



**VOLUNTARY SECTOR  
COMMISSIONING FRAMEWORK  
(COMMUNITY CENTRES) TASK  
GROUP**

**Tuesday, 12th May, 2015**

**7.30 pm**

**Town Hall**

Publication date: 30 April 2015

# AGENDA

Councillors R Martins, K Collett, A Joynes, B Mehta and K Hastrick

**1. ELECTION OF CHAIR/COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

The Task Group to elect a Chair for the Task Group.

**2. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)**

**3. SCOPE (Pages 3 - 10)**

To receive a scrutiny proposal regarding Community Centres as part of the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework by the Corporate, Leisure and Community Section Head.

**4. SCRUTINY REPORT: VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMMISSIONING FRAMEWORK (COMMUNITY CENTRES) (Pages 11 - 26)**

To receive a report regarding Community Centres as part of the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework by the Corporate, Leisure and Community Section Head.

**5. ACTIONS FOR THE NEXT MEETING**

The Task Group to decide actions to be completed before the next meeting of the Task Group on Tuesday 26 May 2015, 6.30pm.

**Commissioning Framework – Community Centres  
Scope**

**Section 1 – Scrutiny Suggestion**

**Proposer: Prema Mani – Corporate, Leisure & Community Section Head**

**Topic recommended for scrutiny:**

*Please include as much detail as is available about the specific such as;*

- *areas which should be included in the review.*
- *areas which should be excluded from the review.*
- *Whether the focus should be on past performance, future policy or both.*

To review community centres as part of the overall review of the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework and in preparation for the next framework from April 2016 – March 2019.

A briefing will be presented to the task group providing information relating to:

- the outsourcing arrangements for the five community centres previously managed by the council
- details of the funding arrangements with the five community centres and the inclusion of a sixth centre
- a performance assessment of the current funded community centres
- details of other community centres in Watford
- an options analysis

Areas excluded from the review

The areas which will be excluded from the review are the other current priorities delivered under the Commissioning Framework 2013-16. These are:

- infrastructure support to the voluntary sector
- arts and culture
- advice services
- service to enable people with a physical mobility problem to access the town centre

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sport</li> <li>- Small Grants Fund</li> </ul> <p>The Task Group are asked to consider particular issues relating to community centres including:</p> <p>Property issues – All six funded community centres are council owned and this generates significant costs to the council for the upkeep of current structural maintenance and future asset management.</p> <p>Additionally there are a number of community centres that are council owned and leased out to voluntary sector organisations which do not receive council grant funding.</p> <p>Income generation and future sustainability – It has been evident that some of the community centres have faced challenges in generating income to become more financially sustainable due to a number of limiting factors including size of the centre, location and level of community engagement.</p> <p>The outcome of the Property Review and identification of development issues.</p>
<p><b>Why have you recommended this topic for scrutiny?</b></p>	<p>The current Commissioning Framework comes to an end in March 2016. All the priorities are being reviewed, however it was considered that the priority for community centres funding is a particularly complex area and therefore would benefit from being treated as a separate workstream.</p> <p>The Portfolio Holders and Heads of Service meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2015 has approved the submission of a cross party task group to look at this area of the Commissioning Framework review.</p>
<p><b>What are the specific outcomes you wish to see from the review?</b></p>	<p>The task group are asked to consider the evidence presented to form a view on this priority to inform the overall review of the Commissioning Framework.</p>

<b>Does the proposed item meet the following criteria?</b>	
It must affect a group or community of people	Yes a number of voluntary sector organisations and their service users
It must relate to a service, event or issue in which the council has a significant stake	A significant amount of the Council's budget is deployed to enable the voluntary sector to provide services to the community including community centres.
It must not have been a topic of scrutiny within the last 12 months <i>There will be exceptions to this arising from notified changing circumstances. Scrutiny will also maintain an interest in the progress of recommendations and issues arising from past reports.</i>	This has not been a topic of scrutiny within the last 12 months
It must not be an issue, such as planning or licensing, which is dealt with by another council committee	This is not an issue being dealt with by another council committee.

<p><b>Does the topic meet the council's priorities?</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Making Watford a better place to live in</b></li> <li>2. To provide the lead for Watford's sustainable economic growth</li> <li><b>3. Promoting an active, cohesive and well informed Town</b></li> <li><b>4. To operate the Council efficiently and effectively</b></li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>1, 3 and 4</i></p>
<p><b>Are you aware of any limitations of time, other constraints or risks which need to be taken into account?</b></p>	<p>The review needs to be carried out prior to the draft Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework being prepared for consultation in July/August 2015.</p>
<p><b>Does the topic involve a Council partner or other outside body?</b></p>	<p>The topic is of relevance to organisations currently in receipt of a management fee or grant payment and of interest to the wider voluntary sector community.</p>

<p><b>Are there likely to be any Equality implications which will need to be considered?</b></p> <p><i>Protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Age</li> <li>• Disability</li> <li>• Gender reassignment</li> <li>• Pregnancy or maternity</li> <li>• Race</li> <li>• Religion or belief</li> <li>• Sex</li> <li>• Sexual orientation</li> <li>• Marriage or civil partnership <i>(only in respect of the requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination)</i></li> </ul>	<p>There are likely to be Equality implications and an Equality Impact Analysis will be undertaken as part of the overall review of the current commissioning priorities including community centres.</p>
<p><b>Sign off</b> <i>(It is expected that any Councillor proposing a topic agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee will participate in the Task Group)</i></p>	
<p><b>Officer: Prema Mani</b></p>	<p><b>Date</b> <b>16 February 2015</b></p>





## Commissioning Framework (Community Centres)

<b>Section 2</b>	
<b>Consultation with relevant Heads of Service</b>	
<i>It is important to ensure that the relevant service can support a review by providing the necessary documents and attending meetings as necessary. The Head of Service's comments should be obtained before the request to hold a review is put to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.</i>	
Has the relevant Head of Service been consulted?	Yes
Is there any current or proposed review of service which would affect this suggestion?	This task group will support the review of Community Centres and the development of the Commissioning Framework
Is this a topic which the service department(s) is able to support	Yes this is part of the Corporate Strategy and Client Services Service Plan priorities
When was the last time this service was the subject of a scrutiny review?	2012 as part of the development of the current Commissioning Framework 2013-16

<p>Is the issue something which will be of significant interest to the public and if so, how should this be managed?</p>	<p>A consultation plan is being developed as part of the Commissioning Framework review</p>
<p>Head of Service consulted and when</p>	<p>The Head of Service is the project sponsor and has been involved from the outset</p>

Report to: Scrutiny Task Group  
Date of meeting: 12 May 2015  
Report of: Corporate, Leisure and Community Section Head  
Title: Community Centre Review

## 1.0 **SUMMARY**

1.1 This report provides:

1. Background information on:
  - Six community centres to be included within the scope of the review
  - Current funding arrangements
  - Council lease agreements with non-funded community centres
2. An overview of each of the council funded community centres, the communities they serve and recommendations/options

1.2 This report asks the Task Group to:

1. Consider the information presented on the council funded community centres
2. Provide initial feedback and identify any information required in preparation for the second Task Group meeting.

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Report approved by: Head of Corporate Strategy & Client Services

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 This review is to consider the best way forward for the future of six 'council funded' community centres in Watford. Five of these are council-owned: see 2.2 - and one is grant funded by the council and operates from council-owned accommodation – see 2.3.

## 2.2 Council owned community centres

### Historical context

A Best Value report of the council's Community Services, including community centres, was undertaken in 2005. This was to determine the best option for securing the future development and sustainability of the then five council-managed community centres:

- Centrepoint located in Central ward (returned to council management April 2014)
- Leavesden Green located in Stanborough ward (now managed by Watford Community Housing Trust)
- Orbital located in Woodside ward (now managed by the YMCA)
- Meriden located in Meriden ward (now managed by Watford Football Club Trust)
- Holywell located in Holywell ward (now managed by Watford and Three Rivers Trust)

### Outsourcing

At the time of the review it was considered that that the five community centres were not fulfilling their potential as community assets.

To achieve this, the Best Value report recommended that the centres be managed at a local level by local residents and user groups.

Community Matters were commissioned to work with local users to establish whether there was sufficient enthusiasm and capacity to take on the management of their local community centre and provide training to strengthen and support the necessary capacity and capability.

Whilst there was some interest, it became increasingly evident that there were no clear community management proposals emerging from local user groups. As a consequence, it was agreed that the community centres be outsourced to voluntary sector organisations. This outsourcing took place during the period September 2010 to November 2012.

## 2.3 West Watford Community Association

A sixth community centre, West Watford Community Association (WWCA) was added to the council's 'portfolio' of community centres following the implementation of the Commissioning Framework (2013-16). WWCA was never managed by the council but has received grant funding for a number of years and has occupied and provided services from the council owned building for over 40 years.

WWCA is being considered as part of this current review.

### Additional community facilities and provision in Watford

There are a further two community facilities in the borough, which provide activities similar to the six funded community centres outlined above. The council has a lease only arrangement with these facilities but provides no form of direct funding. They are listed below:

Harebreaks	Managed by Watford Community Housing Trust
Woodside Community Centre, The Brow	Managed by Woodside Community Association

2.4 The council's Commissioning Framework (2013-16) identified that the majority of the centres were located in or adjacent to areas identified as an area of deprivation with Meriden being the area of highest multiple deprivation in Watford.

What was not clear at the time was the number of non council owned facilities providing similar community centre activities. What has emerged during the last couple of years is a change in the landscape particularly with the development of community hubs by Watford Community Housing Trust and the range of services and facilities these now provide.

Additionally there are a range of community facilities, churches and halls which provide similar services.

### 3.0 Funding arrangements

3.1 The following table details the funding provided to each of the six community centres within the scope of the current review.

Community Centre	Funding 2014/15	Comments
Holywell	£76,680	
Orbital	£72,965	
Leavesden Green	£53,000	£37k for 15/16
Centrepont	n/a	Budget of £69k
Meriden	£72,159	
West Watford Community Association	£34,335	Includes accommodation costs of £10,920
Total	£309,139	

The total direct costs allocated for community centres for 2014/15 = £378,139 (includes the budget for running Centrepont in-house).

### 3.2 Funding 2015-2016

All the community centres will continue to receive the same funding in 2015-16 as received in 2014-15 except for Leavesden Green whose direct costs are reduced by £16k as proposed in their business plan.

## 4.0 COMMON THEMES AND ISSUES ACROSS COMMUNITY CENTRES

### 4.1 Service specification

The service specification which is generic across all the community centres requires the community centres to provide a balanced range of the following activities that meet the needs of the local community:

- Educational
- Recreational and
- Sports

Outcomes identified within the specification are:

- 1) a thriving and vibrant community centre that serves the needs of the local community and contributes to improved health and wellbeing
- 2) increased number of local community using the community centre.

### 4.2 Alignment to the council's Corporate Plan

The activities and objectives of the community centres align with the following Corporate Plan objectives:

CPI – Making Watford a better place to live

CP3 – Promoting an active, cohesive and well informed town

This review will also need to take into account CP4 – operating the council efficiently and effectively as aligning resources to outcomes is a critical element.

#### 4.3 **Challenges**

- Data collection to identify local users and equalities information
- Moving to a community development approach rather than the centres being used as 'halls for hire'. In the Best Value Review of Community Services it was recognised that at the time of outsourcing existing staff structures were concentrating on keeping the building open and not developing activities.
- Meaningful user survey information
- Some evidence of a lack of senior management support to develop the centres.

#### 4.4 **Future areas of development**

- Better alignment with the council's Corporate Plan and other strategies
- More emphasis on Social Value Act outcomes to identify Economic ( e.g. savings on public purse; boost local economy; innovation and skills training) Environmental (carbon reduction; sustainability) and Social (e.g. equality & diversity; social inclusion; public health; apprenticeships)
- Improving skills in community development
- Voluntary sector organisations managing the community centres to be supported to shape the future vision and aspiration for the centre to achieve financial sustainability.

#### 5.0 **INFORMATION ON EACH COMMUNITY CENTRE**

This section provides information relating to each of the six funded community centres including:

- Lease arrangements
- Overview
- Service delivery and income generation
- Summary profile and demographic changes
- Current or emerging needs
- Considerations (including other community facilities providing similar service delivery in the area and the impact of any council strategy or review)
- Initial thoughts on the way forward

#### 5.1 **Holywell Community Centre (managed by Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT))**



Date of transfer: September 2010. Service Level Agreement from April 2013-March 2016

##### **Lease arrangements**

Term: 30 years from 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2010.

##### Restricted covenants on land use

There are no restrictions on the community centre or associated buildings for redevelopment, however any future development would be subject to the necessary planning permissions.

## **Overview**

W3RT (formerly Watford CVS) moved to Holywell Community Centre from a town centre location. Their previous (and still current) core business is infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector in Watford, however as part of the move, they agreed to take over the management of the newly refurbished community centre. The community centre occupies the ground floor of Holywell Community Centre.

Whilst there has been an increase in users over the years, W3RT recognise that they have struggled to engage the local community. Contributing factors may include:

- Location of the centre – down a side road away from the main Holywell estate
- Staffing and restructure – W3RT is a new entity formed from the previous Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) which went through a lengthy restructure. This would have had a destabilising impact on the management of the community centre. The current staffing consists of a part time Director of Operations who is responsible for the overall operations of the community centre and a Services Manager.

## **Service delivery**

The current activities are varied but the majority appear to be quite specialist activities that may not appeal or be open to the whole community. Examples include a group's trustee meeting or a particular community's association meeting (e.g. Chinese and Nepalese). Essentially this makes it more a 'hall for hire' used by a range of organisations, not necessarily located in the local area than a community centre providing a range of regular activities that the local community can participate in.

W3RT have increased their marketing and publicity efforts through leaflet drops and social media.

Looking at the activities at the community centre and the influence of the work of W3RT it is evident that there has been an increase in meetings and events relating to the health and wellbeing agenda within which W3RT is a key voluntary sector representative. Additionally W3RT secured the contract for running the luncheon clubs in Watford. In both these areas, there are benefits for local people and a future for the community centre could be to host a range of health and wellbeing activities for local people in collaboration with other community facilities including Westfield Community Sports Centre and the new Muslim Youth Centre Trust.

## **Income generation**

An analysis of W3RT's finances indicates income generation profit for Holywell is minimal and future sustainability is not achievable in the short-term.

## **Summary profile and demographic changes in Holywell ward**

### Key information from the 2011 Census

Population: 3,600 of which 26.5% are 0-15 one of the highest proportions in Watford, 61.4% are of working age and 12.1% are 65 and over.

### Population change

Since the 2001 Census, the estimated total population of Holywell Ward has increased by approximately 1600 (22.2%)

Ethnicity: 49% of residents are White British with 25.5% of residents of an Asian background (Pakistani is the highest Asian ethnicity at 14%) and the remaining 25.5% of residents are of other White (9.5%), Black, Mixed, or other ethnicity. This is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest ward with non White British population in Watford.

### Multiple deprivation (2010)

Holywell is divided into 5 lower layer super output areas (LSOAs). Two of these are in the top

10 most deprived areas in Watford ranked as 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010)

Income Deprivation (Indices of Deprivation (2010)) Holywell ward has the highest indice of income deprivation in Watford. This is based on the number of people living in low income families reliant on means tested benefits.

#### Housing

Holywell has the highest percentage of shared ownership and a high prevalence of social sector housing.

#### Health and wellbeing within Watford (Public Health England)

- Holywell has the highest percentage of childhood obesity for those aged between 4 and 11 years.
- Holywell has the highest standardised registration ratio for cancer incidence
- Holywell has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest hospital stays for self-harm and the highest hospital stay for alcohol harm
- Holywell has the highest emergency admissions for hip fracture for over 65's

#### **Current/emerging needs**

##### Key issues arising from Community Options Study (Watford Community Housing Trust) 2014

- Litter
- Drugs and drug dealing
- Unemployment

Suggested improvements:

- 'drug free zone'
- Café or coffee shop
- Redesign of the shopping area

#### **Considerations**

##### Similar community facilities in the Holywell area:

Community hubs: Watford Community Housing Trust has community hubs in the Holywell area which are sheltered housing schemes

Additionally some of the local community facilities include:

- Westfield Community Sports Centre
- Watford Muslim Youth Centre Trust who are shortly due to build a community facility in Tolpits Lane
- Westfield Children's Centre

##### Property Review Findings:

The Property Review focused primarily on the area surrounding the community centre including the King George V Playing Fields, changing rooms and tea pavilion. They concluded that the area is well used, providing playgrounds, football pitches, cricket pitches, outdoor gym equipment and multi use surfaces. The alternative use asset value was assumed to be fairly high, however development on this site for any purpose would be very limited as it is designated as a green belt area.

##### Sports Facility Strategy

Holywell is designated as a strategic sports site.



### **Initial thoughts on the way forward**

It is likely that W3RT would require funding to operate the community centre for the next three years in order to provide stability whilst options emerge for future consideration and impacts of local changes are understood. This would include any impacts from the Sports Facility Strategy. Additionally it is not considered that Holywell is in a position to be financially sustainable without funding support.

If funding is maintained the scope of service provision would need to be considered including increasing local community usage.

## **5.2 Orbital Community Centre (managed by YMCA)**

Date of transfer: November 2010. Service Level Agreement from April 2013 – March 2016

### **Lease arrangements**

Term: 25 years from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2010.

### Restricted covenants on land use

There are no restrictions on the building and any future development would be subject to the necessary planning permissions.

### **Overview**

Orbital Community Centre had a diverse and vibrant programme of activities prior to outsourcing but there was little interest from any of the user groups in managing the facility. The YMCA expressed their interest and in 2007 Cabinet agreed to pursue the transfer of the centre management to the YMCA. The transfer took place in November 2010 and the YMCA has continued to develop the centre based on their expertise in running community facilities. This supported the experience brought by the Centre Manager who had been TUPE transferred from the council. The community centre is located in Haines Way and was refurbished prior to the transfer.

The YMCA is currently undergoing a restructure following the merger of YMCA Watford with Central Herts to become YMCA West and Central Herts. The Chief Executive has advised that there are no current plans to change operational arrangements at Orbital.

### **Current service delivery**

Monitoring information received shows that the community centre provides a diverse range of activities which are predominately for the local community including significant provision for youth. Their user survey in 2014 confirmed that the majority of centre users are locally based.

YMCA has developed an income stream to help sustain the community based activities through their Music Gym. There is currently a contracted out lease being developed to legitimise the Music Gym's occupation at Orbital.

### **Income generation**

YMCA generates a small amount of income which helps to subsidise community activities. This is not sufficient to enable them to become sustainable and they advise that the management fee received from the council currently pays for half the costs of running the centre.

Orbital Community Centre is currently fit for purpose as a community centre, however to become more sustainable YMCA will be considering future development including any potential for redevelopment opportunities.

## **Summary profile and demographic changes in Woodside ward**

### Population change

Since the 2001 Census, the estimated total population of Woodside Ward has increased by approximately 383 (5.71%)

### Key information from the 2011 Census

Population 7083 of which 65.3% are of working age (16-64) and 20.3% are under 15. Over 65's account for 14.4% of population.

76.5% identify as being White British with the remaining 22.7% identifying as White non-British, Black, Asian, Mixed or Other.

### Multiple Deprivation (2010)

One LSOA of Woodside ward is in the top 10 most deprived areas in Watford ranked as 9<sup>th</sup> (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010)

### Housing (2008)

Woodside ward has a high prevalence of social sector housing.

### Health and wellbeing within Watford (Public Health England)

- Woodside has the 5<sup>th</sup> highest income deprivation
- Woodside has the 5<sup>th</sup> highest percentage of child poverty
- Woodside has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest percentage of residents reporting that their activities are limited by a long term illness or disability
- Woodside has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest prevalence of adult obesity
- Woodside has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest hospital stays for self harm and 5<sup>th</sup> highest for alcohol harm

## **Current/emerging needs**

### Key issues arising from Community Options Study (Watford Community Housing Trust)

- Litter
- Drug and drug dealing
- Bad image of the area

### Suggested improvements

- Creative arts projects
- More outdoor activities
- Increased social events

## **Considerations**

### Similar community facilities in the Woodside area

#### Community hubs:

Watford Community Housing Trust has the following community hubs in the Woodside area.

- Boundary Way Community Hub – a community facility for local residents to participate in a variety of activities. Currently being refurbished.
- Combewood – a sheltered housing complex

## **Initial thoughts on the way forward**

Given that the community centre is not currently in a position to become sustainable without council funding, it is considered that a sensible way forward would be to continue to provide funding during the three years of the Commissioning Framework to ensure stability and enable the YMCA to explore any potential developments that would support future sustainability.

### 5.3 **Leavesden Green Community Centre (managed by Watford Community Housing Trust (WCHT))**



Date of transfer: 4<sup>TH</sup> May 2011. Service Level Agreement from April 2013 – March 2016.

#### **Lease arrangements**

Term: 99 years from 4<sup>th</sup> May 2011

#### Restricted covenants on land use

There is a restriction on the sale of alcohol. There are no other adverse restrictions. Any future development would be subject to the necessary planning permissions.

#### **Overview**

There was interest from user groups however they were not at a stage where they could take over management responsibilities. Watford Community Housing Trust (WCHT) was approached as it was considered that they would have the capacity and capability to develop the community centre into a significant community asset rather than just being a hall for hire. WCHT invested funds from their Better Communities Fund to redevelop the centre which was reopened in September 2013.

#### **Current service delivery**

Since re-opening, the centre has concentrated on securing new activities to appeal to the local community. The monitoring information indicates that out of 28 activities, the majority are regular and open to the local community and 21 of these activities are new since April 2014. These have included working in partnership with other organisations such as Youth Connexions and Watford Palace Theatre to deliver activities and workshops for local young people. A key aspect of the development was to actively encourage community feedback through planned community sessions.

#### **Income generation and future sustainability**

WCHT have submitted a business plan which outlines their model for achieving financial sustainability for the centre. They have provided costings showing an incremental reduction in funding support required for the period 2015-16 and 2016-17. They received funding of £53k for 2014 -2015. This has been reduced to 37k for 15/16 and £20k for 16/17 after which they will require no further funding.

#### **Summary profile and demographic changes in Stanborough ward**

##### Population changes

Since the 2001 Census, the estimated total population of Stanborough Ward has decreased by approximately 100 (1.4%).

##### Key information from the 2011 Census

Population 7,195 of which 64.9% are of working age (16-64), 24% aged 15 or younger and 11.1% aged 65 or older.

73% identify as being White British with 27% identifying as either White non-British, Black, Mixed, Asian or Other.

### Multiple Deprivation (2008)

One LSOA of Stanborough ward is in the top 10 most deprived areas in Watford ranked as 4th (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010)

### Health and wellbeing (Public Health England)

- Stanborough has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest prevalence of childhood obesity for children aged 4-5
- Stanborough has the 5<sup>th</sup> highest prevalence of childhood obesity for children aged 10-11
- Stanborough has the highest estimated prevalence of adult obesity.

### **Current/emerging needs**

#### Key issues arising from the Community Options Study (Watford Community Housing Trust)

- Traffic (e.g. speeding)
- Lack of facilities for young people
- Unemployment

#### Suggested improvements

- Better facilities for teenagers
- Improvements to homes
- Better facilities for older people

### **Considerations**

#### Property Review

The Property Review proposed that the property remain as a community centre serving the local community with the recreation ground to remain as a park in line with the council's Sports Facility Strategy

### **Initial thoughts on the way forward**

WCHT has substantially invested in the redevelopment of the community centre and are committed to ensuring that this becomes a key community hub. Given that they have a long lease and have presented a robust business plan outlining their plans for future sustainability based on receiving some funding from the council until April 2017, a way forward would be to continue to fund WCHT at the level of funding outlined in their business plan with view to entering into a Community Use Agreement from April 2017.

## 5.4 **Centrepont Community Centre (managed by Watford Borough Council since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014)**



### **Overview**

Centrepont Community Centre was the only centre where there was local interest in managing the centre. A steering group was formed comprising a range of community organisations and a lengthy process of negotiation took place. The transfer was expected to take place in 2010, however the steering group decided not to proceed and at the Cabinet meeting in December 2010, it was agreed that Centrepont would be put out for tender to reach a wider audience. Despite the tender information being circulated widely through various community networks, only one proposal was received from First Rung Ltd, whose core business was youth training.

In September 2014, First Rung gave notice to terminate their lease and Service Level

Agreement. The council took over management of the centre in April 2014 and it was agreed at the x meeting that this arrangement would continue up to March 2016, whilst decisions were being reached with regard to the future of the community centres.

#### Restricted covenants on land use

There are no restrictions that affect this property save for leases that are registered against the title for management of the centre.

#### **Current service delivery**

The management of the centre has been very much on a 'holding the fort' basis due to limited resources and also whilst future direction is considered. In the last year the council carried out a consultation with local residents (primarily from the Radlett Road and Reeds Estates) to determine the level of interest in the centre and also to gauge the type of services residents wanted delivered from the building. Unfortunately the response was poor with the majority of respondents being current users of the centre. Those that did respond favoured a mix of a 'traditional' community centre with additional services around health and wellbeing.

Historically there have been challenges in engaging the local community and this can be seen to be borne out by the low response to the recent questionnaire, however there is recognition that the centre and its activities have not necessarily been well marketed and a centre brochure is being developed to encourage greater local usage. This will be another indicator of the level of interest from the community.

Having said this, there has been an increase in older residents attending activities such as 50+ Keep Fit and the centre is a place where older isolated residents appear to feel at home.

#### **Income generation/sustainability**

Whilst Centrepoint currently receives an annual income of around £13k, this would not be sufficient to enable the centre to be self supporting.

#### **Summary profile and demographic changes in Central ward**

##### Population change

Since the 2001 Census, the estimated total population of Central ward has increased by approximately 1100 (16.7%). Additionally Central has the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest population based on ethnicity.

##### Key information from the 2011 Census

Population 8,143 of which 73.8% are of working age (16-64), 15.6% aged 15 or younger and 11.1% aged 65 or older.

50.95% identify as being White British with 19.6% identifying as Asian and 17.6% as white non-British.

##### Multiple Deprivation (2010)

Three LSOAs in Central ward are in the top 10 most deprived areas in Watford ranked as 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010)

##### Housing (2008)

Central has the highest private sector rented and also a high prevalence of social sector housing.

##### Health and wellbeing (Public Health England)

- Central is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest area of income deprivation
- Central is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest area for children living in poverty and the highest for older people living in poverty

- Central has the highest level of unemployment at 5.3% of the working population
- Central has the highest number of pensioners living alone
- Central has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest level of binge drinking
- Central has the highest level of hospital admissions for self harm and 2<sup>nd</sup> highest for alcohol harm

### **Current or emerging need in Central ward**

#### Key issues and from the Community Options Study (Watford Community Housing Trust Central ward and Radlett Rd)

- Lack of parking
- Security of your home
- Burglaries & thefts
- Drugs and drug dealing

#### Suggested improvements

- Better facilities for young children
- Improvements to homes
- Better housing services
- A better environment
- Tackling anti-social behaviour

### **Considerations**

#### Property Review

The review considered that a change in use from a community centre building to residential could be beneficial but also recognised that assets that benefit the local community would be lost.

#### **Initial thoughts on the way forward**

There are a number of options for the future use of the building beyond April 2016 that could be considered. These include:

- Keeping the building as a community centre with an emphasis on community development
- Keeping the building as a community centre with a focus on health related activities
- Plan for the alternative use of the building. The community centre is currently listed as a D1 (Non Residential Institution) Use under the Use Clauses Order. Planning officers have advised that planning permission would not be required to change the community centre to any of the following uses: clinics and health centres; crèches and day nurseries; day centres; schools; art galleries/museum/library/halls/training centre/job club. Planning restrictions will apply for any other use, for example housing or commercial use.

## **5.5 Meriden Community Centre (managed by Watford Football Club Trust)**



Date of transfer: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2012. Service Level Agreement from November 2012 – March 2016.

## **Lease arrangements**

Term: 25 years from 29<sup>th</sup> November 2012

### Restricted covenants for use

No adverse entries against building.

## **Overview**

The initial proposal for the transfer of management of Meriden Community Centre was for Watford Community Housing Trust (WCHT) to manage both Leavesden Green and Meriden Community Centres. As with Leavesden Green, there was some interest from user groups but they were not at a stage where they could take over management of the centre. WCHT subsequently decided to proceed with taking on the management of Leavesden Green but not Meriden. At the Cabinet meeting in December 2010, it was agreed that Meriden Community Centre would be put out for tender.

Only two proposals were received and Watford Football Club Trust (WFT) was selected as the preferred bidder. Lease arrangements for a 25 year period were agreed to enable WFT to attract capital funding to refurbish the centre and outdoor space.

## **Current service delivery**

Meriden Community Centre has a diverse range of activities with strong local attendance but is constrained in further development due to the imminent redevelopment of the centre and outdoor space. Funding is being finalised for this and the upgrade of the centre will allow for a greater range of activities and income generation.

## **Income generation and future sustainability**

The redevelopment will enable the centre to substantially increase their income to be more sustainable.

## **Summary profile and demographic changes in Meriden ward**

### Population change

Since the 2001 Census, the estimated total population of Meriden Ward has increased by approximately 300 (4.3%).

### Key information from the 2011 Census

Population 7,832 of which are of working age (16-64), aged 15 or younger and aged 65 or older. 73% identify as being White British with 27% identifying as either White non-British, Black, Mixed, Asian or Other.

### Multiple Deprivation (2010)

One LSOA in Meriden ward is considered the most deprived area of Watford. (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010)

### Housing (2008)

Meriden ward has a high prevalence of social sector housing.

### Health and wellbeing (Public Health England)

- Meriden has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest unemployment of people of working age
- Meriden has the highest number of people reporting that their day to day activities are limited by a long term illness or disability
- Meriden has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest prevalence of childhood obesity in children aged 4-5 years and the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in children aged 10-11 years
- Meriden has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest prevalence of adult obesity
- Meriden has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest reported hospital admission for self harm and the 4<sup>th</sup> highest

for alcohol harm.

#### Key issues arising from the Community Options Study (Watford Community Housing Trust)

- Security of your home
- Drugs and drug dealing
- Traffic (e.g. speeding)

Suggested improvements:

- Better facilities for teenagers
- Tackling anti-social behaviour

Better facilities for older people

#### **Considerations**

Community hubs: The Housing Trust do not have any community hubs in the Meriden ward at present however it is their intention as part of the overall development of the Meriden estate to create a small and localised community hub which will compliment rather than work in competition with Meriden community centre.

#### **Initial thoughts on the way forward**

It is evident that Meriden community centre is not currently sustainable and that they would require some council funding during the three years of the Commissioning Framework whilst the redevelopment of the centre and Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) is carried out.

### 5.6 **West Watford Community Association (WWCA)**



#### **Lease arrangements**

The council's Property Services are currently working with WWCA to finalise the lease arrangements. The council have agreed to a 59 year lease as requested by WWCA to provide security to enable them to work towards becoming sustainable. There are specific arrangements around break clauses to allow for any future economic or environmental impacts.

#### Restricted covenants for use

Restrictions registered against the property include the sale of alcohol, building on the line save for fences only.

#### **Overview**

As a non council owned community centre, WWCA has enjoyed a long relationship with the council who has provided funding for the service for at least 10 years.

#### **Current service delivery**

The community centre is well regarded in the local area and provides a diverse range of activities primarily to local residents in the WD18 area. The success of the centre has been largely attributable to the current Centre Manager and there would be a need for WWCA to consider how the centre would continue to develop should the current manager leave or retire as there is no additional capacity in the organisation to take this over.



## **Business planning and future sustainability**

WWCA's ability to become sustainable is challenged by the size of the centre. There is however opportunity for future income generation through the use of accommodation within the centre which was previously occupied by another voluntary sector organisation.

## **Summary profile and demographic changes in Vicarage ward**

### Population change

Since the 2001 Census, the estimated total population of Vicarage Ward has increased by approximately 1,000 (14.1%). Additionally Vicarage has the largest population based on ethnicity with the largest black and minority ethnic (BME) population and also the largest population describing themselves as non White UK.

### Key information from the 2011 Census

Population 8,258 of 66.7% are of working age (16-64), 24.3% are aged 15 or younger and 9% aged 65 or older.

35.8% identify as being White British with 14.71% identifying as either White non-British, 18.49% as Pakistani and 17.23% as Asian (non Pakistani).

### Multiple Deprivation (2010)

None of the LSOAs within the Vicarage ward are in the top 10 areas of multiple deprivation but there is one LSOA in Vicarage that is in the top 20 ranking as number 18. (Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010)

### Housing (2008)

Vicarage ward has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest number of residents in private rented accommodation

### Health and wellbeing (Public Health England)

- Vicarage is the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest area for older people living in poverty
- Vicarage is the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest area of unemployment for people of working age
- Vicarage has the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest prevalence of child obesity in 4-5 year olds and the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest for 10-11 year olds
- Vicarage is ranked 5<sup>th</sup> for hospital admissions for self harm and 3<sup>rd</sup> for alcohol related harm

### Key issues arising from the Community Options Study (Watford Community Housing Trust)

- Traffic (e.g. speeding)
- Lack of parking
- Security of your home
- Unemployment

### Suggested improvements

- Better security
- Improvements to homes
- Better facilities for teenagers and older people

## **Considerations**

### Similar community facilities in the Vicarage area

West Watford has a number of community facilities including the nearby Multi Cultural Community Centre located in Durban Rd.

### Health Campus development

There may be future developmental opportunities arising from the Health Campus development

**Initial thoughts on the way forward**

WWCA would require ongoing funding support for the three years from April 2016 as it is not currently in a position to become sustainable and would not be able to provide a service without financial support.