

Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 7 March 2023

Community Centre Strategy

Executive/routine Wards Council Commitments	Routine All
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1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Culture and Communities Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Approve the proposed approach to be taken to the development of a community centre strategy for the city;
 - 1.1.2 Agree to establish a time limited All Party Oversight Group (APOG), to oversee the strategic review and development of a community centre strategy;
 - 1.1.3 Agree in principle a grant funding award of up to £40,000 for Muirhouse Millennium Centre, subject to funding being agreed by Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee; and
- 1.2 If Committee agrees recommendation 1.1.2, Committee is also asked to agree the membership of the APOG and to note that the APOG will be convened at key stages of the review.

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Executive Director of Place

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Report

Community Centre Strategy

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report responds to the motion from Councillor McNeese-Mechan which was approved by Culture and Communities Committee on [13 December 2022](#).

3. Background

- 3.1 On [13 December 2022](#), the Culture and Communities Committee considered an update on Community Empowerment and approved an amendment by the SNP Group.
- 3.2 The amendment requested a further report in one cycle on the detail of the community centre approach before giving approval to this strategy. The amendment also requested that community centre management committees be consulted as part of this approach, and their feedback should be included in the report.
- 3.3 On 22 December 2022, as requested by Committee, a briefing on the lifelong learning review was circulated to Elected Members and this is attached in Appendix 1.

4. Main report

Community Centres

- 4.1 There are currently 35 community centres in Edinburgh where the Council both owns the buildings and provides day to day services in them. Services based in community centres include Business Support, Facilities Management and Wider Achievement/Lifelong Learning.
- 4.2 There are also a number of other Council service areas involved in supporting community centres including Estates, Strategic Asset Planning and Legal Services.

Investment in Community Centres

- 4.3 At present, routine repairs and maintenance are carried out in community centres, if required. However, an assessment of Council owned community centre buildings in 2020 identified that improvements are required to the fabric of many of these buildings, with an estimated capital cost of £13.6m (which is currently unfunded). A

programme of building surveys is currently being undertaken to bring this assessment up to date and is expected to be completed in Spring 2023.

Community Spaces and Community Groups

- 4.4 In addition to the community centres which are operated by the Council, there are a number of community spaces which provide valuable support and services in local areas but in which the Council has no involvement.
- 4.5 As noted in a motion to the Council in June 2022 and again on 9 February 2023, some of these centres are having difficulties in raising funding and are facing an uncertain future.

Lifelong Learning Review

- 4.6 The review of Lifelong Learning has prioritised support for community centre management committees in recognition of the importance of community centres in local areas and the need to ensure that centres are operating safely and effectively and can adapt in an agile way to change.

Development of a Community Centre Strategy

- 4.7 In order to develop a coherent strategy, it is proposed to undertake a strategic review of the current arrangements for community centres.
- 4.8 Recognising the importance of both Council and non-Council run community spaces and building on the the approved motion by Councillor Nicolson from 9 February 2023, it is intended to engage with management committees of non-Council run community spaces in the development of the strategy.
- 4.9 The primary consideration of the review will be service delivery and local outcomes, and therefore understanding what sort of activities are taking place for local communities, and their effectiveness, will be a primary focus.
- 4.10 The key workstreams in the review will be:
 - 4.10.1 Service provision and outcomes;
 - 4.10.2 Operational committee structures, function, and sustainability;
 - 4.10.3 Building use;
 - 4.10.4 Property condition, location and accessibility, ownership and lease arrangements;
 - 4.10.5 Staffing;
 - 4.10.6 Finances, including funding, expenditure and income (including accessing available grant funding and other financial support received/required); and
 - 4.10.7 Local context, such as neighbouring community assets/projects.
- 4.11 It is important to recognise from the outset that, given the financial investment required to maintain and improve centres and noting the financial challenges which are being reported for non-Council run spaces, it may not be possible to sustain current provision across the city. But equally the Council must seek to sustain local activity which is clearly improving outcomes across the city.

- 4.12 It will also be important to take account of socio-economic and geographical considerations as well as what other facilities are available in local areas (including Council and voluntary sector owned and run facilities).
- 4.13 As part of the strategic review, the key aspects of the community centre estate will be assessed and an overview of the findings will be prepared. The findings of this, alongside the outcomes of the workstream activities, will form the basis on which a new community centre strategy will be developed. This may be set out on a neighbourhood basis.
- 4.14 The information gathered will also be used to help inform the strategic decisions which will be required, within the wider context of the Council Business Plan and a range of other Council service strategies, such as the 20 minute neighbourhood programme. It is also anticipated that a clear process for decision making for the community centre estate will emerge, with a focus on developing innovative approaches to ensure future sustainability.
- 4.15 It is anticipated that the final strategy will include details on how financial support from the Council will be administered and what requirements will be placed on management committees.
- 4.16 The strategic review is expected to commence at the beginning of the new financial year (1 April 2023) and for the final community centre strategy to be presented to Committee for approval within one year.

Stakeholders

Community Centre Management Committees

- 4.17 The number of stakeholders with an interest the strategic review will be broad.
- 4.18 In the first instance, it is proposed to engage with all community centre management committees across the city to explain the proposed approach and its component parts (as described in paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8 above).
- 4.19 Following this, the focus will be on fully consulting and engaging with committees to support the development of the strategic approach and to capture their views on what the future strategy for community centres should be.
- 4.20 Management committees will also be fully engaged in information gathering and on an on-going basis throughout the development of the strategy.

Other Stakeholders

- 4.21 There will also be interest from a range of other stakeholders including:
- 4.21.1 Local users of centres;
 - 4.21.2 Local providers of services in centres (both statutory and voluntary);
 - 4.21.3 Ward Councillors; and
 - 4.21.4 Council officers.
- 4.22 A communications plan will be developed to ensure that engagement takes place with these stakeholders at the appropriate time.

Governance

- 4.23 The newly established Community Empowerment Board will oversee the development of the strategy. This Board is Chaired by the Executive Director of Place and involves officers from all relevant Council service areas.
- 4.24 In addition, it is proposed to set up a time limited All Party Oversight Group (APOG) to ensure Elected Members are kept informed at key stages in the development of the strategy. Committee is asked to agree to the creation of this APOG and to agree the membership of the group.

Shared Prosperity Fund

- 4.25 Running parallel to the strategic review of community centres, funding from the Shared Prosperity Fund has been secured for financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25 to carry out a wide ranging programme of developmental work with community centre management committees.
- 4.26 This work will be carried out in conjunction with an external partner and the programme of development will focus on both Council and non-Council run community spaces. Management committees will be invited to participate in the programme, which will cover a range of subjects ranging from charity law through to succession planning and will be designed to ensure that committees are viable now and in the future.

Lease Arrangements

- 4.27 As noted in the report in December 2022, in 2019 the Council agreed to carry out a consultation with management committees on draft standard lease terms.
- 4.28 This will be progressed alongside the development of the new community centre strategy.

Muirhouse Millennium Centre

- 4.29 On 9 February 2023, the Council heard a deputation from Muirhouse Millennium Centre which recognised that while they are facilitating important services for people from vulnerable and disadvantaged backgrounds and demand for services is increasing, they are facing significant financial challenges.
- 4.30 The Council asked officers to engage with the Muirhouse Millennium Centre Board to provide advice and support on how the centre can continue on a sustainable financial basis, with the outcome of this work to be reported back to Culture and Communities Committee and ward Councillors.
- 4.31 Engagement with the Board is already underway, and the Board has provided some initial information on the financial challenges faced. Officers are currently assessing the information provided and are working with the Board on identifying financial and other support available.
- 4.32 However, in recognition of the financial challenges faced by the Centre, Committee is asked to agree in principle to support a grant funding award of up to £40,000 for Muirhouse Millennium Centre to help meet their operational costs in 2023/24, subject to funding being made available, and to note that officers will seek approval

from Housing, Homelessness and Fair Work Committee to set aside up to £40,000 from the Edinburgh Discretionary Business Support Fund to enable this allocation to be made.

- 4.33 To support the long term planning for the Muirhouse Millennium Centre, officers will also ensure that they are fully engaged in the development of the community centre strategy and will encourage their participation in the development programme which is supported by the Shared Prosperity Fund.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 As set out above, it is planned to begin the strategic review of community centres early in the new financial year and to progress with the development of a new community centre strategy, to be presented to Committee for approval within one year.
- 5.2 As agreed by Committee in December and as outlined above, community centre management committees will be consulted in the development of the new strategy and their feedback will be reported to Committee at the appropriate time.
- 5.3 If Committee agree to the establishment of a APOG to oversee this work, meetings will be set up to run for the duration of the development of the new strategy.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There are no financial impacts arising from this report.
- 6.2 The strategic review of community centres will consider the financial costs associated with running community centres and, in developing the final strategy, full consideration will be given to the financial implications associated with its implementation.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 The proposed approach to the development of this strategy is designed to ensure that the Council works more effectively with community centre management committees and other partners in the future.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 Community Centres Condition Review and Corstorphine Community Centre, Finance and Resources Committee, [5 March 2020](#).

9. Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 - Briefing Note on Lifelong Learning Review December 2022.

Community Empowerment Briefing Note

Culture and Communities Committee

Culture and Wellbeing
Place Directorate
20 December 2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1 On [13 December 2022](#), the Culture and Communities Committee requested a briefing on Community Empowerment, to include:
- The proposed changes to the Lifelong Learning structure;
 - The outcomes that the restructure aims to deliver; and
 - Detail of what prioritising community centres and community centre management committees actually means in terms of resource, structure and engagement.

2. Background

- 2.1 On [13 December 2022](#), the Culture and Communities Committee considered an update on Community Empowerment and requested a briefing note within one week on the items listed in section 1 of this briefing note. A further report was also requested for Committee in March 2023.

3. Main Points

Lifelong Learning Review – Outcomes

- 3.1 As reported to Culture and Communities Committee, an organisational review of the Council's Lifelong Learning service teams has been on-going since June 2022.
- 3.2 At the outset of the organisational review consultation, the vision of the change was to:
- 3.2.1 Focus service delivery on the activities which support the three core business plan priorities of ending poverty, wellbeing and sustainability;
 - 3.2.2 Enhance the Council's approach to community empowerment and engagement by creating a community engagement and empowerment team;
 - 3.2.3 Create a leadership structure to support the Council's Libraries Service for the future;

- 3.2.4 Provide dedicated support for community sport and physical activity, including partnerships;
 - 3.2.5 Create a Wider Achievement Service, removing matrix management and providing a consistent approach that is locally responsive; and
 - 3.2.6 Aligning services within the Council's new Senior Leadership structure, in Culture and Wellbeing and in Wider Achievement.
- 3.3 The organisational review was designed to align roles and responsibilities to three service areas:
- 3.3.1 Community Empowerment;
 - 3.3.2 Libraries, Sport and Wellbeing;
 - 3.3.3 Wider Achievement and Lifelong Learning.
- 3.4 The review recognised that proposals for organisational structures which had been presented immediately prior to the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic needed to be revised to reflect the impact of the pandemic on how the Council operates and what it does.

Changes to the Lifelong Learning Structure

- 3.5 As noted above, the organisational review proposals aligned the existing responsibilities for Lifelong Learning into three service areas.
- 3.6 In Community Empowerment, the priorities for the review were:
- 3.6.1 To define new roles, dedicated to community engagement and empowerment (recognising that this is something that the Council has not previously had dedicated support for);
 - 3.6.2 Focus on improving the Council's approach to engagement and empowerment both internally and externally; and
 - 3.6.3 Ensure that the Council is fulfilling its responsibilities in respect of the Community Empowerment Act 2015 and is addressing the areas for improvement, as outlined in the 2020 Best Value Audit in respect of community empowerment.
- 3.7 In Libraries, Sport and Wellbeing, the priorities for the review were:
- 3.7.1 To create service manager capacity to support future planning and service delivery and development in the Libraries service;
 - 3.7.2 To appoint a Sport Partnership Development Manager to be responsible for the day to day relationship with partners and to support community sport development; and
 - 3.7.3 To strengthen the Council's focus on wellbeing.
- 3.8 In Wider Achievement and Lifelong Learning, the priorities for the review were:
- 3.8.1 To develop a service management team that has a wide breadth and depth of knowledge and expertise;
 - 3.8.2 To focus on actions that make a difference, particularly for those individuals and communities facing the greatest disadvantages; and
 - 3.8.3 To ensure the workforce is highly skilled, professional and able to confidently deliver services that are meeting the Department and Council priorities and statutory responsibilities

- 3.9 The consultation followed the Council's Managing Change approach and through consultation and feedback, the review proposals have been refined to reflect the feedback received (where possible).
- 3.10 The information in Appendix 1 outlines the proposed changes in more detail.

Prioritising community centres and community centre management committees

- 3.11 Since the organisational review commenced, the contextual environment has also changed, and this is reflected in the final service proposals and the priorities which have been identified.
- 3.12 As reported to Culture and Communities Committee and noted above, the community empowerment team is being newly created in response to the Council's duties and responsibilities.
- 3.13 Recognising that there are limited resources available and building on the existing relationships within the Council's Lifelong Learning activities, the community empowerment team of nine members of staff will prioritise working with Community Centre Management Committees to support them to develop and deliver services within their centres. One of the service managers in the team will have a direct responsibility for overseeing this work, with support from the wider team.

Shared Prosperity Fund

- 3.14 This work will be augmented through a Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) contribution of £290,000. The SPF investment is over a three year period, though the significant spend will take place in years two and three. Utilising this funding effectively will involve significant and sustained engagement with management committees over the period of time (recognising that it is not designed to be utilised to meet core staff costs).
- 3.15 The SPF activities will largely be delivered by external organisations, and discussions have taken place with EVOC about a partnering approach with the Council on the delivery.
- 3.16 The funding is intended to be used to ensure that community centre management committees are structured and prepared for a viable and sustainable future by offering a range of training and developmental opportunities ranging from charity law to business planning.

Community Centre Strategy

- 3.17 Alongside the SPF, one of the key priorities for this new team will be to develop a community centre strategy which has a clear set of outcomes relating to the delivery of a viable and sustainable community centre estate across the city, where the buildings meet the needs of local communities.
- 3.18 The strategy will sit within the wider Council business plan and associated strategies.

Other Activities

- 3.19 In addition to working closely with community centres and community centre management committees, this team will also be responsible for the administration of the Community Grants Fund, working with Neighbourhood

Networks and Local Community Planning Partnerships and will play a developmental role with the third sector and community organisations across the city.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1 The detail of this briefing will be incorporated into a report to the Culture and Communities Committee in March 2023, which will provide details of the issues which the strategic approach to community centres will consider.
- 4.2 As requested by Committee on 13 December, in preparation for the March report, community centre management committees will be consulted on these issues and their feedback will be included in the report in March 2023.
- 4.3 It is important to note that there is no reduction in the number of positions available in the future structure compared to the number of posts currently filled across the Lifelong Learning service areas. The final review proposals do however recognise the current financial challenge faced by the Council and therefore there are no increases in the number of positions available.
- 4.4 The organisational review moves into the matching and assignment process early in the new year, with the service manager structure expected to be fully operational by 1 April 2023, with a transition/handover period through February and March. Arrangements for matching and assignment for other positions is expected to begin in mid-late March 2023.
- 4.5 Once service manager matching and assignment is complete, the Community Engagement and Empowerment Managers will begin to progress the activities outlined in this report. Service manager contact details will also be shared with Elected Members.

5. Contact Details

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Appendix 1 – Organisational Resources and Responsibilities

Community Empowerment

The new Community Empowerment team will comprise nine FTE and will be responsible for the activities outlined in this briefing. The key activities of the team will be to:

- Work with community centre and community run centre management committees, aligned to the funding received from the Shared Prosperity Fund;
- Develop a new Community Centre Strategy;
- Manage locally devolved budgets, such as the Community Grants Fund;
- Support community empowerment locally and working with colleagues across the Council, including within the new Community Empowerment Board;
- Work with Local Community Planning Partnerships and Neighbourhood Networks; and
- Work with voluntary, third sector and community organisations on partnering and delivery approaches.

Libraries, Sport and Wellbeing

As noted in the briefing note, the review is designed to create capacity at service manager level to support future planning and operational delivery in the Libraries service. An organisational review of the Libraries service will follow a period of engagement in early 2023 to develop a future model for service delivery which focuses on ensuring the Council's libraries can continue to play a key role for individuals, schools and local communities.

The Libraries, Sport and Wellbeing team will also play a key role in working with community sport and partner organisations (such as Edinburgh Leisure) to develop and implement a Physical Activity and Sport strategy for the city.

This service management team (excluding the Head of Service) will comprise six FTE (five for Libraries and one for Sport Partnership Development). The Sport Partnership Development team will include two FTE.

Wider Achievement and Lifelong Learning

The Wider Achievement and Lifelong Learning service will remain aligned within Education and Children's Services and will bring together strategic and local responsibilities into a single team.

This team will comprise responsibilities for:

- Community Learning and Development (including Adult Education and Youth Work);
- School Sport and Physical Activity;
- Outdoor Learning and Adventure Education;
- Music and Learning;
- Arts and Creative Learning; and

- Parent and Carer Support and Family Wellbeing.

In total, there are nine service manager posts in this area, supported by 46 Development Officers and a variety of other roles aligned across all of the areas of responsibility.