

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET - 18th OCTOBER 2012

RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY REPORT – REVIEW OF THE MANAGEMENT OF COMMUNITY CENTRES

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR LEISURE AND WELLBEING AND CABINET MEMBER FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES AND CO-OPERATIVE COUNCIL

PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS

- 1.1 That the Council carries out a programme of work to ensure that the Council community centres assist in meeting the needs of its communities and that this work incorporates the recommendations made by the Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee. It is proposed that the programme of development of the Council community centres is carried out in the following way;
- That the role of the Council's community centres is developed to assist in addressing local need, whilst ensuring they are run as efficiently and effectively as possible
 - A Project Steering Group is established to oversee the review of the five Council community centres to include a representative from the Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee, and that the group develops a clear project timetable for its work
 - Any proposals to develop the community centres are delivered in partnership with the community and other key organisations including Town and Parish Councils and the Voluntary Sector
 - That the team continue to improve the range of activities and promotion of community centres where appropriate whilst the above work is carried out

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **That the recommendations made by the Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee are noted and the response set out in 3.2 of the report and Appendix 1 is approved.**
- 2.2 **That Cabinet delegate authority to the Managing Director, following consultation with Lead Cabinet Member: Leisure and Wellbeing and Lead Cabinet Member: Neighbourhood Services and Co-operative Council, to implement the proposals made as a result of the review of community centres.**

SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

COMMUNITY IMPACT	Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Objective(s)?	
	Yes	Improved 'life chances' for all and People feeling safe and proud of where they live
	Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?	
	Yes	The community centres are open to all members of the community; however, any proposed changes to the current arrangements for community centres would need to ensure that any potential for a negative impact on specific groups

		was mitigated.
TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE		Establishment of Project Steering Group November 2012. Transfer of management of Priorslee to Estates and Investments November 2012. Completion of review of all community centres March 2014.
FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT	Yes	Community Centres currently have an income target of £114,840. If Priorslee Community Centre is transferred to Estates & Investments the associated operational budgets and income targets will also transfer. Financial implications arising from the review of Community Centres will need to be considered as part of the review as there is no budgetary provision to cover any additional costs that may be identified. MLB 20.09.12
LEGAL ISSUES	Yes	Any legal issues arising from the proposals in respect of individual community centres will be addressed as part of those proposals; this may include staffing issues, equality issues etc. Section 1 Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a general power of competence which, whilst not without limits, is wide ranging. In accordance with Part 4 Section 4 of the Council's Constitution, Cabinet can delegate authority in respect of a Cabinet function to an officer.
OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS & OPPORTUNITIES	Yes	There are a number of opportunities to develop a Co-operative approach to the provision and management of the Council's community centres which could enable the centres to better meet the needs of the community. This approach could lead to a number of risks in relation to partnership working arrangements. Roles and responsibilities within any partnership arrangements would need to be clearly identified in order to limit these risks as much as possible.
IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS	Yes	There is potential to impact most directly upon those residents that live within the Wards in which the community centres are situated including Arleston, Brookside, Cuckoo Oak, Muxton, Priorslee and Hadley and Leegomery, however, there is also potential to impact upon other Wards as residents from across the Borough can access the community centres.

PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

3. INFORMATION

3.1 Background

- 3.1.1 The Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee commenced a review of the management of the six Council run community centres (Brookside, Donnington Wood Lifelong Learning Centre, Leegomery, Priorslee, Sutton Hill and Watling Centre, Arleston) in February 2012. The review was based on concerns that the Council's community centres weren't being developed to their full potential and that in some cases they didn't meet the needs of the community.

- 3.1.2 It had previously been identified that the community centres could have a key role in assisting to address local needs, and that there was potential to develop a co-operative approach to the management of the Council community centres. It had already been agreed that from 1st April 2012 the responsibility for management of these centres and the relevant staff would transfer to the Community Engagement Equalities and Action Team within the Co-operative Council Delivery Team. It was felt that the development potential of the community centres as a community asset to address local need, and the increased involvement of local residents in developing the centres would sit more appropriately within the remit of this team.
- 3.1.3 The Members of the Scrutiny Committee undertaking the review identified that a key issue in relation to the successful development of the Council community centres related to their role within the community. The committee considered the issue of income generation for the centres and the role of the centres in relation to responding to community need. The Committee felt that although income generation is an important factor the key role of the community centres is to respond to local need and therefore increased community usage is essential in relation to the wider benefits to the community. This is key in terms of the strategic direction of the community centres as previously, due to budget pressures they have been managed in terms of a Council facility with an income target rather than as a community asset.

3.2 Proposed Approach to Development of Council Community Centres

- 3.2.1 It had been acknowledged prior to the commencement of this Scrutiny Review that there was a need to develop a different approach to the management of the Council's community centres which was the rationale for transferring the management of the centres to the Co-operative Council Delivery Team. The work that has been carried out as part of the Scrutiny Review has been incredibly valuable in terms of identifying potential future models of delivery for the Council community centres and some key areas for improvement. The detailed response to the Scrutiny recommendations are included in Appendix 1.
- 3.2.2 It is agreed that the centre within Priorslee currently has little potential to function as a community centre within this area. It is therefore recommended that this centre is managed through Estates and Investments and is no longer managed as a Council community centre. This would assist in terms of reducing the burden on the three members of staff with responsibility for managing the Council community centres and will allow more capacity to focus on the future of the other five centres (Brookside, Donnington Wood Lifelong Learning Centre, Leegomery, Sutton Hill and Watling Street).
- 3.2.3 It is also recognised that the Council community centres have great potential to contribute to addressing the needs of the local community within the areas in which they are located, as well as wider needs within the Borough. However, it is acknowledged that the Council currently faces a number of financial constraints and that the community centres must operate as efficiently and effectively as possible. It is felt that the centres lend themselves to a Co-operative approach which involves engaging the local community and partners in how the centres are managed and run. The principles that are set out by the Scrutiny Committee in terms of working in partnership and engaging the local community will be key to the future development of the centres. As acknowledged within Scrutiny Committee report, the development of five centres is a significant piece of work. It is therefore proposed that the approach to future development of the centres is as follows;
- Establishment of a **Project Steering Group** to oversee the review of the Council community centres, to include key Council Services and partners such as a Town and Parish Council representative and a member of the Co-

operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee involved in the Scrutiny review.

- Project Steering Group to develop an overall **project plan** including timescales for reviewing each centre and **key principles** for appraising options for each centre. These principles will incorporate the Scrutiny recommendations in relation to engaging the local community and partners and assessing the role of centres in relation to addressing community need. The group will also consider wider local issues in relation to other community and Council facilities and how these complement each other within the area, along with any potential financial implications for the Council.
- That ongoing improvements in terms of the way in which the community centres are run continue in terms of increased promotion and community engagement. It will be ensured that these improvements do not conflict with the potential to make changes in relation to the management of the centres in the future, some improvements to the management of the community centres have already been implemented and it is proposed that where appropriate these continue.

3.2.4 As acknowledged by the Scrutiny Committee a one-size fits all approach is not appropriate for the Council community centres and different solutions may be developed for each centre. A wide range of options will be considered for the centres, taking into account community need, the ability of each centre to meet the needs of the community and the views of the local community. It is proposed that delegated authority is given to the Managing Director to implement the proposals developed from reviewing the community centres, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Leisure and Wellbeing and Neighbourhood Services and Co-operative Council. Although the financial viability of the centres won't be a key driver it will be necessary to take this information into account. It is agreed that the Council should take a lead on this next stage of work in relation to the future of its community centres and that this should involve a Co-operative approach, however, ultimately it may not be appropriate for the Council to continue to run and own the five community centres. Careful consideration would need to be given in terms of the impact on the community of any changes to existing arrangements. Consideration would also need to be given to the longer term liability of the Council if it was proposed to transfer management of any of the centres to another party.

3.3 Progress to date

3.3.1 Since the Scrutiny Committee commenced their review a number of improvements and changes have been made to the way in which the community centres are run and managed. Some of these include;

- Clarification of key holding arrangements reducing impact on community centre staff
- Development of weekly timetables of events for centres
- Increased staffing presence at centres through support from other staff within Community Engagement Equalities and Action Team
- Increase in short term and longer term bookings within the centres enabling the team to meet their overall income target for the first quarter of the financial year
- Further involvement of community members in the development of Brookside Community Centre including group securing funding towards community cafe
- Volunteers assisting to improve the appearance of Donnington Wood Lifelong Learning Centre

- Review of health and safety arrangements within each centre

3.3.2 The team have identified a number of other actions that will assist in promoting the community centres and increasing community engagement within the centres. This work will continue whilst the longer term plans are developed.

4 IMPACT ASSESSMENT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

4.1 Financial Implications

4.1.1 Community Centres have a base budget of £229,300 including support service recharges for 2012/13. The operational budget (i.e. the budget excluding support services) is £129,500. This includes an income target totalling £114,840 for all of the centres. In 2011/12 income generated by Community Centres totalled £102,496 which was £12k short of the target. Shortfalls in income occurred mainly at Donnington and Sutton Hill Community Centres.

4.1.2 Priorslee Community Centre is currently budgeted to make an operational surplus of £350 with an income target of £8,970. If this is transferred to Estates & Investment all the operational budgets including the income target would also need to be transferred. This would leave an income target of £105,870 for the remaining Community Centres.

4.1.3 The review of Community Centres will need to consider the financial implications arising from any proposed changes to the running of Community Centres as options are developed. There is currently no budget provision to meet any additional costs that should be identified as a result of implementing any recommendations of the review.

MLB 20.09.12

5 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report of Co-operative and Communities Scrutiny Committee – Review of the Management of Community Centres

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