



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

**REVIEW OF COMMUNITY CENTRES
FUNDED BY WATFORD BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

JUNE 2015

CONTENTS

Background Information **Page 5**

Recommendations **Page 6**

Summary of Meetings **Page 8**

Appendices

<i>1 - Task Group scope</i>	<i>Page 11</i>
<i>2 - Officer's initial report to Members</i>	<i>Page 18</i>
<i>3 - Officer's second report to Members</i>	<i>Page 34</i>
<i>4 - Profile of Users</i>	<i>Page 37</i>
<i>5 - Activities Table</i>	<i>Page 38</i>
<i>6 - Ward Councillor Comments</i>	<i>Page 48</i>
<i>7 – Minutes of meeting on 12 May 2015</i>	<i>Page 50</i>
<i>8 – Minutes of meeting on 23 May 2015</i>	<i>Page 56</i>

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Overview

The Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework (Community Centres) Task Group has been set up to review community centres as part of a larger review of the Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework. The Task Group met on two occasions in May 2015 and produced recommendations regarding the community centres. The recommendations are listed on page 6.

Background

The Portfolio Holders and Heads of Service meeting on 2 February 2015 agreed officers' suggestion that they ask scrutiny to set up a cross party Task Group to review community centres prior to the draft Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework being prepared for implementation in 2016-2019. At Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 March 2015 it was agreed that the Task Group would be established. The Task Group was asked to form a view on the community centre priority to inform the overall review of the Commissioning Framework.

All the priorities of the current Commissioning Framework are to be reviewed by officers, however it was considered that the funding of community centres was a particularly complex area and therefore would benefit from being treated as a separate work stream with input from Members.

Remit of the Task Group

The remit of the Task Group covers the continued outsourcing arrangements of five community centres which have previously been managed by the Council (Centrepoint, Holywell, Leavesden Green, Meriden, Orbital) plus one additional centre which receives funding from the Council (West Watford Community Association).

Other priorities delivered under the Commissioning Framework are not part of the Task Group's remit. These are infrastructure support to the voluntary sector, arts and culture, advice services and services to enable people with a physical mobility problem to access the town centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework (Community Centres) Task Group propose the following recommendations in relation to the six community centres currently funded by Watford Borough Council (Centrepoint, Holywell, Leavesden Green, Meriden, Orbital and West Watford Community Association):

1. That the Council continues to support the six community centres on the basis that they are all located in areas with evidence of deprivation.
2. That all six community centres be required to forward a copy of their updated business plan to the appropriate Council officers by September 2015.
3. That all six community centres be commissioned to support the needs of their individual communities and foster a sense of community spirit and cohesion. In addition they should seek opportunities to focus activities at the centre around addressing one or more of the following issues according to local need and demographic information:
 - 3.1. Public health with a focus on mental health and wellbeing.
 - 3.2. Support and skills building towards gaining employment.
 - 3.3. Youth focused activities.
 - 3.4. Activities for older people.
 - 3.5. Support with budget and debt issues.
 - 3.6. Activities for people with disabilities.
4. That all six community centres increase their marketing and publicity activity with the Head of Corporate Strategy & Client Services requesting the Communications & Engagement Section Head identify what level of service could be provided by the team within current resources to support the marketing of the six community centres activity. Particular focus to be placed on the Council's current communication resources e.g. About Watford, social media opportunities and the setting up of a contact/link person.

The Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework (Community Centres) Task Group propose the following recommendations in relation to individual community centres:

5. **Centrepoint Community Centre:** That the Council continues to manage the centre on an interim basis within a budget envelope of £69k whilst further discussions take place with regard to the future of the centre, allowing for the following:
 - 5.1. Any impact from the Property Review to be considered.
 - 5.2. The outcomes from the Watford Community Housing Trust's Community Options Study to be considered.

5.3. Partnership opportunities around future management of the building to be explored.

5.4. A separate detailed review of Centrepoint Community Centre to be undertaken.

6. **Holywell Community Centre:** That the Council continues to fund the centre for three years to provide stability, allowing for any opportunities arising from the Sports Facility Strategy to be considered and enable Watford and Three Rivers Trust to maximise income potential through the hall hire for the following proposed activities:

6.1. Charitable fundraising events.

6.2. Business events and conferences .

6.3. Private hires including wedding receptions.

6.4. Health and wellbeing activities that target evidenced health issues in local area.

7. **Leavesden Green Community Centre:** That the Council continues to fund the centre for two years up to April 2017. Watford Community Housing Trust subsequently continuing their long lease (99 years) on the condition they use the building for community activities with such a commitment embedded into the lease as a Community Use Agreement.

That Watford Community Housing Trust market activities at the centre to both Watford Community Housing Trust residents and the wider community.

8. **Meriden Community Centre:** That the Council continues to fund the centre for three years whilst redevelopment of the site is completed and that the Watford Football Sports and Education Trust (WFC Trust) be required to submit a comprehensive business plan with evidence of moving towards becoming self-sustaining from April 2019.
9. **Orbital Community Centre:** That the Council continues to fund the centre for three years to provide stability, enabling the YMCA to consider redevelopment and funding opportunities that will help them to become self sustaining.

That the centre explore community development opportunities with the influx of new residents as a result of the new Watford Community Housing Trust housing development and proactively engage with the new community residing at Lincoln Court.

10. **West Watford Community Association:** That the Council continues to fund the centre for three years whilst WWCA explore opportunities for income generation and future alternative premises/partnerships.

SUMMARY OF MEETINGS

Task Group Membership

Members - Task Group

Councillor Rabi Martins	Chair of the Task Group and Councillor for Central Ward
Councillor Karen Collett	Councillor for Woodside Ward
Councillor Kareen Hastrick	Councillor for Meriden Ward
Councillor Anne Joynes	Councillor for Leggatts Ward
Councillor Binita Mehta	Councillor for Park Ward

Other Members attending

Councillor Jackie Connal	Councillor for Holywell Ward
Councillor Tony Rogers	Councillor for Woodside Ward
Councillor Linda Topping	Councillor for Nascot Ward
Councillor Seamus Williams	Councillor for Callowland Ward

Officer Support

Lesley Palumbo	Head of Corporate Strategy & Client Services
Prema Mani	Corporate, Leisure and Community Section Head
Sandra Hancock	Committee and Scrutiny Officer
Rob Cowan	Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer

Meetings

7.30pm	Tuesday 12 May 2015	<i>Committee Room 1, Watford Town Hall</i>
6.30pm	Tuesday 26 May 2015	<i>Committee Room 1, Watford Town Hall</i>

First Meeting - 12 May 2015

Councillor Rabi Martins was elected Chair.

Members considered the remit and objective of the Task Group and discussed each of the centres in turn.

It was noted that the focus of the review was not cutting funding or disposing of centres but rather to consider how they were progressing and what was the best way forward. The focus was on making the centres more independent. It was highlighted that all the centres were different. Each centre was at different stages of becoming self-sufficient and each had their own needs and limitations, serving different types of communities.

It was agreed that officers should provide Members with information regarding the range of activities offered by each centre, as well as marketing and promotion information and profiles of the centres users where possible.

Members were provided with contact information for the centres and encouraged to make arrangements to visit or speak to community centre staff.

Officers agreed to liaise with community centre management teams regarding the potential opportunities for working with external groups for example mental health charities and education providers.

The minutes for this meeting can be found in Appendix 7 to this report

Second Meeting - 26 May 2015

Officers informed Members that, following the Task Group meeting of 12th May 2015, officers had taken on board Members' comments which had helped officers to crystallise their thoughts regarding the community centres and had informed the structure of the recommendations.

There was discussion amongst Members regarding the following:

- Whether deprivation was still a relevant factor in deciding to continue to fund community centres.
- The importance of different organisations and groups working together.
- The need for greater public awareness of what Community Centres provided.
- Whether marketing and advertising should be carried out by the Council's communication team or the community centres themselves, and how such arrangements would be funded.

Officers provided Members with draft recommendations for each specific centre which Members agreed with a small number of additional elements. Members outlined a number of recommendations for all Centres. These were continuing to support community centres on the basis that they were located in deprived areas, requiring centres to provide business plans by September 2015, improving marketing and advertising, and requiring centres to promote one or more the following (depending on the needs of the centre's demographic)

- Public health with a focus on mental health and wellbeing
- Support and skills building towards gaining employment
- Youth focused activities
- Activities for older people
- Support with budget and debt issues
- Activities for people with disabilities

The minutes for this meeting can be found in Appendix 8 to this report

APPENDICES

<i>1 - Task Group scope</i>	<i>Page 11</i>
<i>2 - Officer's initial report to Members</i>	<i>Page 18</i>
<i>3 - Officer's second report to Members</i>	<i>Page 34</i>
<i>4 - Profile of Users</i>	<i>Page 37</i>
<i>5 - Activities Table</i>	<i>Page 38</i>
<i>6 - Ward Councillor Comments</i>	<i>Page 48</i>
<i>7 – Minutes of meeting on 12 May 2015</i>	<i>Page 50</i>
<i>8 – Minutes of meeting on 23 May 2015</i>	<i>Page 56</i>