REPORT for meeting to be held on 12 November 2015

Review of community space - update on progress

Summary: This report provides a progress report on the work undertaken to implement the recommendations agreed by Cabinet in July 2013 from the review of community space undertaken by scrutiny committee in 2012-13.

Recommendation: Members are requested to comment on progress.

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Background

1.   This report provides a progress report of the work undertaken to implement the recommendations agreed by cabinet in July 2013 from the review of community space undertaken by scrutiny committee in 2012-13.

2.   The scope of the work of the review was to examine the distribution, social benefit and the council's role in the provision of community space, and to consult community centre management committees in order to formulate and implement centre assessment criteria.

3.   Cabinet resolved at their meeting in July 2013 to:
- thank the many volunteers that run the council's community centres;
- endorse in principle the recommendations from scrutiny committee;
- allocate council officer time (subject to the detailed assessments and resource implications of each recommendation highlighted in the report) to explore in more detail and in conjunction with community space volunteers, partners and other agencies, how the recommendations might be implemented; and,
- report progress to the scrutiny committee in due course.

4.   The terms of reference from the scrutiny committee task and finish are enclosed at appendix 1; the recommendations reported to cabinet are at appendix 2 and a table covering progress against each recommendation can be found at appendix 6.

5.   The report completes the main focus of activity and makes recommendations for future work in each of the themes with the community associations.

Methodology

6.   The work carried out to take forward the recommendations have been summarised into three areas of work:
- Increased network and collaboration
- Accountability and management
- Training and mentoring.

7.   The tables below provide a summary of the recommendation and how the work has been taken forward as actions.

Evaluation Tables

9. Increased networking and collaboration

Objective	Actions
Improve networking between centres	Thirteen networking events have been held. The majority of community centres have been represented at most events. The feedback from those who have attended these sessions has been positive and resulted in some centres networking outside of these events and undertaking joint events.
Improving collaboration	Success criteria have been developed that are a part of

	performance framework (see 4. below). A new community centre manual has been produced in conjunction with the centre management committees. The manual provides a common framework for centres to be able to communicate strengths and deficiencies with each other and acts as an A-Z guide to running a community facility. Centres are now able to share strengths and skills without recourse to city council resources. There are now some examples of this e.g. sharing accounting experience and resolving insurance issues.
Develop a more sustainable business model	A new community centre management guidance manual has been developed in conjunction with the centre management committees. This provides a guide to operating a community centre. All aspects of management have been included – health and safety, safeguarding, equalities and accessibility, planning and finance, governance, legalities and regulations, activities and improving use by the community.

Management committees are also being encouraged to view their centres as community hubs from which public sector and other local services can be run. Examples of this are: Marlpit community centre hosts Sustainable Living Initiative who rent part of the building and pay hire charges for training and other events; West Earlham hosts Reach that provides a family outreach service; Clover Hill hosts a Norfolk and Norwich hospital community cardiac service; Chapel Break provides a base for pre-school and out of school services. All of these services provide the associations with independent funding. |
| Improved communication with the community and marketing | Establish a better web presence: A new independent community centre website has been developed in conjunction with centre management committee representatives that went live in October 2015. The new website address is: www.norwichcommunitycentres.org.uk

The website will be established and remain for centres to self-administer. Funding for the website has been secured for two years, and training has been given to interested committee members. After this time the cost to maintain the site will be minimal and can be shared among centre committees. |

Continuing work	The community centre website contains a secure section that community association volunteers can use as an online forum for centres to share best practice and information. A new centre management manual has been issued to all centre committees and has been designed to allow easy updating when required. Electronic copies and appendices are available within the secure section of the website and is available to be downloaded by all the management committees. Linking up centres with other projects such as 'digital inclusion.'

10. Accountability and management

Objective	Actions
Establish a performance management framework: The new 'management tool'	A new performance management framework has been established: Each centre is now able to assess how well they operate the centre by using the new self-assessment questionnaire known as the 'management tool'. The self-assessment tool reviews the current status of centre management and governance. By highlighting areas that could be improved the centre committees are able to identify training, refer to the centre manual for better practice or to ask other centres for help and advice as described in 2. above.
Develop a means for centres to monitor and review their service provision	Community centre 'star awards' have been developed in conjunction with community centre management committees as a mechanism for centre management committees to self-assess how well they are operating against the performance framework. The star awards programme has been implemented and each centre received a star award certificate from the Lord Mayor at a celebratory event in June 2015. All centres achieved the minimum standards in the performance framework with many achieving 4 or 5 stars.
Opportunities to increase centre income will be maximised and be encouraged where possible	Opportunities to enhance financial management and increase income were incorporated into the recent training programme. In addition, use of the star awards will provide evidence of the effectiveness of the centre and can be used to support funding bids. See also 3 above.
Continuing work	Each centre management committee has been invited to be re-assessed for their star awards in autumn 2015 after they have made improvements with supported by their engagement officer.

	Maintaining the 'star awards' will be much simpler as centres are now familiar with how to undertake a self-assessment review of their services.
	By undertaking a review, there are potential savings, reduction of management risks and better service offered to the community by ensuring that the centre is being managed in line with the centre manual and property licence.

11.0 Training and mentoring

Objective	Actions
To develop and deliver directly or indirectly, a learning and development programme	There has been regular training offered at networking events. This training has reflected the guidance offered by new centre management manual and has been linked to the needs of each centre. Overall, the training sessions were well attended and the feedback that has been received was very positive. Examples of training include safeguarding, financial management and health and safety. A summary of the training programme can be seen in the appendix to this report.
Continuing work	The current training programme is planned to be continued on a rolling basis until the New Year. The management tool will help centre management committees identify future training needs. This can be met either independently or in collaboration with other centres.

Further details of the learning and development programme are at appendix 5.

Conclusions - what difference has the programme achieved so far?

11. The community centre improvement programme resulted in the following changes:
- Community Centre Manual – a comprehensive guide to community centre management that has been circulated to members through e-councillor – a summary can be found at appendix 3 and full version available is available on the new community centre website under the resources section www.norwichcommunitycentres.org.uk

  - Self-assessment management tool – centres can find out how well they are managing a centre and identify management skills that can be improved. A quality standard scheme 'Star Awards' was introduced in order to celebrate and highlight their achievements – a summary can be found at appendix 4

- Training and mentoring programme – skills training was established to improve centre management based on information contained within the community centre manual – see appendix 5 for details of the programme

- Community centre website: This will be established before Christmas 2015 and will be used to help market centres and to act as a virtual forum to help provide resources such as training and mentoring between centres

- Overall, the activity has resulted in the community association management committees having a greater understanding of what is required to operate a community centre and the tasks that need to be undertaken in order to achieve a high standard of service and management.

Examples of community centre management improvements:

Between October 2014 and May 2015:

- In general, improvements to the operational management of the centres have been identified independently by centre volunteers who, in turn, have been assisted by the new management tool (see appendix 2). In addition, help and advice is being offered by community engagement officers to help implement these operational improvements

- Eight additional centres have produced an induction process for new committee members (total is now 93%)

- Four additional centres have completed their annual return to the charity commission (total is now 100%)

- Increased equality awareness: Three additional centres have adopted a formal equality policy (total is now 79%) and nine additional centres now encourage user groups to formally consider equality issues at the point of booking (total is now 86%)

- Three additional centres have adopted formal safeguarding policies (total is now 79%)

- Five additional centres now check what safeguarding measures user groups put in place (total is now 86%)

Feedback from community centre management committees

- The feedback from those who have attended network and training events has been very positive, useful and informative. The training sessions have been well attended especially considering that volunteers have used their own time and resources and may have not found it possible to attend every single event.

Appendix 3 shows a summary of the training events that have taken place since June 2014.

- Throughout this programme a number of steering groups comprising centre volunteers helped to guide and inform the project. Although there was a great deal of informal consultation between community engagement officers and community volunteers, there was also more formal involvement by community associations, for example:

  - **Star awards development steering group:** The steering group reviewed the indicators, the clarity of the guidance, using the tool and putting it into practice

  - **Website development**: The steering group outlined basic requirements, assessed and scored website tenders – including awarding the work to their chosen supplier

  - All the community centres were invited to comment on the draft website at the June 2015 celebration event. Feedback from all centres who attended was collected and passed onto the web designer

  - **Centre manual development:** this piece of work was dealt with slightly differently will draft versions of the manual given to each centre for comments to ensure the language was correct, the context was logical and it covered all their key requirements.

Appendix 1

Terms of reference from scrutiny committee review of community space

- For an area of work to be included in the scrutiny committee work programme, topics are assessed using the PICC analysis.

- PICC stands for **P**ublic interest, **I**mpact, **C**ouncil performance, and keeping in **C**ontext and in order for a topic to be placed onto the scrutiny committee work programme all four of the criteria need to be satisfied.

- The review of community space was assessed and it was agreed by scrutiny committee that the proposal met all four criteria.

- Terms of reference were agreed by the task and finish group which included:
  - the scope of the task
  - the summary of overall anticipated benefits
  - intended outcomes and
  - indicators of success

- These are detailed below:

- **Scope –** to set up a scrutiny task & finish group to report its recommendations to the scrutiny committee regarding the distribution, social benefit and the council's role in the provision of community space, and assist in the drawing up of assessment criteria. Excluded from the scope were open spaces and commercial businesses.

Summary of overall anticipated benefits and intended outcomes:

- Foundations for provision of performance criteria as an aid through the identification of the pre requisites of success to the provision of socially beneficial community space
- Effective and good value provision
- Improved links between the council and other providers
- Rationalization and improved integration of provision for usage of a range/diversity of groups
- To assess the most appropriate body to provide community space
- Map and register of geographical distribution of council centres, church halls, school halls, facilities for older people and facilities for younger people

- In agreeing the terms of reference and scope of the review, the task and finish group set some measures of success from which the anticipated benefits and intended outcomes could be measured.

Indicators of success:
- The embedding and implementation of best practice for community space providers that is measured against and linked to the council's key performance measures and a suite of performance criteria
  - Level of positive feedback from public surveys

- Level of footfall

Appendix 2

Recommendations from scrutiny committee to cabinet
The task and finish group make the following recommendations:

- The council celebrates and continues to provide support to the volunteers who run the council's community centres.

- **Increased networking and collaboration:** the council works with the community associations and other community space providers to encourage closer working and collaboration. Working with the community associations and providers, the council sets out a clear purpose for community space and develops a more sustainable business model and performance management framework for council owned centres and associated guidance for other centres with which it works. Community feedback should be gathered and used to develop the use of these centres. Closer working may lead to the development of a community space forum which could explore how additional external grants could be accessed that the centres may otherwise not have access to (as long as this does not conflict with centres themselves).

- **Accountability and management:** in line with all other council services or assets, performance of council owned community centres should be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they offer value for money and are sustainable. However, this should reflect that the centres are operated on a day to day basis by volunteers. For this to be effective, the council works with the community centres (and forum if it comes to fruition) to draw up criteria that can be used to indicate the effectiveness of each centre including best value, how the centre delivers against the council's priorities and incorporate best practice. Centres will be supported as resources allow, to deliver to high standards. The Council will develop a viability and decommissioning process identifying the occasions it might be used. Opportunities to increase centre income will be maximised and be encouraged where possible, but not to the detriment of community use.

- **Training and mentoring:** the council will work with community centres, other community space providers (and forum if it comes to fruition) to develop and deliver directly or indirectly, a learning and shadowing programme encompassing both its own centres and other provision. This should incorporate an accreditation scheme where possible.

- **The council's role:** the council recognises that effective community centres can deliver against number council priorities including social inclusion, learning, diversity and equality at a local level. The council should explore how the role of community spaces can be developed further, whilst at the same time ensuring its own community centres are prepared to be more resilient in times of financial constraints including signposting to more sustainable funding sources. The council explores how councillors as community leaders and champions can contribute to the development of these centres. The council continues to recognise that it may not be the only

or best provider for community space in a given area of the city and the distribution of space needs to be monitored and reviewed to ensure that:

- Residents have access to a community space from which they can develop, run or access activities and services
- That the spaces are aspirational
- The views of residents around community centres are captured

- The council should also develop investment criteria for its own centres that should reflect a range of quantitative and qualitative information including usage, location and local needs.

  - **Strategic development:** the council develops an approach to mapping the distribution and use of community provision across the city which is informed by levels of deprivation, crime and disorder, health and wellbeing, to identify priority areas, levels of oversupply. The council should seek to use and promote the use of the centres more widely to deliver other services, e.g. housing advice sessions, other public sector provision local consultations etc, so that they become important hubs within the community. The council should also work collaboratively with partner organisations to use the centres.

  - **Environmental audit;** the council develops a cost effective maintenance scheme including a full environmental audit of all its centres and goes on to retro fit them to the highest energy saving standards, and explores partnership with the local Norfolk County Council Energy Services Company (ESCO) to deliver this.

  - **Communication;** the council explores the development and hosting of an on-line 'open data' directory of provision, giving groups access to update and input into it. This would allow residents to find out the types of provision where they live. This could involve for example developing an interactive GIS community space map covering provision from the council and other providers. The council should in conjunction with community associations, actively promote the community centres through all its communication channels, to convey what is available in terms of space and activities, and to encourage local residents to get involved in using and running the buildings.

  - **Monitoring of recommendations –** the implementation of these recommendations should be reported to scrutiny when appropriate; the development of performance, assessment or funding criteria should be reported to scrutiny committee for comment

Appendix 3

The community centre manual 2015 - Summary

Community Centre Manual 2015

- The table below gives the contents of the new community centre management guidance manual. All management committees have been presented with a hard copy as well as access to download versions.

**Community Centre Guidance Manual – Overview table**

Section	Topic
Governance	Constitution Association structure The committee's role Officer roles and responsibilities Legal responsibilities of trustees
Legalities	Governing documents Charity Commission Licences Other legal aspects Insurance Social clubs and the sale of alcohol
Equalities and accessibility	Equality and diversity
Safeguarding	Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults
Health and Safety	Health and safety policy Health and hygiene Everyday hazards Building and maintenance Personal security Control and disposal of sharps First aid Accident reporting Emergencies Fire safety and maintenance Food safety and food hygiene Graffiti Legionella Risk assessments
Planning and financial management	Financial procedures and planning Budget planning Business planning Emergency planning Reserves
Activities and usage	Hire agreements / booking forms Conditions of hire Knowing your community's needs

Appendix 4

The self-assessment management tool

- The 'management tool' is a series of questions that ask centre management committees how they govern the association and manage the building. It identifies and distinguishes between the minimum legal requirements, the expected standards, and any recommended 'value added' standards.

- The star award summary of results (see table below) shows that all the community centres are managed to an acceptable standard. A minimum standard is for a centre to have scored 1 star. A good centre would achieve a 3 star, and an exceptional centre would achieve a 5 star rating. All centres have succeeded in achieving at least a minimum standard. The table below shows a summary of the star award results

Star award summary May 2015
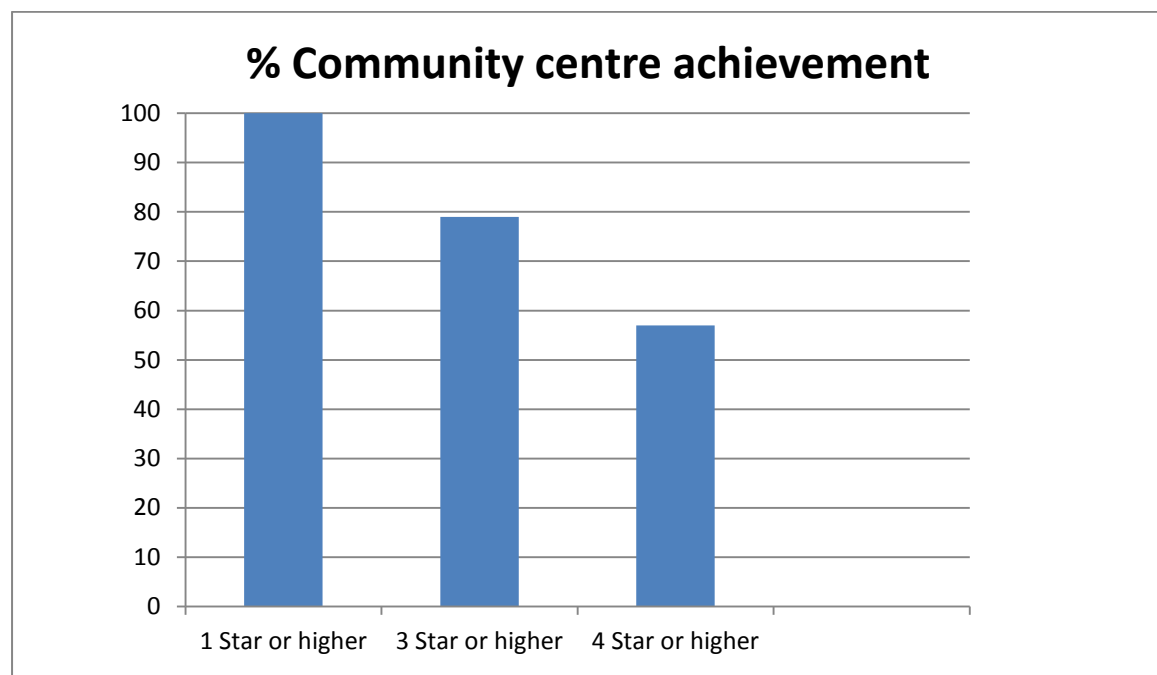
Community Centre management tool summary - analysis May 2015

- Below is a chart that shows the main areas of improvements for community associations which have been identified through the self-assessment tool. Community engagement officers are currently offering centres help and advice to implement these improvements

Management tool: Summary of main recommendations for policy and practice improvements for centre management

Criteria	Number (centres) requiring improvement
Fire evacuations are practiced every 6 months	6
Has a copy of the management license	3
Has a copy of the premises license	3
Have an equality policy	3
There is a safeguarding vulnerable adults policy	3
There is a safeguarding children policy	3
The safeguarding vulnerable adults policy has the minimum requirements	5
The safeguarding children policy has the minimum requirements	5

Appendix 5 Community Centre network and training programme

- Below is a table showing the centre management committees volunteers network and training programme. Each network event contained a training focus – with the exception of two introductory and celebratory events (April 2014, June 2015). This was intended to provide centre committees a chance not only to attend some training, but also to have space to informally meet each other.

- It should be noted that some centres already have their own arrangements for training and therefore would not need or want to attend a particular event. For some centres this programme only represented a supplement to their own training courses. A better picture of community centre training *needs* can be offered by the management tool and the star awards results.

- Each of the courses corresponds to a part of the 'management tool' assessment and a section in centre management manual. Further training courses are being planned to include:
    - Recruiting and keeping volunteers and Mapping community needs
    - Equality and Diversity and Event Planning
    - First Aid and Food Hygiene to be arranged when numbers are established

Table of centre volunteer training courses

Date	Network event & course	Attendees	No. centres represented
2014 April	Introduction to the network & training programme	35	9
June	Fire Safety	8	5
August	Funding 1	9	5
August	Funding 2	8	5
September	Social Media	10	8
September	Risk Assessments	6	8
November	Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults	4	6
November	Safeguarding Children	9	4
2015 January	Marketing and publicity	9	7
January	Finance 1	7	7
February	Health and Safety	11	3
March	Committee skills	5	5
March	Finance 2	7	7
June	Fire Safety	26	6
June celebration	Network event	40	11
October	First Aid*	9	5
October	Website Development	11	8

*Includes some voluntary community groups

Appendix 6

Check of progress against recommendations from scrutiny committee

Theme	Recommendation	Progress
Increased networking and collaboration	The council works with the community associations and other community space providers to encourage closer working and collaboration.	Work to date has been focussed on networking with council owned community centres. Work with other community facilities will be progressed as opportunities arise. Some already exists through the existing neighbourhood network meetings and these will continue.
	The council sets out a clear purpose for community space and develops a more sustainable business model and performance management framework for council owned centres and associated guidance for other	This has been re-iterated in the community centre manual. Community centres have been provided with guidance and information about

	centres with which it works.	achieving greater financial sustainability – see table at paragraph 9.
	Community feedback should be gathered and used to develop the use of these centres.	Continues to be progressed through day to day working. Community associations are encouraged to request feedback on the running of their centres to make improvements.
	Closer working may lead to the development of a community space forum which could explore how additional external grants could be accessed that the centres may otherwise not have access to (as long as this does not conflict with centres themselves).	The development of a forum has not as yet been progressed as there was little support from the associations when proposed.
Accountability and management	In line with all other council services or assets, performance of council owned community centres should be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they offer value for money and are sustainable.	Information on how centres are used is captured to provide a degree of assessment on the performance in terms of providing local activities. Guidance on how a centre should be managed on a day to day basis has been issued through the community centre manual. The management tool provides a mechanism to assess performance in this area.
	For this to be effective, the council works with the community centres (and forum if it comes to fruition) to draw up criteria that can be used to indicate the effectiveness of each centre including best value, how the centre delivers against the council's priorities and incorporate best practice.	Partially completed through the performance framework now in place. Developing criteria for softer community outcomes is difficult, but not impossible to develop. It is recommended that these are developed.
	Centres will be supported as resources allow, to deliver to high standards.	Achieved through the performance framework and star awards.
	The Council will develop a viability and decommissioning	

	process identifying the occasions it might be used.	
	Opportunities to increase centre income will be maximised and be encouraged where possible, but not to the detriment of community use.	Some good progress – see table at paragraph 9.
Training and mentoring	The council will work with community centres, other community space providers (and forum if it comes to fruition) to develop and deliver directly or indirectly, a learning and shadowing programme encompassing both its own centres and other provision. This should incorporate an accreditation scheme where possible.	Main programme completed which will now be provided on an as needs basis.
The council's role	The council recognises that effective community centres can deliver against number council priorities including social inclusion, learning, diversity and equality at a local level.	Ongoing work which can be developed across all community assets.
	The council should explore how the role of community spaces can be developed further, whilst at the same time ensuring its own community centres are prepared to be more resilient in times of financial constraints including signposting to more sustainable funding sources.	Ongoing work but progress made – see paragraph 9.
	The council explores how councillors as community leaders and champions can contribute to the development of these centres.	Information distributed to members at the time the community centre manual was made available. This could form an element of the future role of ward councillors in the neighbourhood model.
	The council continues to recognise that it may not be the	This will be considered as the council moves forward with

	only or best provider for community space in a given area of the city and the distribution of space needs to be monitored and reviewed to ensure that: Residents have access to a community space from which they can develop, run or access activities and services That the spaces are aspirational The views of residents around community centres are captured	reduced resources.
	The council should also develop investment criteria for its own centres that should reflect a range of quantitative and qualitative information including usage, location and local needs.	This will be developed through the asset management strategy.
Strategic development	The council develops an approach to mapping the distribution and use of community provision across the city which is informed by levels of deprivation, crime and disorder, health and wellbeing, to identify priority areas, levels of oversupply.	The role out of "My Norwich" on the council's website has provided an opportunity to map the council's community centres (and other assets). Going forward it will be explored how other information related to centres can be added or linked to the community centre website – see paragraph 9.
	The council should seek to use and promote the use of the centres more widely to deliver other services, e.g. housing advice sessions, other public sector provision local consultations etc, so that they become important hubs within the community.	Community centres are highlighted as venues that can be used by the council for events and activities and assets that could play a role through the roll out of early help arrangements.
	The council should also work collaboratively with partner organisations to use the centres	See above.
Environmental audit	The council develops a cost effective maintenance scheme including a full environmental audit of all its centres and goes	The council is in progress of undertaking stock condition surveys of each centre to guide future investment. As

	on to retro fit them to the highest energy saving standards, and explores partnership with the local Norfolk County Council Energy Services Company (ESCO) to deliver this.	funding become available or though external funds that can be sourced by the community associations, these can be progressed.
Communication	The council explores the development and hosting of an on-line 'open data' directory of provision, giving groups access to update and input into it. This would allow residents to find out the types of provision where they live. This could involve for example developing an interactive GIS community space map covering provision from the council and other providers.	This is not progressed as yet. The report to cabinet suggested that this may not be core business for the council to implement and the hosting of such a tool might best be developed through the voluntary sector with the council providing support and guidance. This approach will be progressed as opportunists arise.
	The council should in conjunction with community associations, actively promote the community centres through all its communication channels, to convey what is available in terms of space and activities, and to encourage local residents to get involved in using and running the buildings.	Work progressed through My Norfolk and the Community centre website.