

SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel

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PART I

FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION

COMMUNITY CENTRES – FUTURE PROVISION

1 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report is to advise the Scrutiny Panel of the Council's strategic direction for the provision of community centres in Slough and seek advice on the future direction of this work. The paper outlines the rationale and status of work to develop multi service community hubs that will both improve access to services for local people and reduce administrative costs.
- 1.2 The report seeks to put service improvement through community hubs in the context of the council's emerging Asset Strategy and plans for regeneration. It highlights achievement in projects including Chalvey and advises Members of the current status of plans for a number of other centres, including Haymill and Horsemoor Green.

2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

- 2.1 The Panel is requested to:
- a) Comment on progress and plans to date for the community hubs.

3 Community Strategy Priorities

- **Celebrating Diversity, Enabling inclusion**
 - **Adding years to Life and Life to years**
 - **Being Safe, Feeling Safe**
 - **Prosperity for All**
- 3.1 Community based services are critical to realizing the Council's Sustainable Community vision and strategy for Slough. Multi functional community hubs can deliver services to local people in a more accessible and easier to use form and provide better services and better value through fostering community partnerships and joint working.

4 **Other Implications**

(a) **Financial**

There are no proposals contained in this report with any direct financial impact. Development of new community hubs for Chalvey and Britwell forms part of the Council's capital programme. Efficiency savings relating to community centres amounting to £50k in 2011/12 and £100k in both 2012/13 and 2013/14 have been agreed as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

(b) **Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications**

There are no direct human rights or legal implications arising from this report.

(c) **Workforce**

There are no direct workforce implications arising from this report.

5 **Current provision of community centres**

5.1 There are over 60 community centres and related facilities across the town, including:

- Youth centres
- Community centres
- Parks and play areas
- Buildings used by voluntary and community groups
- Arts and sports facilities
- Children's centres
- Libraries

5.2 To this list may be added schools, health centres, doctors surgeries, places of worship, parish council buildings and other local centres that may not be owned by the council, but which also fulfil a function as community venues.

5.3 There is great variety in the types of services offered and the way services are delivered and this can be confusing for residents. It has also proved challenging for staff trying to deliver services to local areas that cut across traditional professional boundaries.

5.4 The Council's strategy for community centres has been developing since 2010 and is closely linked with the agreed Asset Strategy and capital programme as well as development of community partnerships.

5.5 The main themes for the strategy are:

- Implementing the Council's agreed Asset Strategy to release a limited number of sites to enable investment in better services
- Developing multi functional centres that bring together different service offers that serve a wider community than the immediate community
- Standardising terms for use of community centres to make them clear, consistent and easier for the public to understand

6 **Asset strategy**

6.1 The Council's Asset Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 7 February 2011. The strategy shows for all Council premises their costs and allocates them to one of four categories:

- **Category A.** Assets that are likely to remain operational
- **Category B.** Assets that could stay operational with potential for co-location
- **Category C.** Assets that are expensive to run, are not fit for purpose and/or have a potential capital receipt

6.2 The strategy has been updated and agreed by Cabinet subsequently as part of broader papers on the capital programme, most recently on 19 September 2011. It sets out priorities to improve and maintain high quality core premises. Central to this approach is the establishment of community hubs.

6.3 Community hubs are intended to be accessible and flexible buildings that are shared with partners. They are situated in the heart of communities giving access to as wide a range of services as possible. They offer the potential to deliver better quality and more joined up services to local people and to rationalise the number and quality of current facilities.

6.4 The strategy proposes three main community hubs, initially at Britwell, Chalvey and Manor Park, would be complemented by a range of other mostly multi functional buildings across the borough that ensure all residents have excellent access to services wherever they live. These other venues include, for example, children's centres, libraries and some schools. In addition, the Curve, as part of the Heart of Slough, would also be a community hub for the whole community in Slough in the town centre.

6.5 The Asset Strategy is being delivered through the Council's capital programme, which balances investment opportunities with asset disposal and capital funding to improve facilities. The Council is currently investigating a Local Asset Backed Vehicle (LABV) as a means to improve its capacity to invest in capital improvements.

7 **Multi functional community centres, including Chalvey and Britwell**

7.1 Community hubs would be used to bring together different council services delivered locally and also partner public sector organisations and the voluntary sector. Each hub would be designed to common principles specifically to meet the needs of the local community and the mix of services and operational arrangements would vary according to needs and opportunities.

7.2 For a community hub to be successful it must be:

- Close to other facilities such as shops, sports buildings or schools
- Prominently located in a central location
- Have good access by foot or public transport and sufficient parking
- Suitable in size and design for sharing accommodation and facilities

- 7.3 Facilities would normally include a shared reception, café and refreshment areas, community space, kitchens, meeting rooms, storage, offices, play areas, toilets and car parking.
- 7.4 Traditional community centres are places where different services or community groups would book a room or hall for use and the centre would be opened up and locked up again after use. This approach contrasts with the new Chalvey community centre, which includes:
- Open 76 hours a week, with staff supervision
 - Satellite library
 - Café run by a social enterprise
 - Hot desking for locally based staff, including police and wardens
 - Welcome-reception area with space to meet at no charge
 - IT suite
 - High quality meeting rooms
 - Hall that can also be used as 3 meeting rooms
- 7.5 The Chalvey centre was designed with advice and support from the Chalvey Partnership, representing community organisations, who also led local consultation and are part of the advisory board for the new venue. While the new building is important, even more significant is the way that the relationship with the local community has helped shape the service offer and built local ownership. The centre may in future also encompass other services such as a doctor's surgery. The programme for the reception area from September 2011 is included as Appendix A.
- 7.6 The same design principles and community involvement are being used for the new community centre in Britwell, which will include a new full branch library, hall, meeting rooms, base for community wardens, café, IT training suite and a training/commercial kitchen. In both cases, there is a shift of emphasis from different organisations having their own space to co-location and shared use of space that enables centres to be occupied a much higher proportion of the time.
- 7.7 A similar principle has been adopted in Colnbrook and the Wexham Road Sure Start centre, where children's centres are host to satellite libraries. They and other centres include a variety of other services for families, including health clinics and adult and family learning. In Colnbrook the centre will also host a My Council service each week.
- 7.8 In Manor Park, while at present there isn't funding for a new community centre, in liaison with the local community partnership group, an extended offer is being built to make best use of existing facilities, to establish the principles of the community hub model.
- 7.9 Other work is being done with some schools to extend use of their premises out of school hours. All these initiatives will contribute to achieving a number of community venues which are busy and can be afforded.

7.10 The benefits of this approach include:

- Simpler and easier access to services for the public by bringing things together in one place
- Range of services improved and more coherent programming
- Reduced costs because premises are used more efficiently and fewer buildings are needed because of sharing
- Much better quality of buildings and facilities through concentrating investment

8 **A consistent approach to managing centres**

8.1 The strategy for community centres is intended to be inclusive of all centres managed by the Council, developing a multi-functional model for delivery and encouraging all centres to be promoted and accessible to the community more easily.

8.2 One element of this strategy is the process begun in mid summer to transfer Youth and Community centres to the Community Services team in Community and Wellbeing. This would have the benefit of enabling promotion and management of the centres and terms and conditions of use to be standardised and made easier for the public to understand.

8.3 This approach helps capitalise on opportunities created by the reduction in direct youth service delivery by opening centres to wider community use. In addition there is the potential, subject to clarification on resources, to achieve some operational efficiencies in managing bookings and caretaking arrangements.

8.4 The focus of the Community Services team on customer service delivery is facilitated by the transfer of responsibility for the fabric of the buildings to the property team ("corporate landlord") from June 2011. This means that caretakers and facilities officers for other Council premises are part of a single team and can operate more flexibly, while the Community Services team can concentrate on community partnerships and increasing use of the centres.

9 **Specific issues**

9.1 **Rochfords and Langley Community Centre**

The PPRG revenue budget programme includes revenue savings for community centres in 2012/13 and 2013/14 of £100,000 each year. These savings will be achieved through a combination of reduced premises costs, staffing and administrative efficiencies.

9.2 Closure of the Rochfords Community Centre and Langley Community Hall was approved by Cabinet in July and September 2011, as a contribution to achieving required savings. In each case a 3 month consultation process is taking place with all users to find the best alternatives to meet their needs. It is possible to relocate the vast majority of existing users to another venue that they are happy with, including Upton Lea and the Langley Pavilion.

9.3 While Rochfords will be closed and demolished, prior to disposal, the Council hopes to sell the Langley Community Hall and it is possible that community use would be maintained by the new owner. In each case also, efforts are continuing

to increase capacity for community activities through working with schools and other venues which will mitigate the impact on local people.

9.4 No decision has been made about the future of other community centres.

9.5 **Haymill**

Haybrook College currently occupies a range of buildings on the Haymill site including a large proportion of the Haymill Community Centre building as a sub-lease from Community and Wellbeing.

9.6 The Council's Asset Strategy has classified the Haymill Community Centre as Category C (assets that are expensive to run, not fit for purpose and/or have a potential capital receipt or are possible LABV asset). It is known that the utilities in the building are in poor condition, difficult and expensive to maintain and the heating system is expensive to operate. The building has a flat roof which is in poor condition and the mainly concrete structure has very poor thermal efficiency. It currently costs over £119,000 net of income each year to operate.

9.7 A report to Cabinet in April 2011 identified a number of options for the site:

1. Release the full site for possible disposal - Relocate Haybrook College (both the special school and PRU) to an alternative site in Slough and find alternative venues for the other users of the Haymill building.
2. Release part of the site for possible disposal – Retain the former Joan Lestor building, sports hall and some surrounding play space to house either the special school or the PRU service and relocate the other half of the school. Find alternative venues for the other users of the Haymill building.
3. Retain the full site for Haybrook College and community use – Haybrook College is expanded on the site to increase capacity to meet the rising demand. This might include adding modular classrooms or renting additional rooms in the Haymill building.

9.8 The current position is that the future operation of services on the site continues to be under review. In common with all other assets, this is being considered in the context of the potential LABV to deliver a capital programme for the Council. Until decisions are made on the LABV in the autumn of 2012, no final decision can be made on the Haymill site. The Haymill Community Centre is on list B of the Asset Strategy (assets that could stay operational with potential for co-location).

9.9 **Horsemoor Green**

Negotiations are in progress for the potential use of Horsemoor Green for a local charitable organisation which intends using it for their headquarters and is arranging some re-decoration of the centre. The centre would continue to be available as at present for wider community use. Meanwhile, the centre is part of the Youth and Community Centres package under review for possible transfer to Community and Wellbeing to improve its promotion and ensure a more consistent approach to management of community venues. This site is on list B of the Asset Strategy (assets that could stay operational with potential for co-location).

10 **Conclusion**

- 10.1 There are substantial opportunities to improve community centres and service delivered to communities through making better use of the many facilities across Slough. The strategy rests on bringing new venues such as schools into greater use and enabling multi functional design and shared working arrangements. The potential is shown by developments at the Chalvey Community Centre. This is an important point in the strategy, linked with the review of its capital programme, and advice from the Scrutiny Panel is being sought on how best to proceed.

11 **Appendices attached**

- A SBC community centres list
- B Chalvey Community Centre reception & shared area activities, September 2011

12 **Background papers**

- A Creation of the Slough Local Asset Backed Vehicle (LABV). Cabinet, 19 September 2011

Appendix A

SBC community centres list

Community centres

Chalvey Community Centre
Cippenham Community Hall
Haymill Community Centre
Horsemoor Green Youth and Community Centre
Langley Community Hall (closing 2011/12)
Langley Pavilion
Manor Park Community Hall (Age Concern)
Manor Park Youth and Community Centre
Maria Cowland Community Hall (Age Concern)
Milan Centre
Orchard Youth and Community Centre
Rochfords Community Centre (closing 2011/12)
Rotunda annexe (voluntary sector tenant)
Upton Lea Community Centre
Weekes Drive Community Hall
Westfield Community Hall

Other linked community facilities include:

Britwell Library
Cippenham Library
Langley Library
Slough Central Library
Slough Young People's Centre
The Centre, Farnham Road
Thomas Gray Centre
West Wing

Children's centres:

- Cippenham Nursery
- Claycots
- James Elliman
- Marish
- Montem
- Orchard Avenue
- St Andrew's Way
- Vicarage Way, Colnbrook
- Wexham Road
- William Penn
- Yew Tree

Appendix B

Chalvey Community Centre reception & shared area activities, September 2011

| Day | Time | Weekly / Fortnightly / Monthly / Quarterly (W/F/M/Q) | Activity | Organisation Running | Comments |
|------------------|-------------------|---|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Monday | 9.30am - 2.30pm | W | Job Club | Employment & Enterprise | To help people out of work, raise CV, search for jobs etc |
| | 9.30 - 12.30 | M | Sure Start Information Surgery | Sure Start | Information and help session for families, children and young people of services etc for them |
| Tuesday | 10.00am - 12.00pm | W | Children's Story Time | Life Long Learning | For children under 5 to come along with parents/guardians and listen to stories |
| | 3.00pm - 4.30pm | F | Asian Poetry Club | Community Services | A group of people reading and writing poetry |
| | 12.00am - 2.00pm | W | Community Savings & Loan | Berkshire Credit Union | A non profit organisation that encourages people to join and save with them on a regular basis and offers low cost loans. |
| | 2.00pm - 3.00pm | W | You, Me and a Cup of Tea | Phoenix Centre | For people with physical, sensory and / or learning disability to come and socialize, chat and have a drink |
| Wednesday | 10.00 am - 11.30 | Q | Diabetes - Advice & Signposting | NHS Berkshire | A information, Advice & signposting session for people with diabetes Berkshire Health Care Foundation Trust |
| | 2.00pm - 2.45pm | M | Peak A Boo, Baby & You | NCT Pregnancy and baby care | Time for parents with bumps, babes and toddlers to come together, talk & socialize |

| Day | Time | Weekly / Fortnightly / Monthly / Quarterly (W/F/M/Q) | Activity | Organisation Running | Comments |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|---|---|
| | 2.00pm - 4.00pm 6.30pm - 8.30pm | W M | Community Warden Support Services SANAS Committee Meeting | Neighbourhood Enforcement SANAS | For the community to come and talk, ask questions and get help ST. Kitts & Nevis Association Slough - Charity – Provide or assist in the provision of facilities for recreation and other leisure time activities in the interest of social welfare with the object of improving their conditions of life. |
| Thursday | 11.30am - 1.00pm 7.00pm - 8.00pm | W M | Debating Group Have Your Say | Community Services Thames Valley Police | A group of people coming together to discuss and debate issues informally Police Community Service Officer meeting for the Community of Chalvey to come and talk about matters concerning them and ask questions. |
| Friday | 11.30am - 12.00 12.00pm - 2.30pm | W M | Children's Music Time Sure Start Families Services / Children's Centres | Library services Sure Start | Singing and Music for under 5's and their parents / Guardians Information and help session for families & children |
| Saturday | 10.00am - 11.00am 11.00am - 12.00 | M W | Book Club PCSO Coffee Morning | Library Services / Community Services Thames Valley Police | For people to come together to read and discuss books as well as socialize For the community to come along have a coffee and chat with each other as well as the Police Community Service Officer |
| Sunday | 2.00pm - 4.00pm | W | Taster Sessions in Bhanghra Dance | Community Services | For people to come down and discuss dance & be taught small steps |