

Title of meeting:	Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport
Date of meeting:	29 June 2012
Subject:	Improving Community Centre Utilisation
Report by:	Head of Cultural Services
Wards affected:	Paulsgrove, Buckland, Nelson, Charles Dickens,
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Sport on the strategy for improving community centre utilisation at 3 centres deemed to be under utilised as assets – particularly when looking at the location and the revenue support from Culture - and to seek his approval for the strategy.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That work is undertaken with the three community associations: Buckland, Stamshaw & Tipner and Paulsgrove and to support them to better utilise their buildings with individualized targets and strategies for each particularly focussing on use by the local community.**
- 2.2 **To support the implementation of these strategies under the Service Level Agreement (SLA) which could result in a reduction in grant support to individual associations not taking these strategies fully on board. Should this situation arise, then a further report would be brought to the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport.**

3. Background

- 3.1 These community associations are independent charities operating community centres from PCC owned buildings. All receive grant support towards staffing or direct staffing from PCC.

Information on the utilisation of centres and is gathered annually from information provided by each individual centre. This information is used to inform the committee on the use, the users and the programme on offer at their centre.

Following the Community Centre Report 2011 (Appendix 1) the under utilisation of some community centres was noted. It was particularly apparent at these 3 centres who receive a large subsidy (in the form of staffing or and grants) which lead to their cost per visit being high.

Improvement in utilisation would not only improve the income and viability of these centres, it would also help promote the facilities as sustainable resources for their communities.

Buckland Community Centre receives a good level of financial support from PCC.

Although they have a good programme their building is only running at 38% capacity (2010 figure), there is also a likely drop in this figure 2011 and into 2012 as they have lost groups over that time period.

The Association tend to be responsive rather than pro-active in getting new activities and groups at the centre and need to adopt a more pro active approach to filling their facility.

Stamshaw & Tipner has already issues around sustainability and are currently under measures to try and bring the association into a more healthy position. The most recently available figure for utilisation is 17%.

The building has recently benefited from over £200,000 of funding from PCC to scale down and improve the building. Penny Mordaunt MP has supported the centre with voluntary support to redecorate and improve the interior of the building.

Most users are from areas other than those around the building and with spare capacity at Buckland, the justification of continuing to support this underachieving centre is lessening.

Paulsgrove Community Centre (33% utilised) tends to lack forward planning which in these times of high competition and with the new Wymering Community & Youth Centre due to open in late 2013 will may prove highly detrimental for the centre without action now.

Individual strategies and targets will be required as each centre is unique. The strategy will need to be negotiated with the individual committees in line with the current SLA.

Timescale

Each centre plan would run for 3 years and engage in all aspects of programme, co-location opportunities and funding availability.

It is proposed to review each centre's progress bi-annually with the potential to reduce the grant resource each would receive should there be insufficient evidence of compliance.

4. Reasons for recommendations

- 4.1 This recommendation recognises that with these buildings being under utilised, they are not providing value for money to PCC and not providing a quality programme to local residents.

5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

- 5.1 An EIA is not required at this time but if there is a change to service delivery as result of an action arising in the SLA, an EIA will be completed at this time.

6. Head of Legal, Licensing & Registrars' comments

- 6.1 The comments of the Head of Legal, Licensing and Registrars' are incorporated within the body of this report

7. Head of Finance's comments

- 7.1 The financial support towards costs at the three centres in 2012/13 will be;

Buckland Community Centre

- Direct Staffing - £19,300
- Grant towards staffing costs - £12,400

Stamshaw and Tipner Centre

- Direct Staffing - £4,700
- Grant towards staffing costs - £15,000

Paulsgrove Community Centre

- Direct Staffing - £8,300
- Grant towards staffing costs - £27,500

The costs of developing individual targets and strategies for each of the three sites will be met from within the existing cash limited budget.

In the event of any of the three sites not meeting the agreed targets and not following approved strategies there may be a reduction or cessation of the financial grant awarded.

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Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Head of Cultural Services

Appendices: None

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Service Level Agreement	Cultural Services Shared drive
Community Centres Report 16 December 2011	http://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/yourcouncil/23297.html

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved / approved as amended / deferred/ rejected by Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport on 29 June 2012.

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Signed by: Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport