

Item



## **Review Update of Future Community Development Services and Community Centres Management**

### **To:**

Councillor Alex Collis, Executive Cllr for Open Spaces, Food Justice and Community Development

Environment and Community Scrutiny Committee 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022

### **Report by:**

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### **Wards affected:**

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

## **Not a key decision**

### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1 Following decisions made by the Executive Councillor for Communities in October 2021<sup>1</sup> and March 2022<sup>2</sup>, this report sets out an updated direction of travel for the council's community development service, services for children and young people, and community centres. The reviews in each area are being undertaken as part of the council's Our Cambridge transformation programme.
- 1.2 This report provides an update to members on the emerging findings from review work now undertaken, and an outline of proposals for re-shaping the future direction and approach for these three service areas. Subject to approval of the report recommendations, restructure proposals based on this report will be circulated to staff for consultation, in accordance with the council's organisational change policy. Following this, implementation will be subject to formal approval, in consultation with the Executive Councillor, Opposition Spokes and Chair.

<sup>1</sup> <https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=476&MIId=3969&Ver=4>

<sup>2</sup> <https://democracy.cambridge.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=476&MIId=3971&Ver=4>

1.3 The reviews are not intended cut costs but are about working differently to achieve better outcomes. The council will in a better position to address its priorities, the emerging cost of living crisis and to reduce inequalities. The reviews seek to make the best use of available resources and if any efficiencies materialise, these will be reported in the implementation paper and highlighted in the autumn, or subsequent council budget processes.

#### 1.4 Future Approach for Community Development Services

In summary, the future approach for community development, will include the following:

- a. Integration of the council's priority work with children, young people, and families (CYPF)
- b. A re-structure of staffing resources to increase community development officer hours across the city; providing a named officer that communities can reach and work alongside
- c. Development of key priority themes for the team going forward, including tackling poverty, supporting children, young people & families, capacity building, equality and diversity and inclusion work, and health & wellbeing. These workstreams will provide a refreshed strategic framework to underpin future work.
- d. Providing greater connectivity for work across the council's services supporting children young people and families
- e. Projects directly delivered by the council will transition to a new 'partnership by default'<sup>3</sup> approach, that will mean less assumption about direct delivery and instead greater collaboration making use of co-production techniques to work alongside communities<sup>4</sup>. This will harness and build on the COVID response work which approached responding to a shared issue by way of partnership
- f. Creating greater flexibility within the budget to enable local commissioning of work as needed, bringing in specific skills and resources as required.

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<sup>3</sup> The partnership-by-default approach to collaboration aims to strengthen whole system participation in the future wellbeing and prosperity of the city - considering who is best to lead on, facilitate, coordinate, and contribute to achieving positive outcomes for the city based on evidence of communities' needs and priorities.

<sup>4</sup> Co-production is about working with, rather than doing to, people and communities

## 1.5 The Future Approach for Services for CYPF

- 1.5.1 These services will now be integrated into the Community Development team, to ensure that Council CYPF activities and resources can make the optimum impact to corporate priorities.
- 1.5.2 An independent review into the needs of CYPF in the city was commissioned which assessed available desktop research into the needs of CYPF by organisations such as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation. It also interviewed key stakeholders to ask questions about the needs of CYPF, existing activities, the sustainability of services, gaps, and current and future demands. This was not a review of the current Children and Young Peoples Participation Service (ChYPPS)<sup>5</sup> provision, but instead it focussed on establishing a clear evidence base and identifying how the council could embed 'partnership by default' as its future approach. The review went on to suggest where and how the council could consider re-focussing work with CYPF in the city in future.
- 1.5.3 The recommended approach is about taking a blended approach to work more collaboratively with other partners who also deliver services in this area, and with local communities. The council will retain specialist skills for working with CYPF so that there is expertise to commission, grant fund and guide and deliver priority work as needed. It seeks to maximise value in more of a one system approach and will ensure in future that the council's resources for working to improve outcomes contribute to creating clear pathways for achieving this.
- 1.5.4 Having concluded the strategic research work, and subject to approval of the recommendations in this report, work will progress in July with phase two of the independent review work to develop a more detailed work programme and action plans across the community development service, including the CYPF work programme. This work will seek to consult with CYPF to shape these programmes through focus groups, in partnership with service providers such as Romsey Mill and Meadows Children and Family Service.

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<sup>5</sup> ChYPPS is an abbreviation of the service name but the programme is also known by the brand name ChYpPS

## 1.6 The Future Approach for Community Centres Management and Operation

1.6.1 The measures recommended in this report could enable additional community centre opening at no additional cost, to make facilities more accessible in the highest need areas of the city and mitigate rising costs. All the benefits that could be achieved from this review are summarised, as follows:

- a) A Community Facilities Manager post appointed in March 2022 who can provide a consistent, joined up approach to community centre operation and procedures, and bring business planning foresight to maximise revenue generation to offset running costs where possible
- b) Increased opening hours with weekend opening as routine at key centres (Clay Farm, Meadows, Browns Field) on Saturdays between 9am and 2pm
- c) Additional weekday opening hours for Akeman Street Centre from 8am to 5pm to ensure facilities are available for residents in one of the highest need areas of the city
- d) A 'one team approach' moving away from the current model with fixed dedicated centre teams, to a new cluster management model of staffing which will deploy staff to centres where there is demand, to maximise support to communities through the crisis

1.6.2 If the recommendations within this report for restructuring community centres management and operation are not implemented, then extra funding will be required to meet increasing costs from inflation, rising utility prices and more demand for facilities and additional provision to manage.

## **2. Recommendations**

The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

1. Note the findings emerging from Community Services review work
2. Approve the future direction of travel and approach for community development services including priority work with children, young people, and families, and for community centres management

3. Agree to proceed with the consultation with staff on proposals for a staffing restructure for community development, ChYPPS and community facilities, in accordance with the council's organisational change policy and, in so doing, seek to maximise opportunities for affected staff and minimise redundancies

### 3. Background

- 3.1 The Council has embarked on a corporate wide programme of transformation (Our Cambridge Programme) which aims to transform services so that the council can continue to deliver key priorities and provide quality services, despite reduced funding and income. By 2026/7, the Council needs to achieve a net savings requirement of around £7.5m.
- 3.2 Embedded as part of the OCP discretionary service reviews, Community Services instigated reviews for three key discretionary service areas; community development, ChYPPS and community centres management. This review work has been underpinned by the key principles of the OCP, which are:
  - a) **Working in partnership by default** – the council cannot address needs in the city and tackle inequality alone
  - b) **A place based and person-centred approach** – putting customers at the heart of services to address inequalities and to support them to thrive, be resilient and able to shape and influence what happens in their local area
  - c) **Outcome focussed** – designing in partnership with others the best possible outcomes with all the available resources in the system to tackle needs
- 3.4 There were several other strategic drivers for focusing service review work on these discretionary areas as a priority within the OCP:
  - a) Changes have now been implemented to Community Services Senior Management Team posts, aligning all community centres under one single new management post, and to integrate ChYPPS within the community development service. These management changes have created an opportunity to review priorities and

outcomes, and to assess whether more flexible staffing and resourcing models could be achieved for these service areas

- b) A need to refresh the evidence base that links the community development and ChYPPS programme, to the [council's Vision](#) and [Corporate Priority 2](#), and to clearly defined outcomes. The council's future community development priorities and activity need to be better articulated within this current strategic context, and as part of a wider partnership delivery model in the city
- c) Significant changes to community centres arising from implementation of the [Community Centres Strategy](#), and a need to review staffing across all council operated centres
- d) Resource requirements for new community centres developed for key growth sites in the city (e.g., Darwin Green) now need to be assessed
- e) Rising costs in running community centres, both from increase demand for priority use activities, and from higher maintenance and utility costs. The Council is also being asked to provide more financial support to some third parties running council facilities

3.5 Therefore, there are two outcomes that will be achieved by these services reviews:

- a. To ensure the council has in place the most flexible, effective, and efficient staffing model for the future operation of council run community centres, to expand the current community centre offer and to meet rising financial and increased demand pressures at no additional cost to the council
- b. To have a refreshed framework of thematic and place-based priorities, that articulates a clear pathway between future investment and activities to help strengthen CYPF and communities, and support people who are more likely to experience poverty, inequality, and vulnerability. The future delivery model for community development will focus on a partnership by default approach

3.6 These service review recommendations will help to inform a second phase review of the council community grants programme. The community grants review will identify how funding can most effectively support community organisations to respond to needs and challenges.

3.7 The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Region of Learning (RofL) project is one example of a joined-up partnership approach to targeting support for 1,070 young people at risk of NEET (not in education,

employment or training), who are unemployed or economically inactive, and young people who are BAME, young parents, without basic skills, and those with a disability. This approach could be explored more widely for delivering specific outcomes to maximise opportunities to support young people to enhance aspirations, educational attainment, and pathways into employment.

#### **4.0 Pre-Review Community Development Priorities and Community Centre Management Arrangements**

##### **4.1 ChYPPS – the council’s work with children and young people through the Children & Young People’s Participation Service**

The city council has been providing direct delivery services to children for over 50 years, including delivery of an adventure playground, music studio, youth clubs, a youth bus, a play boat, targeted project work and a summer programme

4.1.1 More recently in 2005, the council launched the ChYPPS service, as an amalgamation of 3 separate council services. The ChYPPS service was last reviewed in 2015, and at that time the budget was reduced by circa 50% and it was revised to focus on direct delivery of a year-round free programme of targeted and universal opportunities to access play and engagement activities in neighbourhoods across the city, aimed at 9 to 13-year-olds. The service was seen as a mechanism to bring children and families together in a positive way and to engage with service providers, and it remains a recognised and trusted service by users.

4.1.2 The current staffing structure for ChYPPS is available on request and the service is currently budgeted at £428k pa (excluding recharges).

##### **4.2 Community Development**

4.2.1 The current staffing structure for the council’s community development service is available on request, and the service is currently budgeted at £352k pa (including income but excluding recharges).

4.2.2 Historically CDOs have provided a dual role, both running community buildings as well as providing a community development function. The

skill sets for these roles are very different; managing buildings has unavoidable demands on time and this detracts from the community development role, reducing the capacity for outreach, engagement and delivery.

4.2.3 Our service priorities currently link to Anti-Poverty Strategy and the council's ambition to build one Cambridge, fair for all.

4.2.4 The current structure has several small hours contracted posts, from as little as 7hrs per week. These posts are not substantial enough on their own; staff cannot dedicate time required to make meaningful impact within the communities they support, and this needs reviewing.

4.2.5 New communities are a big focus of our work, supporting the development of the urban extensions in providing community development support, play and youth work and micro-grants to kick-start community activity. This workstream is funded via s106. Whilst we have a commitment to deliver this work, it could be delivered differently.

4.2.6 During the COVID emergency response work, staff from across community services were redeployed to become a crucial link with community groups in every ward in the city. Learning from this way of partnership working has helped to shape the service delivery model going forward.

### 4.3 Community Centres Management

4.3.1 The council currently directly operates seven community centres, but this will reduce to five by the end of 2022-23<sup>6</sup>.

4.3.2 In 2019, the council completed an evidence-based, strategic review of community centres and published a [Community Centres Strategy](#). The strategy identified; where centres needed to be re-provided to improve facilities and accessibility; where there were gaps in accessing facilities for high need residents within a reasonable walk-time; and where there might be opportunities for the council to consider partnering with

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<sup>6</sup> In November 2022 Buchan Street Neighbourhood Centre will close permanently when the new larger Meadows Community Centre opens. In March 2023 operation of Storeys Field Centre (not a core centre) will transfer from the City Council to a new operator when the current contract for service ends

community and voluntary sector organisations to take on the management of some community buildings.

4.3.3 Management oversight for community centres has historically been divided between 3 senior management posts, and this has impacted on joined up programme planning, operating systems, and processes e.g., there is no central room booking system for council operated centres.

4.3.4 The current staffing structure is available on request and the service is currently budgeted at a net cost of £532k pa (including income but excluding recharges).

## **5. Key Findings from the Service Review Work**

### **5.1 Children, Young People, and Families**

5.1.1 An independent review was commissioned, not to review of the current ChYPPS service specifically, but instead to complete a review of the available research, data and key stakeholder information about the needs of CYPF. The purpose was to develop a clear evidence base of the needs of CYPF in the city, and review of the focus of current activity to identify any gaps. 23 individual interviews were conducted with service providers over a 2 week period, including; City Council services, County Council services, and key Voluntary and Community organisations, and Social Enterprises.

5.1.2 There were six key findings ascertained by the review:

1. The consultant found that across the council there is lack of coherence, joined up thinking and planning for CYPF.

2. Corporate and partnership planning work for CYPF are currently not sufficiently collaborative, and there is a tendency to keep doing things the same without challenge. The impact of intervention work is not fully understood.

The ESF funded RofL model, however, is one example of partnership collaboration focused on educational underachievement among young people in the city. It uses digital technology to coordinate and target interventions to improve and track learning outcomes.

3. Whilst the principles and aims of the ChYPPS programme have value and the experience and skills of the team enviable, having looked into the evidence of needs for CYPF there isn't a clear link between the ChYPPS programme and identified needs, or evidence that this model of delivery would be successful at improving outcomes for CYPF in the longer term.

There is a need for different solutions if the council is to be successful in tackling inequality, poverty, and disadvantage, and the emerging cost of living crisis.

4. The review found that in the city there is a rich and diverse range of support, services, and activities available to CYPF in Cambridge, providing opportunities to engage positively with activities that are fun and beneficial to their development.

However, much of this direct delivery and place-based activity is reliant on CYPF having the ability to access it and take part, with little or no support.

5. Early intervention and prevention are essential to impact positively on outcomes. In recent years County youth work resources have been focussed on targeted and later intervention crisis support.

6. Consistency was the most used word in the interviews with those who work in CYPF services, and many feel vulnerable to uncertainty and change, reduced funding or programmes ceasing altogether.

Sustainability for reliable, trusted, non-judgemental, accessible, and consistent services is important, but hindered by existing barriers e.g., annual grant funding cycles and lack of funding for core or organisational development work.

Pots of funding are available for CYPF service work, but there isn't a workforce in place of appropriately trained and supported workers to deliver. Longer term, core funding for key VCS partners is important, so that they can develop these skills and be commissioned to deliver. They are often best placed to offer responsive, flexible, and scalable services, when and where there is identified need.

Capacity building within communities is also important where there is most need, to also enable them to achieve resilience and be able respond to mitigate against the effects of poverty.

## 5.2 Future Work with CYPF

The next stage will be to develop a blended programme of work that includes the following as examples:

- a) Supporting the RofL project in working with targeted young people in encouraging aspiration, educational attainment and access to training and employment
- b) Explore whether the RofL model could be used more broadly to support other topics, such as mental health
- c) Working alongside partners and communities, explore opportunities for a more targeted approach to the delivery and commissioning of services that tackle inequalities and provide better outcomes for children young people and families
- d) Further developing a contextual safeguarding model with partners, building on the preventative work being done via the Community Safety Partnership, to make Cambridge a safe city for children and young people
- e) Building on the Council's [Equalities Pledge](#), working with partners such as CECF and the Kite Trust, undertaking both universal and targeted activity to help ensure children and young people feel they live in a diverse, safe, welcoming and inclusive city
- f) Ensuring support is available for children, young people and families experiencing the impacts of financial hardship in accessing advice, help and resources available from anti-poverty projects
- g) In thinking about community cohesion extend the focus to include CYPF and work with refugees and work with new communities
- h) To follow up work already in progress with the County Council to establish a Youth Advisory Board (a version of the Youth Parliament), and build on the success of the Take Over Days and Make a Difference events to better hear the voices of CYP
- i) For the OCP to consider a more collaborative approach to working with CYPF

## 5.2 Community Development

5.2.1 The service review work is underway and has identified a number of areas for improvement. To date, Neighbourhood Community Development, Equalities and ChYPPS have been separate service areas, however, we work in partnership with the same voluntary and community organisations, fund similar programmes and deliver similar types of work with shared outcomes.

5.2.2 The review of community development seeks to deliver these following aims:

- a) Combine skills and resources within current service; delivering an expanded, more cohesive and joined up approach to community development across the city, within the same budget footprint
- b) Create multi-skilled team of dedicated Community Development Officers who will work to council's strategic priorities: Tackling poverty, reducing inequality, improving health & wellbeing, and supporting children, young people, and families
- c) Focus on capacity building and a partnership first approach
- d) Increase capacity within the equalities workstream to provide additional support for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and supporting those with poorest health outcomes.

## 5.3 Community Centres Management

5.3.1 The service review work now underway for council run community centres has identified several potential areas for implementing more efficient practices and procedures, and for restructuring staffing resources to target greatest need and increased demand.

5.3.2 The key operating efficiencies identified include:

- a) A centres-wide booking system
- b) Greater use of SharePoint for centralizing community centre procedures
- c) A review of all community centre business plans and pricing policy
- d) A one team, flexible staffing model

## **6. Implications**

### **a) Financial Implications**

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Without implementing the changes informed by the service review of community centre management, and by keeping things as they currently are, it is likely that significant additional funding will be needed to run community centres in future.

The reviews and the staffing restructure work will enable staff resources to be deployed most efficiently and effectively. This will better position services to deliver council priorities, support transformation work and absorb increased resource pressures within the current service budget head room.

Any savings that can be still achieved by this service review will be identified within the OCP.

### **b) Staffing Implications**

A staff consultation on the draft staffing restructure proposals will begin in July 2022.

A recruitment freeze has been in place for the three service areas since 2019, with posts only being filled to enable essential activity. This means that we have maximised the opportunity to retain skilled permanent members of the team within the new structures.

The three service reviews and staffing restructures have deliberately been timed to take place concurrently, to maximise opportunities for staff to apply for roles across the three service areas and to minimise redundancies.

In anticipation of the service and staffing reviews, staff have been encouraged to consider their future career pathway and to address any skills gaps they might have to maximise securing new roles ahead of the formal consultation process.

### **c) Equality and Poverty Implications**

An EQIA (Equality Impact Assessment) has been completed at Appendix 1.

#### **d) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

A Climate change rating tool assessment has been completed for the proposals and the assessment overall is low negative, for the following reasons:

- The proposed staff changes will mean it is possible to extend opening hours for community centres in the highest need areas of the city, and meet rising costs for operating centres, without bidding for additional council funding. The extended opening could mean additional consumption of utilities and fossil fuels to provide access to facilities and services that aim to reduce inequality.
- The changes to ChYPPS will see less direct delivery of play engagement services by the council which will reduce transport use.
- The changes to the community development service to focus on council priorities and working more closely in partnership with local communities will have no impact on climate change.

#### **e) Procurement Implications**

None.

#### **f) Community Safety Implications**

None.

#### **a) Consultation and communication considerations**

#### **b) Background papers**

- a) [Melanie's Monaghan](#) report commissioned by Cambridge City Council 'A Review of Children, Young People and Family's Needs and Service Provision in Cambridge City' 25.05.22
- b) Cambridge City Council's [Community Centres Strategy](#)
- c) Climate Change Rating Tool assessment

#### **c) Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessment

Inspection of papers:

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