

Title of meeting:	Cabinet Member for Culture Leisure and Sport
Date of meeting:	12 th October 2012
Subject:	Community Centres Policy
Report by:	Head of City Development and Cultural Services
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to put forward for approval a policy clearly outlining the Council's aims for its community centres. The policy will provide a framework for future decision making about location of provision and will give officers guidance on the Council's priorities, including the role of the managing community associations.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That this Community Centre purpose and policy statement be formally approved.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council has no formally adopted policy on community centres. Over the years a number of centres have been built or acquired, including those from Hampshire County Council in 1997, and some disposed of. In addition, a small number of new centres have been built by other providers.
- 3.2 The Council currently owns 15 buildings designated as community centres with a 16th (Wymering) about to be rebuilt. 13 of these centres are managed by charitable associations whose committees of trustees are drawn from their local neighbourhoods
- 3.3 In light of revenue budget pressures, the benefits of co-locating Council services where this maintains or enhances quality of service and the condition of some buildings, new ways of delivering community centre services are being explored.

- 3.4 In addition to the Council owned community centres there are a small number of community buildings which operate in very similar ways including being managed by voluntary committees of residents. These committees participate in the network of associations and receive advice and access to training via Community Support.
- 3.5 The Localism Act which seeks to ensure there is a transition of decision making and control devolved to local communities. In the shift from Big Government to Big Society the majority of our community centres already support PCC to meet four of the six 'ingredients' required to make such a 'transition';
1. Empowering communities to do things their way
 2. Increasing local control of public finance
 3. Diversify the supply of public services
 4. Strengthening accountability to local people.
- 3.6 Recent cuts in public spending necessitate a review of community assets and the way services are delivered to our communities – seeking to obtain best value for communities and the council.

4. The Purpose of Community Centres

- 4.1 With the publication of the Government White Paper in July this year, 'Caring for our Future', the expectation on local authorities is to '*maximise the potential for spaces and buildings in a community to act as meeting places or centres for activities*'.

Where public buildings (*community centres, libraries, leisure centres and day centres*) should be '*open, inclusive and culturally sensitive venues*'. Other agendas could be locally delivered through such accessible public facilities.

- 4.2 Another important purpose is to support and build community cohesion within communities and this is achieved chiefly through providing, in the local neighbourhood, a range of activities and opportunities for social interaction across age, background and ability, thus supporting social integration. Centres provide an environment where people engage voluntarily, feel confident that they belong and are comfortable mixing and interacting with others. The programmes are typically aimed at and delivered to people who traditionally would not participate in activities in more formal environments and with the aim of encouraging wider participation.
- 4.3 A third purpose is the provision of volunteering opportunities at a variety of levels including that of membership of the committee of managing trustees. Management committees of community associations are annually elected by and from the membership and are drawn mainly from local residents. Not only are such committees best placed to understand the needs of their local area but subject to replacement if they fail to deliver what the local community needs and wants.

5. Policy Statement

- 5.1 Portsmouth City Council will seek to equip local communities with the resources to meet a wide range of community needs – social, recreational, educational and

cultural; the expertise to manage those resources and the ability to use the resources and expertise in favour particularly of the less advantaged in the community & PCC will seek to support a network of buildings across the city that meet these needs.

6. Reasons for recommendations

- 6.1 A clear Council policy on community centres will provide a framework for decisions and proposals for future developments.
- 6.2 Formal endorsement of the Policy Statement and the Purpose of Community Centres (as outlined in 4 and 5 above) will enable these debates and developments to be pursued with clarity of purpose and objectives.
- 6.3 From a wider perspective, this community centre policy will position the Council's *modus operandi* within the direction of a number of national agendas:

Big Society agenda
The Localism Act
Health & Social Care White Paper
Dept for Schools Children and Families – co location of services
Community Learning – supporting diverse delivery and inclusion

7. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

- 7.1 Preliminary EIA completed – full EIA not required.

8. Head of Legal, Licensing & Registrars' comments

- 8.1 The proposed Community Centres Policy is consistent with the City Council's powers to make provision for the social, recreational, educational and cultural needs of the community.
- 8.2 Under Part 2, Section 3 of the City Council's Constitution (responsibilities of the Cabinet) and further in accordance with the Scheme of Delegations at Appendix A to the Executive Procedure Rules in Part 3 of the Constitution, the Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport has authority to approve the recommendations set out in this report.

9. Head of Finance's comments

- 9.1 The Community Centre Policy will be implemented within the cash limited resources of the Community Support section.

Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Head of City Development and Cultural Services

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
None	

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure & Sport on 12 October 2012

Signed by:
Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure & Sport