

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

Date Tuesday 8 October

Subject: Community Funding Review – Community Facilities

Cabinet Member: Cllr Philip Whitehead, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Procurement and Economic Development

Key Decision: Key

Executive Summary

The report identifies those community areas that have not benefitted from capital investment through the community campus and hub programme.

This report provides a suggested mechanism identifying how Wiltshire Council might engage with identified community areas to identify potential facility projects that address local priorities; and where council investment could enable communities to develop new or improved community assets.

To recognise that some capital funding should be set aside to support the development of any appropriate facility projects identified by these community areas during this process, subject to further investigation.

Proposal(s)

To approve the community areas eligible for this process.

To also consider any other substantial community whose local area has not benefited from a campus investment.

To approve a mechanism to engage identified community areas be developed and implemented.

To allocate some capital funding to support communities to develop appropriate facility projects in identified community areas through this mechanism.

To prioritise projects which align to the principles of Wiltshire Council's Service Devolution and Asset Transfer policy and which are underpinned by a collaborative approach ensuring multiple community organisations benefits from investment.

Delegate authority to the Director of Communities and Neighbourhood Services in consultation with the Director of Finance and Procurement to oversee and implement an engagement mechanism and to allocate funding to any appropriate facility projects identified by community areas as part of this process.

Reason for Proposal(s)

To ensure that community areas that have not benefited from community facility investment have the opportunity to identify potentially develop facility projects, which could improve local provision and support local priorities.

To ensure any future provision within the proposed community areas explores the potential to deliver new community facilities, aligned to the principles of the Service Devolution and Asset Transfer policy passed by Cabinet in November 2017.

To ensure that additional investment within the proposed community areas compliments future priorities identified through the respective leisure facilities and libraries reviews.

Alistair Cunningham OBE
Executive Director Investment & Growth

Wiltshire Council

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Purpose of Report

1. To identify community areas that have not benefitted from capital investment through the community campus and hub programme.
2. To provide a mechanism identifying how Wiltshire Council might engage with identified community areas to identify potential facility projects that address local priorities; and where council investment could enable communities to develop new or improved community assets.
3. To recommend some capital funding be allocated to support communities to develop appropriate facility projects in identified community areas through this mechanism.

Relevance to the council's Business Plan

4. The provision of high-quality fit for purpose community facilities is intrinsic to the council's vision to create stronger communities in Wiltshire.
5. Provision of appropriate local facilities enables communities to improve personal and community wellbeing and allows for the provision of services which protect the vulnerable. Collaborative work on projects of this nature ensures the council works with partners as an innovative and effective council. These are all key priorities within the Wiltshire Council business plan.
6. Community facilities have a key role to play in supporting people to live more active and fulfilled lives, providing sustainable assets for local communities that provide a place, facilities and services that can help to combat isolation and loneliness and increase opportunities for social interaction.

Background

7. The community campus and hub programme was conceived in October 2009 following the merger of the county council and four district councils and was part of the Workplace Transformation Programme, which was set-up to

rationalise the property estate and provide fit for purpose accommodation for council services.

8. Eleven community areas have benefited from investment as part of the community campus programme. Budget for this programme is fully committed.
9. The following community areas have so far not received any investment through the community campus and hub programme:
 - Amesbury
 - Bradford on Avon
 - Chippenham
 - Marlborough
 - Southern Wiltshire
 - Tidworth
 - Trowbridge

While all other community areas have received investment through the campus programme, there are other substantial communities whose local area has not benefited from a campus investment and they may wish to be considered as part of this proposal.

10. The Service Devolution and Asset Transfer policy was passed by Cabinet in November 2017, the principles of which could form an integral part of discussions with identified community areas.
11. Work is underway in Westbury to asset transfer the former Westbury Youth Centre in Eden Vale Road to the Westbury Community Project, a registered charity. This work may provide a suitable model to develop and deliver facility projects following discussions with the seven community areas identified above. Further details can be found from paragraphs 13 to 21.
12. An in-depth review of leisure facility and library requirements across the county is due to be commissioned shortly. These reviews will ensure that Wiltshire has the appropriate facility provision to deliver fit for purpose services over the medium to long term. It is imperative that any facility projects identified as part of this proposal be developed in accordance with the findings of these reviews.

A Community Led Model for Success: Westbury

13. Work is underway in Westbury to asset transfer the former Westbury Youth Centre in Eden Vale Road to the Westbury Community Project, a registered charity. This project aims to upgrade the existing building and utilise the facility to co-locate vital services and provide a space for the local community to create additional recreational and social activities that generate increased social capital.
14. Wiltshire Council has identified £100,000 of capital funding through the Community Led Funding Facilities (CLFF) model (Appendix 1 - Community

Led Funding Facilities model), to contribute to the required improvements to this facility which reflects the condition of the building at point of transfer.

15. In the CLFF model utilised in Westbury the community has identified a need and a suitable opportunity to deliver a project that also contributes to Wiltshire Council's own priorities. In addition to funding, Wiltshire Council has provided a wraparound support package to assist the development of the project. This has included:
 - Asset transfer support via Strategic Assets and Facilities Management
 - Building improvement guidance via Strategic Assets and Facilities Management
 - Business case development support via Community Engagement
 - Governance support via Community Engagement
 - Support to identify other suitable community partners via Community Engagement
16. Providing a menu of tools and expertise to local communities allows Wiltshire Council to support projects, improve the chances of communities successfully delivering schemes of work and minimises the risk to the council.
17. The CLFF could provide a suitable model to develop facility projects in other community areas and to unlock existing assets.
18. Any project receiving funding from Wiltshire Council should be assessed against criteria which measures community benefit and need as well as ensuring projects are viable and delivery organisations are credible. The Capital Projects Gateway process (Appendix 2), could be utilised to assess this. Facility projects would be passed through a series of governance and assurance gateways designed to ensure that any project's progress is monitored and assessed through a robust process aligned to Wiltshire Council's Capital Investment Strategy.
19. Facility projects assessed through the Gateway process will require specific documentation to be completed and submitted for review and challenge at various stages. The documentation requirement will ensure that capital expenditure or capital project details and associated business cases are recorded in a consistent manner, so that any scheme can continue with all parties understanding the proposed outcomes and costs.
20. For any capital investment that also includes the transfer of a Wiltshire Council owned asset, the asset should be transferred under the principles of the Service Devolution and Asset Transfer policy and ensure that there is no conflict between assets that are likely to be transferred to the 20 agreed town councils.
21. Once a project has been approved for funding, as well as governance and assurance gateways, it is recommended recipients complete annual monitoring reports to record progress, detail spend and report against any performance measures.

Investment Options

22. The type of facility that could be invested in could include the following:

22.i Wiltshire Council owned buildings currently in use – Investigate options for asset transfer and capital investment to ensure building is structurally sound and can be successfully maintained and operated by communities.

22.ii Wiltshire Council owned buildings currently not in operation – Investigate options for asset transfer and capital investment to utilise buildings that are not currently in use before handing to the community to deliver community benefit and address local priorities.

22.iii Third party owned buildings – Capital investment for third party owned buildings where communities have identified potential investment could support local priorities and deliver community benefit.

Engagement Mechanism

23. It is recommended that presentations be delivered at areas boards for each of the seven community areas above, requesting communities work collaboratively to submit proposals and ideas relating to potential facility development projects.

24. To ensure a broad range of residents and community organisations are engaged in the process and aware of the opportunity, presentations will be followed with press releases, social media promotion, direct mail circulation and use of the Our Community Matters web pages.

25. Communities will be encouraged to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) using a standardised pro-forma template. This approach will ensure a level of consistency in the initial information provided for each project.

26. Local CEMs will be able to provide guidance and advice relating to the submission of EOIs and their content. Where appropriate CEMs might advise that multiple EOIs being developed should be merged and a collaborative approach taken.

27. For this approach to work and to not unnecessarily raise expectations amongst community organisations clear guidance will need to be provided at the beginning of the process. This will need to include:

- The maximum amount of capital funding available per community area
- The maximum amount of capital funding available per project
- The maximum number of projects to be funded per community area
- The maximum number of projects to be funded across all seven areas
- The criteria against which projects will be assessed and monitored from EOI through to funding being agreed and ongoing project monitoring
- The governance requirements organisations need to comply with in to be considered for funding

- That priority will be given to projects working collaboratively to benefit multiple community organisations and a broad range of priorities and residents
- That priority will be given to projects that utilise an asset transfer approach or upgrade an existing facility. New build facilities are unlikely to be in scope.

28. EOIs will be assessed by the local CEM and members from the area board, with any proposals deemed suitable passed to the Director of Communities to work collaboratively with the Directors of Finance and Legal, and with the cabinet member for Communities to approve and agree funding.

29. Projects that are granted funding will then progress through the CLFF model, business cases for each project developed and projects assessed using the Capital Projects Gateway process.

Main considerations for the Council

30. Allocation of a capital funding budget to develop any credible facility projects put forward by identified community areas.

31. Consideration will need to be given to the existing community facility asset base in each of the seven identified community areas to ensure gaps in provision and relevant opportunities are identified.

32. Capital investment should adhere to the principles of the community campus and hub programme with priority given to projects that modernise local community facilities, deliver efficiencies, amalgamate facilities, reduce maintenance costs and allow services and community organisations to operate in partnership from shared spaces to deliver community benefits.

33. Capital investment should be allocated using a needs-based approach to ensure local priorities are met. Where possible funding should be allocated based upon needs identified through local neighbourhood plans or which address the priorities and needs identified through the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) process (Appendix 3). Furthermore, priority should also be given to projects that utilise a service devolution and/or asset transfer delivery model.

34. Any projects delivered through new capital investment should reflect and complement the priorities identified as part of the impending leisure and libraries facility review. Need for capital investment in the seven community areas identified in this report should be community led and utilise operating and management models that are driven by local communities.

Overview and Scrutiny Engagement

35. The proposal to engage community areas to understand local requirements and opportunities is the first stage in this process. It is proposed that, as this work progresses, detailed business cases are developed for any projects

identified as suitable for funding. Opportunities to engage will form an important part of the consultation process for each of these projects.

Safeguarding Implications

36. Priority will be given to projects that utilise a service devolution and/or asset transfer delivery model and as such projects will be community led. Safeguarding support will be provided to these organisations as part of the wraparound support package offered by Wiltshire Council. This will ensure projects adhere to appropriate safeguarding policy and legislation in relation to staff, users, volunteers, apprenticeships and work placements. As part of this appropriate checks will need to be adhered to and training on safeguarding will be implemented as part of the induction process for all staff and volunteers and monitored by Wiltshire Council.

Public Health Implications

37. Enabling communities to benefit from improved facilities and co-located services will help provide opportunities for people to lead healthy active lives, to socialise and reduce isolation and loneliness.
38. Identified projects may be able to further contribute to public health priorities including increased opportunities to be active or by aiding the improvement of the physical and mental health of the population, which reduces mortality and improves life expectancy.
39. Any projects which receive investment will be required to identify how they are able to contribute to these outcomes and ensure local communities experience the same benefits.

Procurement Implications

40. Projects which receive Wiltshire Council investment will need to comply with relevant procurement regulations and evidence how they will achieve this as part of the application process.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

41. Accessibility will be a key design consideration for all projects receiving investment. All facilities will be designed to be fully accessible, in compliance with current building regulations and Wiltshire Council requirements.
42. All facilities and community spaces will be required to maintain an ongoing equalities assessment.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

43. The localised provision of services for customers, embedded within the community, is seen as a sustainable model, minimising travel distances for customers and helping to reduce carbon emissions.

44. Encouraging communities to identify facility priorities may lead to suggestions relating to existing buildings or sites that are not currently in use allowing the reimagination of these spaces. Re-use of the existing fabric and the design of all elements to make flexible use of the premises and to facilitate changing models of care, will optimise the potential for ongoing effective and sustainable use of the properties.
45. Community organisations delivering facility projects through this process will be encouraged to design and deliver efficient facilities, helping reduce operational costs and the impact on the environment.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

46. Service provision and community engagement has significantly improved in the community areas where Wiltshire Council has invested in improved community facilities. Residents in areas where there has been no investment have yet to benefit from the same quality of provision. There is a risk that provision and investment across the county is not seen as equitable.
47. A potential missed opportunity for communities to come together and for assets to be enhanced, improved and made sustainable for the longer term.
48. A potential missed opportunity for some local facilities that currently sit outside of the Service Devolution and Asset Transfer policy.
49. A potential missed opportunity for local communities to make an impact against local priorities for limited investment.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

50. Expectations are raised in the seven identified community areas that they will achieve investment at levels similar to the other community areas that have received investment through the community campus and hub programme. Mitigated by making clear the maximum figure available for investment in each community area and, by providing a suggested scope for the type of facility development suitable for consideration as part of this work when first engaging community areas at the beginning of the process.
51. No partner organisations identified/willing to deliver in community areas – Mitigated by promoting this opportunity to a broad range of organisations including town and parish council's, schools, existing community organisations and established partners.
52. Multiple/unrealistic projects are suggested in each community area and community organisations are disgruntled if their projects aren't progressed. Mitigated by setting clear guidance at the beginning of the process and by encouraging collaborative working.
53. Scheme Overspend – Mitigated by maximum budget allocation for overall investment and by setting a maximum grant award for an individual project. All applications for funding to include detailed feasibility studies and business

and sustainability plans. Projects required to identify and secure additional funding and risk sits with third party organisations delivering schemes of work.

54. Savings/Income not realised at expected level – Mitigated by each proposal for funding to identify potential savings to Wiltshire Council over the short, medium and long term.
55. Partner/staffing difficulties in operation of facilities – Mitigated by Wiltshire Council undertaking a due diligence exercise of all organisations at EOI stage. Wraparound support to be provided in areas including governance provided by Wiltshire Council. Expected governance requirements detailed at the start of the process.
56. Planning not obtained – Mitigated by continued early engagement with planning officers on a project by project basis and a full consultation with stakeholders to produce an acceptable scheme.

Financial Implications

57. Allocated capital funding will be required to support the development of facilities in seven community areas.
58. Each scheme of work will have ongoing operational and revenue implications. These costs will become the responsibility of the partner organisations leading on each project.

Legal Implications

59. Consideration will be given to the model of ownership and provision for each project allowing the Council and partners to maximise grant and other capital funding opportunities. This will need to be balanced by the need to ensure standards of service are maintained and reactive to changing needs.
60. Any facility that is likely to transfer to the community, will need to follow the Asset Transfer and Service Devolution policy and comply with all legal processes
61. Legal advice will be sought when required and oversight provided as required.

Workforce Implications

62. This process should be administered by the communities team and there may be a requirement to seek additional staffing support to facilitate this work and to provide ongoing support to each scheme of work across the seven community areas.
63. Additional support will also be required across a range of other internal departments including Strategic Assets and Facilities Management, Legal and Community Engagement.

Options Considered

64. The following options have been considered and are available to the council.

- i) Do not provide any additional capital budget to invest in the seven community areas which have so far not benefited from investment in community facilities. This would mean that those communities would be left without the benefit of facility investment through Wiltshire Council.
- ii) Deliver a community campus or hub in each community area. Funding for this has ceased and the council is currently reviewing its leisure and libraries stock to ensure that the county has the right facilities in the right places, operated by the most appropriate management model. Significant additional capital investment and officer resource would be required by the council to deliver a campus or hub in the seven identified areas and there is no evidence of strategic need currently.
- iii) Set aside a sum of capital to support a community-led programme that will see some facility investment in the remaining seven community areas and engage with these communities to understand local priorities for community facilities and any gaps in provision. This approach has commenced in Westbury and would appear to be an appropriate model for investment which requires less capital investment and officer resource while still helping communities contribute to local priorities.

Conclusions

65. Officers recommend that the appropriate approach would be to deliver option three. Cabinet is therefore asked to:

- i.) Confirm that option three is the preferred option and should be pursued by officers as a means of developing new facility development in the seven identified community areas.
- ii.) Confirm the seven community areas where capital investment should be allocated as Amesbury, Bradford on Avon, Chippenham, Marlborough, Southern Wiltshire, Tidworth and Trowbridge.
- iii.) Confirm engagement should take place with the seven identified community areas to identify local opportunities suitable for facility development and to better understand local priorities.
- iv.) Recommend a sum of money available for investment to develop community facilities in the seven community areas.
- v.) Recommend the CLFF model identified in this report be developed as a model to develop community facilities in the seven identified community areas.
- vi.) Approve a mechanism be developed to engage with the seven community areas similar to that suggested in this report.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Community Led Facilities Funding Model

Appendix 2 – Capital Projects Gateway Process

Appendix 3 – JSNA Demand Overview

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

None