

Report to Cabinet

Subject: Community Asset Transfers and Development of Community Hubs

Date: 10 January 2019

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Wards Affected

All wards

Purpose

1.1 To inform Cabinet of progress with the community asset transfer programme.

1.2 To propose to Cabinet that:

- i. the Community Relations Service Area continue to support the development of sustainable community hubs across the Borough.
- ii. the facilitation of the Community Asset Transfer Partnership to offer good practice sharing, workshops and other capacity building opportunities is continued
- iii. alternative models to reduce the subsidy within the community centre budget portfolio are sought, where community asset transfer is not currently deemed a realistic prospect
- iv. the efficiency target for the community centre budget portfolio is amended to £45,900

Key Decision

2.1 This is not a key decision.

Background

Budget Reductions and Community Asset Transfer Policy

3.1 In March 2014, the Council made a budget decision to explore the community asset transfer of its community centre portfolio as a means to achieve necessary budget efficiencies. The first step in this asset transfer programme was the development of a community asset transfer policy which was adopted by Cabinet on 22 October 2015. This document sets out the framework for the Council to follow when it considers the transfer of its buildings or land to different forms of community ownership.

Community Ownership and Management of Assets Programme

3.2 On the back of adopting the new policy, the Community Relations Service Area has been successful in obtaining over £20,000 and 16 days free consultancy from both the Government's Community Ownership and Management of Assets (COMA) programme and Locality, the national network supporting community organisations to be strong and successful. This funding has been used to support the capacity building of local community organisations interested in our buildings and to investigate and address small scale building improvements as necessary.

3.3 Appendix A highlights how this funding and consultancy has been allocated. This has included a series of workshops for local groups on subjects ranging from facilities management to organisational governance. It has proved to be useful learning for the Council too, highlighting both the opportunities community asset transfer can offer and resources required to achieve that goal. For example, Locality advise that on average a successful and sustainable asset transfer can often take up to five years to complete.

Community Asset Transfer Resource Pack

3.4 A Community Asset Transfer Resource Pack has been produced following collaboration with our network of local voluntary organisations. The pack provides a formal submission process and guidance in line with the Community Asset Transfer Policy and has been published on the Council's website -

<http://www.gedling.gov.uk/resident/community/communityassettransfers/>.

Recognised Good Practice

3.5 During this period the Council also emerged as a good practice case study selected by the Cabinet Office. The report is available on Locality's 'My Community' website:

https://mycommunity.org.uk/case_study/gedling-borough-council-developing-

[multiple-asset-transfers-in-gedling/](#)

Gedling Community Asset Transfer Partnership

3.6 Following the local COMA programme our local community partners agreed to continue to network and the Gedling Community Asset Transfer Partnership was established in 2017. Initial members of the Partnership included organisations interested in Council owned buildings but these partners agreed to extend the offer to other community bodies with an interest in managing community buildings. This approach ensured learning and capacity building opportunities could be shared more widely across the local community and voluntary sector. Members of the Partnership have included:

- Stoke Bardolph Heritage Association
- Gedling Borough Arts Association/Calverton Road Arts and Community Centre CIC
- Flying High Expressive Arts
- The Ark advice service
- Carlton Brass Band
- Haywood Road Community Association
- Eagles Nest Church
- The Beacon Project
- Gedling Play Forum
- The Newstead Centre
- Phoenix Boxing Club
- Cornwater Evergreens

Outcomes from Capacity Building Work

3.7 Appendix B provides a site by site update of community asset transfer progress for each of the Council's Community Centre buildings. One building has been successfully transferred while the Community Relations Service Area is working alongside interested local organisations regarding four other sites to establish the most suitable future lease or licence arrangements.

3.8 The expansion of the work programme to include non Council owned sites has strengthened the Council's relationship and understanding of a wider network of community hubs that exist within the Borough.

3.9 Notable outcomes from this community capacity building programme for both Council and non-Council owned buildings include:

- In July 2017 the asset transfer of Arnold Hill Community Centre to Eagle's Nest Community Action, a newly established charity, on a 99 year lease. This centre now operates as Eagles Nest Community Centre.
www.encc.org.uk.

- Eagle's Nest has since further developed its model for wider community support in the Arnold area and taken up a tenancy at Arnot Hill House. The organisation is using the space to develop a "charity" hub for local community organisations that need office and meeting space to support their work.
- The opening of The Beacon community hub on Killisick estate in June 2016 using the former Baptist Church building which had previously closed. The project is run by Daybrook Baptist Church.
<https://www.beaconkillisick.org/>.
- Advising and supporting Haywood Road Community Association on their journey towards a new business plan and charitable status as they pursue a new lease for Haywood Road Community Centre.
- Advising and supporting members of Gedling Borough Arts Association to establish a new charitable organisation Calverton Road Arts and Community Centre and with the development of their emerging business plan. Officers from Community Relations Service Area are currently exploring with the group options for asset transfer of Pond Hills Lane Community Centre, which also borders Calverton Road in Arnold.
- Establishing Flying High Expressive Arts as a major user of Pond Hills Lane Community Centre and supporting them in pursuit of their own charitable status. The organisation is increasing the participation of local young people in the creative arts and has become a key player in supporting the sustainability of this centre.
- To support Gedling Play Forum in their pursuit of a longer-term lease for Wollaton Avenue Community Centre, additional support for capacity building and business planning development has been secured for the organisation, as well as an annual Service Level Agreement with the Council to support their community delivery.
- Carlton Brass Band has secured new longer-term premises in Netherfield working with Derbyshire based outdoor adventure charity Mount Cook. Planning permission has now been approved for their use of the site.
- WeRHere has received capacity building and business planning support and agreed a new Service Level Agreement with the Council to support their operations. They are negotiating a longer-term lease for their occupancy of The Lodge in Arnot Hill Park, owned by the Council.
- Supported Netherfield Forum with a successful grant application to Awards for All to develop a feasibility plan for the potential future asset transfer of the Netherfield Medical Centre to the Forum. The aim is to further expand the current community hub offer at the St. George's Centre

site which is next door.

- Providing grant funding to the Newstead Centre following the loss of a key tenant and commissioned the organisation Locality to undertake initial business planning work for the charity which runs the building. The charity is seeking to develop a sustainable operating model for the future.
- Advising Stoke Bardolph Heritage Association in their negotiations with Severn Trent Water on a new lease for managing the former Social Club Buildings in the village. Charitable status has been obtained in 2018 and future building plans identified. Severn Trent Water has now commenced lease discussions with the group.

Community Centred Wellbeing

3.10 On 6 September 2018, Cabinet adopted a new Health and Wellbeing Delivery Plan, which set out a community centred approach to improving health and wellbeing outcomes for local people. This model seeks to map and mobilise the assets within the local community, increasing people's control over their health and lives. It defines the Council, local partners and the voluntary and community sector, as having key roles to play in community capacity building.

3.11 Community centres are some of those key community hubs and assets where community, statutory and commissioned services come together to improve wellbeing options for local residents. Building resilience amongst these assets through the Council's own locality and health and wellbeing programmes, such as the SPRIING social prescribing scheme, will enhance delivery of other Council priorities such as supporting the most vulnerable and reducing social isolation.

Proposal

4.1 It is proposed that Cabinet note the progress made to date regarding community asset transfer.

4.2 It is also proposed that Cabinet agree to:

- i. the Community Relations Service Area continuing to support the development of sustainable community hubs across the Borough
- ii. continuing to facilitate the Community Asset Transfer Partnership to offer good practice sharing, workshops and other capacity building opportunities
- iii. the assessment of alternative models of management to secure a reduction in the subsidy provided by the Council, where community asset transfer is currently considered as not being the most realistic option for a community centre
- iv. amend the efficiency target for the community centre budget

portfolio to £45,900 (which includes £21,700 already achieved) to reflect the recommendations in this report

Alternative Options

5.1 Withdrawing support to both existing community run hubs and local community organisations with an interest in the community asset transfer of Council buildings will reduce the opportunity to develop the long-term sustainability of community assets across the Borough. This in turn will weaken the Council's wider ambitions to integrate a community centred wellbeing model locally.

5.2 Not considering alternative options where a community asset transfer is not an immediate prospect will restrict the options to reduce the subsidy of the community centre budget portfolio.

Financial Implications

6.1 In 2014/15 Council approved a budget efficiency proposal for savings of £104,700 in the operational community centre revenue budgets to be delivered over the medium term.

6.2 In 2017/18, a saving of £21,700 was made against these budgets. This was the result of both the successful community asset transfer of Arnold Hill Community Centre and a re-structure of community centre management.

6.3 If the anticipated community asset transfer of Pond Hills Lane Community Centre and Haywood Road Community Centre are completed during 2019/20 there is a potential £19,200 saving to be achieved against these budgets with effect from 2020/21.

6.4 This leaves a remaining budget of £63,800. As no interest has been received by the Council in community asset transfer of either the Brickyard Community Centre or Westdale Lane Community Centre there remains uncertainty whether efficiencies can be achieved regarding these centres through the asset transfer programme.

6.5 Equally, Phoenix Boxing Club as tenants of Burton Road Community Centre has indicated it does not have the capacity to take on full responsibility for the running of that venue.

6.6 Killisick Community Centre currently relies on a lease with Nottinghamshire County Council to keep subsidy of that venue to a minimum. However, potential uncertainties over the future level of commissioned Children's Centre's Services puts at risk this lease remaining a sustainable source of income for the Council.

6.7 By considering future alternative models to community asset transfer regarding the management of these remaining sites, there will be an opportunity to assess growth in income potential at each venue based on marketing and consideration of alternative uses of available space. It is therefore considered appropriate to aim for a minimum £5,000 in the reduction of budget subsidy at these sites.

6.8 It is anticipated that community asset transfer is unlikely to be progressed across all community centres over the medium term. Therefore, this report recommends a change to the original approved efficiency target for the community centre budget from £104,700 to £45,900 (which includes £21,700 already achieved).

6.9 A budget reduction risk provision of £45,000 has already been included in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for this efficiency item in recognition of the challenges of securing asset transfer over this period. This will therefore leave a further £13,800 of unmet efficiencies to be met from alternative budget areas within the Council.

6.10 Table 1 below set out the proposed efficiency savings and the amount to remove from the MTFP.

Table 1: Proposed changes to efficiencies					
	Actual 2017/18 £	Estimate 2018/19 £	Estimate 2019/20 £	Estimate 2020/21 £	Total £
Current Profile of Efficiencies	21,700	0	38,000	45,000	104,700
Arnold Hill	14,700				14,700
Staff Restructure	7,000				7,000
Total Achieved	21,700	0	0	0	21,700
MTFP Risk Provision				45,000	45,000
Remaining Target	0	0	38,000	0	38,000

Proposed Revised Efficiencies					
Haywood Rd/ Ponds Hill				19,200	19,200
Subsidy Reduction				5,000	5,000
Revised Efficiency	0	0	0	24,200	24,200

Proposed Reduction in Efficiency Target to be removed from MTFP			38,000	-24,200	13,800
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Appendices

Appendix A: Programme of External Funding and Free Consultancy to support Community Asset Transfer

Appendix B: Progress Update on Community Centre Asset Transfer

Background Papers

Community Asset Transfer Policy

Recommendation(s)

7.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- i. Note the progress made to date regarding community asset transfer
- ii. Agree to the Community Relations Service Area continuing to support the development of sustainable community hubs across the Borough
- iii. Agree to continuing to facilitate the Community Asset Transfer Partnership to offer good practice sharing, workshops and other capacity building opportunities
- iv. Agree to the assessment of alternative models of management to reduce the subsidy provided by the Council, where community asset transfer is currently considered as not being the most realistic option for a community centre
- v. Agree to the reduction in the efficiency target for the community centre budget portfolio to £45,900 (which includes £21,700 already achieved) and include it in the budget process for 2020/21

Reasons for Recommendations

8.1 A supportive community asset transfer programme can help build the capacity of local community organisations and help secure a sustainable future for local community facilities.

8.2 Community asset transfer might not be applicable in all circumstances; therefore assessing alternative options in the context of the local needs of the community will inform both innovative decision making and creativity in seeking operational models to reduce the current subsidies with the Council's community centre portfolio.

8.3 Sustainable local community hubs and better integration of statutory,

commissioned and voluntary sector delivery are at the heart of the community centred health and wellbeing model defined in the Gedling Health and Wellbeing Delivery Plan which was adopted by Cabinet in September 2018.