
- 5.13 From the analysis of information and risk assessments, the Council's community centres were categorised as either:
- Core (strategically important, need to be retained and/or further developed);
  - Transitional (less strategically important because they serve less disadvantaged communities or overlap with other centres); or
  - Independent (centres which are already delivering services with little or no Council support)
- 5.14 The categorisation process will help form recommendations for the future of the Council's community centres. For example, in developing core centres, or new facilities to address gaps, the Council may work with the County Council and others to consider multi-agency hubs. In reviewing transitional centres, the Council will work with other providers to explore options for community management.

## **6. Partnership and Joined Up Working**

- 6.1 Voluntary organisations and community groups were contacted to explore issues of community management. A number of organisations have submitted initial expressions of interest in taking over the running of all, or part, of a Council community centre. This opportunity was also promoted on the Council website. Further discussions can take place as part of the development of the strategy.
- 6.2 In considering how facilities are managed, the Council will explore alternative management arrangements which could be community led and which could allow buildings to be managed by (or even have ownership transferred to) community organisations. Such arrangements would require appropriate safeguards to ensure access and broad-based community programming.
- 6.3 The Council is exploring ways to deliver services by working in partnership. This will include dialogue with statutory partners to consider how services may be efficiently and conveniently co-located.

- 6.4 The new facilities at Clay Farm have been developed on a community hub model with the County Council and health providers co-locating services alongside the City Council. This joint planning approach and delivery model provides a more sustainable basis for the long term funding requirement for the building and staffing, and simplified access to services for residents.
- 6.5 No recommendations have been made regarding any changes required to the buildings for the three new community centres: Clay Farm, Storey's Field and Darwin Green. These have all evolved from growth-related master-planning, and are categorised within the review as Core Centres. They are currently at different stages in the design, planning and development process. They will be considered as part of the review assessing the outreach community development priorities.
- 6.6 In parallel to the work around the Community Centres Strategy, there will be a focus on delivery of the Council's anti-poverty priorities through community development activity. This work is currently under review and key findings will be brought back to this committee. There will be an opportunity to realign the resources currently spent on buildings and staffing to meet future needs.

## **7. Implications**

### **(a) Financial Implications**

- Initial analysis indicates that reconfiguring community centre provision as proposed could release funding from facility related costs which then could be reinvested in new facilities and community development work. More detail will emerge through the feasibility studies and will be presented in the final strategy proposals.
- Redevelopment of the Buchan Street and Meadows sites would create an opportunity for the investment of devolution funding in new Council housing, which would create a rental income for the Housing Revenue Account. The amount of capital to be invested and the revenue return will be determined through detailed modelling of the number and size of homes to be developed.

### **(b) Staffing Implications**

- There continues to be a need for community development activity and the development of new centres may create opportunities for staff. If, once consultation has been completed and final recommendations agreed, there were to be any changes that affect members of staff, then



consultation with them would take place. Any future implications will be undertaken within corporate policy.

(c) **Equality and Poverty Implications**

- The Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) undertaken earlier in this project has been updated to reflect the draft strategy and will be reviewed again following further consultation. At this stage, the following points can be noted:
  - There is considerable data on current use of the Council's community centres.
  - Gaps in provision across the city have been identified and proposals made to help mitigate these gaps.
  - The consultation will be tailored to each centre and designed to engage all who want to participate
  - Any impacts arising will be reflected in the EqIA action plan.

(d) **Environmental Implications**

- There are no implications at this stage, however as part of the proposed feasibility work, the potential for reducing energy usage and carbon emissions will be considered and will inform final recommendations.

(e) **Procurement**

- There are no procurement implications at this stage. Any future implications will be undertaken within corporate procedures.

(f) **Consultation and Communication**

- A consultation and communication plan will be developed to reflect the recommendations.

(g) **Community Safety**

- There are no implications at this stage.

## 8. Background papers

a) Previous reports to this committee have informed this report:

30<sup>th</sup> June 2016

<http://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=176&MId=3076&Ver=4>

14<sup>th</sup> January 2016

<http://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=176&MId=2792&Ver=4>

8<sup>th</sup> October 2015

<http://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=176&MId=2791&Ver=4>

b) The following supplementary information is available upon request:

- Overview of the Council's current and future community centre provision
- Summary of recent reviews of Council community centres
- Community Centre catchment maps

- Community Centre scenario over-lapping catchment maps
- Larger scale maps
- Detailed rationale for the categorisation of Council community centres
- Options assessment

## 9. Appendices

- Appendix A - Draft Community Centre Draft Strategy 2017-22
- Appendix B - Equalities Impact Assessment.

## 10. Inspection of papers

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

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