

STRONG AND SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	Agenda Item No. 5
14 SEPTEMBER 2016	Public Report

Report of the Service Director Adult Services and Communities		
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COMMUNITY CENTRE ASSET REVIEW

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report provides details about the community asset management and transfer programme, including the current practice for the management of community assets, the development of Peterborough's community asset transfer strategy, how the strategy has been applied to date and how the strategy has and will continue to direct the current community centre asset review programme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to scrutinise the approach being taken to the management and potential community asset transfer of community buildings.

3. LINKS TO THE CORPORATE PRIORITIES AND RELEVANT CABINET PORTFOLIO

- 3.1 The provision of community assets directly contributes to the Council's priority to keep our communities safe, cohesive and healthy. Often acting as hubs for a wide range of community based activity, they also contribute in some way to most of the other priorities.

Community asset related matters sit within the portfolio of the Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment Capital (Councillor Irene Walsh)

4. BACKGROUND

4.1 Management of Community Assets in Peterborough

Peterborough City Council own thirty one Community Centres, with a further two centres which are leased. All of the centres are run by volunteer community associations, many of which are long standing tenants and have been in occupation for 15 years or more.

Most community associations have a standard lease and are responsible for tenant's typical minor repairs and maintenance together with covering the running costs of the centre. The council remains responsible for the structure of the building.

The majority of centres are able to generate sufficient rental income to cover their running costs and put modest surplus income back into general improvements or enhancements.

4.2 Community Asset Transfer Strategy (CAT)

The Council's Asset Transfer Strategy 2013 - 2017 was adopted by Cabinet in September 2013,

and provides a transparent and fair process to how community assets are assessed and managed. The strategy aims to:

- Build community capacity and harness benefits to the wider local community
- Retain valued local provision where it is appropriate to do so
- Improve local services in times of austerity
- Contribute to savings
- Deliver local services that address local needs through community led and community controlled assets
- Achieve financial viability, long term sustainability and external investment reducing or removing the need for council investment

4.3 Use of the Community Asset Transfer Strategy to date

Seven of the eight former play centres have remained open, and are going through or have concluded the asset transfer process. Each are beginning to thrive in their own right and have been re-designated as community centres that offer a wide range of activities and services to their local communities. This process has been quite time consuming as the centres were previously managed by PCC paid staff. The process of asset transfer has meant that the communities team have had to establish and work with new groups to run the buildings, resulting in two charities, two CIC's and one new community association being created.

More recently the new purpose built Cardea Community Pavilion has also successfully completed the CAT process. Through the new improved working between properties and communities, the CAT process was greatly reduced.

4.4 Community Centres Review

The 33 community centres owned or leased by the council that are part of the current citywide review are as follows:

- Bedford Hall
- Belsize Community Centre
- Bluebell Community Centre
- Copeland Community Centre
- Dogsthorpe Community Centre
- East Community Centre
- Eye Community Centre
- Fleet
- Gladstone Park Community Centre
- Glington Village Hall
- Hampton Community Room (sits within a school building)
- Hampton Vale Community Centre
- Herlington Community Centre
- Hodgson Community Centre
- Loxley Community Centre
- Matley Community Centre
- Millennium Centre
- New England Complex
- Newborough Village Hall
- Orton Goldhay Community Centre
- Orton Wistow Community Centre
- Parnwell Community Centre
- Paston & Gunthorpe Community Centre
- Pyramid Centre
- Riverside Pavilion
- St John's Hall (leased)

- Saxon Community Centre
- South Grove Community Centre
- Southfields Community Centre
- Stafford Hall
- Stanground Community Centre
- Walton Community Centre
- Werrington Village Centre (leased)

5. KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 As the city's communities have changed and the way we connect with each other has developed, it is important to make sure that community buildings are well used, modern facilities that work for the whole community. An initial consultation on the use of centres was undertaken in 2014 and attracted 5,100 responses and provided an evidence base of how people use, or would want to use, their local community facilities. We are now in the process of reviewing all community centres.
- 5.2 The review of community centres is being carried out in close partnership with community associations and groups currently running our centres, and Community Action Peterborough (CAP), the partnership that represents community associations. We are co-producing the outcomes of the review with CAP to ensure the best interests of our communities are represented and to make sure that the right decisions about each of the centres is made. This includes taking the opportunity to review and develop a local offer of tailored and relevant services and facilities within our communities using all available resources, not just community centres.
- 5.3 The review will also provide the opportunity to ensure that community associations and council departments work collaboratively and supportively, which we recognise hasn't always been the case and has caused some confusion and frustration amongst community associations. For example, there have been misunderstandings around tenant and landlord responsibilities and lack of consistency with carrying out repairs, and a lack of clarity about the resources available to assist groups and enhance the buildings which they operate i.e., capital investment, operational management of buildings, statutory testing.
- 5.4 In addition, the council is working closely with a range of local partners to provide business and social enterprise support for community groups and parish councils who wish to explore community asset transfer. Groups will be supported to develop financially sustainable business plans, including responsibilities for full maintenance and repair of the facility, understanding and applying effective financial management, and evidencing and responding to the direct needs of the community. The support to build capacity within the groups will be developed through the voluntary and business sector.
- 5.5 This Asset Review Working Group aims to:
- Produce an options appraisal on Trust models, including legal/governance models, previous case studies, costs and a road map for development if suitable of a preferred model.
 - Develop a tool for determining the strategic/ organisational capability of an organisation and its potential for improvement
 - Articulate the social impact created and its value to key stakeholders
 - Develop a wraparound service to support groups going through the review and asset transfer process and guidance on how to operate a community building (ie, Health and Safety, Statutory Testing, Fire assessments).
- 5.6 A new community centre 'offer' for the communities of Peterborough will be developed, agreed and implemented. The principles for this work are:

- To develop existing and new groups who can support the community and the local authority
 - To maximise the use of community buildings, libraries and other community assets as hubs for the delivery of activities and services
 - To ensure assets can be used flexibly to help prevent loneliness and isolation
 - To use community buildings as an access point of information and advice and services
- 5.7 The delivery model for the programme is being co-produced by a working group comprising officers from the People and Communities Directorate, legal officers, property officers, and members of Community Action Peterborough (CAP). The Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment Capital is the chair for these meetings.
- 5.8 It is anticipated that following the process each centre will be identified within one of the following Recommended categories:
- Community Asset Transfer – to an individual organisation
 - Community Asset Transfer – to a citywide Trust
 - Re-purpose (i.e. retain the building but change its use)
 - Status Quo
 - Disposal for capital receipt
- 5.9 Property surveys have been completed for the majority of the council-owned buildings and will be shared with the appropriate community association.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The asset review is a citywide programme and will therefore impact across all wards. Until the review is complete, with agreed new management arrangements in place, the council will remain responsible for emergency repairs, maintenance and any health & safety matters associated with the buildings.
The working group will also be working with PCC's media team to develop a robust and proactive communications strategy for the programme, to ensure positive stories and case studies are promoted

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The working group has committed to circulate update reports on a regular basis to all community associations and other interested parties. In addition, a regular open forum is to be hosted by the working group, providing opportunities for the council and CAP members to share information and consult on individual proposals.
- 7.2 All decisions on individual centres will require Cabinet Member, Director and working group approval.

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 The council's property and estate management services have recently transferred to the NPS Group, who will now take on responsibility for providing a range of management services for the city's estates and strategic assets. This transfer of services has impacted on the ability to proactively progress the programme during this transition period.
- 8.2 With the transfer of management responsibilities in place, the new Property Team will now take ownership of the asset review and process, maintaining the previously mentioned co-production principles. The programme as a consequence will benefit from this dedicated resource.
- 8.3 Given the number of properties within the review, the working group will assess the buildings in phases, which we anticipate will mean the Asset review programme will run into early 2018.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

9.1 Community Asset Transfer Strategy

10. APPENDICES

10.1 N/A

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