

Extension to Storeys Field Community Centre Contract For Services

**To:**

Cllr. Anna Smith, Executive Cllr for Environment and Communities
Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee 24.03.2022

Report by:

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Wards affected:

Newnham, Castle

Non-key Decision

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Storey's Field Centre (SFC) on the Eddington Development in the Northwest of the City, opened to the public in February 2018 and has been managed and operated by the City Council under a contract for services with the Storey's Field Centre Trust (SFCT) since June 2016.
- 1.2 The Council agreed to contract to operate SFC in the first instance, partly to contribute community centre management expertise to the newly formed Trust, and partly to support establishment of the new centre to be able to meet the needs of a new community in a key city growth area. It was always the Council's intention for this to be a medium-term arrangement, to support the work until the centre manager and team had been recruited, trained and a centre programme established.
- 1.3 A 5-year contract term was initially agreed between the Council and SFCT on a full cost recovery basis, and this had been due to end on 30 June 2021. In advance of this deadline, however, SFCT approached the council to request an 18-month extension to give it time to consider

options appraisal work and recommendations regarding the centres business plan and operation. On 25 March 2021 the Executive Councillor for Communities agreed to an 18-month contract extension ending 31 December 2022.

- 1.4 On 22nd September 2021, SFCT were given advance notification that, in line with the council's corporate priorities and [Community Centres Strategy](#), and following the successful establishment of the Centre programme and staffing team, the councils operation of Storey's Field Centre would not continue beyond the current contracted deadline of 31 December 2022, and that the Trust would now need to begin to assess other options.
- 1.5 SFCT responded to state that it will continue to work with the Council towards achieving a successful transfer of service by 31.12.22 but requested that provision is also made for a further contract extension period if required until 31.03.23 in case additional time is needed to complete negotiations and TUPE arrangements. A further extension provision would be pragmatic to ensure a smooth transfer for the staff involved, with a hard end date of 31st March 2023.
- 1.6 Following the transfer of service to a new operator, the councils Community Services team will focus on working collaboratively with SFCT and The University to ensure a joined-up programme across community facilities in the local area and that community work is continued, at least to the requirements as set out in the Section 106 agreement.

2. Recommendations

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

1. To agree to extend the councils contract for management services if required by Storey's Field Centre Trust (SFCT), until 31 March 2023
2. To note that the council's management and operation of Storey's Field Centre will end 31 March 2023 and that eight Council employed posts will then transfer under a TUPE arrangement, to a new operator appointed by Storey's Field Centre Trust

3. Background

- 3.1 The Storey's Field Centre is in the new district of Eddington, Northwest Cambridge, and serves this new community; existing communities in Newnham and Castle wards; areas in South Cambs; and citywide audiences for some of its centre programme. The centre is overseen by a joint venture between the University and the City Council, known as the Storey's Field Centre Trust.
- 3.2 The University and City Council both have a 50% stake in the company and nominate 3 representatives each to sit on the Trust. Under the Section 106 agreement for the site, the University is responsible for the full cost of the Joint Venture operations for the first 12 years, after which the City Council will be responsible for 50% of the costs. The 12-year period will commence on SFCT signing a lease with the University, but this has not yet been completed, and in 2020/1 financial year SFC's net operating cost is predicted to be £222,224. It should be noted however, that the 3rd year of operation for SFC (2020-21) was significantly impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic, as were all other community centres, but in tandem with this, a slow-down in the planned construction programme for the Northwest Cambridge site, and the arrival of fewer new residents.
- 3.3 Prior to the Centre opening the Trust contracted with the City Council to manage the staff and oversee the day to day running of the Centre on its behalf and the centre opened in February 2018. All staffing and management costs are reimbursed to the Council as part of the contract.
- 3.5 Since opening, the Centre has developed a programme of activity in line with the Centre business plan which includes community activity, arts and cultural events promoted by different organisations and commercial activity including weddings and conferences. In its second year, prior to the impact of COVID, the Centre attracted over 40,000 visits in its first year and in its second financial year (Aug 19 to July 20) it had already generated over £106,000 in income from hire charges when it closed during March 20.
- 3.6 During this time, the Trust has reviewed various aspects of the Centre's operations and the legal and governance framework, to determine the most sustainable and cost-effective structure and management arrangements going forward. Given the councils eventual joint liability

towards the centres running costs, officers have been working jointly with Trustees and the University to the review work.

4. Financial Implications

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There are no financial implications for the Council as all staff and management costs are paid by the Trust to the Council as part of the Contract for services (see section 1.3).

a) Staffing Implications

There are 2 full time and 6 part time posts currently employed directly by the Council as an agreement within the service contract arrangement. When the contract ends 31 March 2023, the staff will transfer under a TUPE arrangement to a new operator appointed by SFCT.

b) Equality and Poverty Implications

An EQIA has been completed to accompany this report, but no impacts have been identified.

c) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications

A climate change rating tool has been completed which shows no net impact on the council's net zero carbon target.

d) Procurement Implications

There are no procurement implications for the Council.

e) Community Safety Implications

There are no community safety implications.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

The recommendations in this report have been made following discussions with Trustees who include University and Council representatives.

6. Background papers

Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=176&MID=2791#AI14788> Strategic Review of Community Provision, and Management Arrangements for New Community Centres at Clay Farm and Storey's Field

<https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/documents/s55243/Storeys%20Field%20Centre%20Contract.pdf> Storey's Field Centre Contract for Services Extension

7. Appendices

N/A

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact please contact Allison Conder, Strategic Project Manager, tel:01223 457862, email: allison.conder@cambridge.gov.uk