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Report of the North East Area Manager

North East (Inner) Area Committee

Date: 16th October 2006

Subject: Chapeltown Community Facilities Review

Electoral Wards Affected:
Chapel Allerton

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council Function

Delegated Executive Function available for Call In

Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report

Executive Summary

This report has been prepared at the request of the Area Committee following the deputation to full Council meeting on the 28th February by the Chapeltown Community Centre Action Group (CCCAG). It presents the findings of a review of existing community facilities in Chapeltown carried out within the context of the Council's community centre strategy and an assessment of the proposals made by CCCAG for a new community centre.

The report also sets out city-wide and local initiatives which are relevant to future decisions on community centres in Chapeltown.

The report asks the Area Committee to consider the outcomes of the review, to address the issues that have emerged and to decide on further action.

Purpose Of This Report

1. The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the community facilities review to enable the Area Committee to make an informed response to the deputation made by CCCAG for a new community centre in Chapeltown.
2. The report seeks to inform Members about:
 - The current level of community provision in Chapeltown
 - The CCCAG case for a new community centre
 - The proposals for a new LIFT Joint Service Centre for Chapeltown and any links to issues of concern for CCCAG
 - Opportunities to improve and expand existing provision to address instances of poor quality, low usage and duplicate provision
 - The impact on community provision in Chapeltown of the Extended Services for Children and Families agenda

Background Information

3. Members of the CCCAG made a deputation to full council meeting on 28th February seeking land in the Chapeltown area for the building of a new community centre. In particular, the deputation raised concerns about the allocation of land connected with the development of the new LIFT Joint Service Centre on the site of the former Hayfield Public House in Chapeltown.
4. CCCAG was formed in 2001, when discussions about closure of the community centre were started. It meets monthly and has more than 280 local residents and groups on its mailing list. The group has the support of Fabian Hamilton MP and the Chapel Allerton ward councillors. The aim of the group is to build a new centre to be developed and managed by the community for the community, preferably on the site of the former Hayfield pub. The group does not believe there is a facility in the area that meets the needs of the community as a whole.

Statement of methodology for the review

5. A list of community facilities in the Chapeltown area, identified as part of this review, has been compiled (see Appendix 1) . It is intended to provide as full a picture as possible of the availability of facilities in Chapeltown. Only facilities which had one or more rooms available for let to the public are included.
6. The data for the review was obtained through interview, written and telephone contact with individual staff and Management Committee members.
7. For each facility the research sought to identify:
 - Rooms available, including size and their general use;
 - Letting costs and variance of fees for different types of users, e.g. reduced rates for charities etc
 - Levels of use and nature of users, i.e. community groups, schools, private sector;

- Levels of free capacity, i.e. hours per month unused
- In many cases, only partial information was available on voluntary sector facilities.

8. It should be noted that at the time of writing, new information was still being received.

Main Issues

9. The review of community facilities has followed the principles and policy of the Community Centres Review approved by the Executive Board. It will serve to understand the mix of community provision in Chapeltown and help inform decisions about future provision and investment. The review has looked at existing users' interests with an assessment of their business plans. Appendix 1 provides details of 15 community facilities in the area providing a range of services.
10. In summary the review of existing provision found:

- **The general impression that there are few facilities available to either individuals or groups is not borne out by the study. The audit identified 15 buildings with space for community use.**

As can be seen in Appendix 1 which outlines details of these facilities, 2 of these are run by schools. Comments from both schools indicate that the community's perception of the primary purpose of their facilities is not for community provision. Hillcrest school however does have rooms and facilities available to the public during and outside their normal working hours. The remaining facilities provided by the Council and the voluntary sector all have rooms available to the public during their normal working hours and the majority of them outside these hours by special arrangement and on the payment of fees. 7 buildings have facilities for conferences and 6 for wedding and christening parties.

- **Despite this there appears to be shortages of certain types of community facilities and some of the facilities are restricted to a targeted group of users.**

The need for additional out of school childcare was highlighted in the responses from many providers. However this is being substantially addressed by Sure Start and the Children's Centre developments within the Extended Schools agenda. Comments from faith sector providers indicate that in many cases their facilities are used mainly by members of the congregation. All providers indicated their willingness to operate an "open-door" policy and consider improved marketing and awareness of their facilities would increase usage by the wider community.

- **There was a general consensus that there is a shortage of youth facilities available after 9pm and at weekends. Some felt this should be addressed through the provision of a dedicated youth centre.**

The Mandela Centre is perceived by many as the youth centre for Chapeltown, however there are problems associated with the physical condition of the building that prevents it from achieving its potential. Other facilities such as the Ramgarhia Sikh Sports Centre and Hillcrest school have sports facilities available to the wider community and it was

suggested that many unmet needs could be met through planned and existing resources

- **Lack of coordination of community facilities was a recurring theme. It was suggested that services to the community would be greatly enhanced through proper marketing, sharing of information and co-ordination of provision**
 - **There are a number of existing ICT facilities and more planned. In order to avoid duplication and promote flexible use these developments need to be properly co-ordinated**
 - **There are many other developments taking place within schools in the area. The outcome of these developments will almost certainly lead to an increase in facilities available to the wider community, including young people.**
11. The audit of community facilities sought to gather factual evidence of the levels of use by community groups. Despite a few exceptions, the vast majority of facilities were under- used. This was the case regardless of the provider of the facilities or their physical condition, and suggests that the roots of the under-use may be in other factors. Several Management Committee members contacted attributed the lack of use of their facility to the loss of a sense of “community” and recognised the need to make sure that all buildings and public spaces are used by all communities.
12. Community facilities in Chapeltown are managed by people with real commitment, many of whom bring years of experience to the task. They see themselves as highly accountable to their local community and seek to make their building more accessible both physically and practically. However there is evidence that they have a poorly developed sense of the changing needs of the community and the market for what they have to offer. They are often more concerned with the physical management of the building than with the development of the local community and the role the building has to play within such development.

The CCCAG case for a new community centre

13. The CCCAG are an organised, active, articulate and creative group with a strong commitment to community provision for Chapeltown residents. They have been told that the Council cannot support new community provision without a full review of community facilities in the area for obvious reasons. They have accepted this and understand the review process. CCCAG have participated in the review and have indicated their willingness to engage with us and other providers in finding a way that supports and enhances the community facilities provision for Chapeltown.
14. They have developed some innovative proposals for community provision in Chapeltown and the stated aims of the group are to;
- Support the ongoing sustainable development of Chapeltown through the provision of a high quality, multi-cultural, multi-generational and proactive community centre
 - Provide a centre that is a not-for-profit, financially independent Community Interest Company, run by and for the people of Chapeltown.

“We intend to create a community centre, which will be built by, owned by, and managed by the people of Chapeltown for the people of Chapeltown. It will be financially sustainable rather than dependent on fundraising, and will not be funding-led, but will encourage projects needed by the community. It will be a flagship environmentally-friendly building, which will require very little energy and maintenance once built, thus keep running costs to a minimum and providing a building we can all be proud of. There will be a rolling programme of training for all stakeholders to ensure that there is always a pool of skilled people willing and able to manage the business, the projects and the property.”

15. CCCAG’s business plan is currently based on a minimum building footprint of 600sqm. They predict that at this scale they will be fully self-financing from year one, assuming identified capital streams enable the centre to open without outstanding loans. They are requesting that the Council make land available for the development and have suggested this is done either on a “peppercorn “ rent basis on a 99 year lease, an actual land transfer of freehold to the Community Interest Company, or a Limited Liability Partnership arrangement.
16. CCCAG’s deputation in particular raised concerns about the allocation of land connected with the development of the new LIFT Joint Service Centre (JSC) on the site of the former Hayfield pub in Chapeltown. The Council bought the Hayfield site in late 2002 using SRB round 3 monies for the express purpose of developing a one-stop centre on the site using PFI credits. This decision was confirmed by Executive Board on 15th September 2004 as part of the approval of the Outline Business Case to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in support of a request for PFI credits to fund the Joint Service Centres.
17. CCCAG’s interim report of May 2006 outlining their case for a new community centre has been assessed both in context of the Council’s Community Centres Review by Martyn Stenton of the Regeneration Partnership’s Team, and in terms of land requirements by Martin Farrington, Head of Asset Management. The following is a summary of their comments on the proposals:
 - The Council bought the Hayfield site in late 2002 using SRB round 3 monies for the express purpose of developing a one-stop centre on the site using PFI credits
 - If they use the Hayfield site this will be incompatible with the Council’s existing proposals and prevent the provision of the Joint Service Centre in partnership with the PCT. It would also hamper the planned decant from Social Services Roundhay Road site.
 - Any remaining land not used by the JSC will be needed as greenspace for planning reasons
 - CCCAG are looking for the Council to offer the site at nil consideration. This would leave the Council looking for alternative sites for its proposal and no capital receipts
 - The group has no capital funding at the moment. Any call to the Council for capital would have to compete against the already long list of unfunded priorities

- The expenditure proposals included in the interim report do not include rates. If the group were a registered charity they would be liable for 25%. As a non-charity they could be liable for 100%
- The proposed use of the land in question as a Joint Service Centre is considered best for delivering the Council's corporate objectives and its use as a community centre would be unlikely to be supported in asset management terms.
- There is lack of evidence in the draft business plan of the group's experience and ability to run a capital scheme of this size
- Income and expenditure projection does not include an amount for performing arts fees or business rates
- The project plan does not include reference to the operational team required to run the centre and appears as a series of aspirations.
- 70% predicted usage in the first year is unrealistic

The proposals for a new Joint Service Centre and issues of concern to CCCAG

18. Whilst not integral to the community facilities review the following summarises the concerns of the CCCAG regarding the development of the JSC.
 - CCCAG's preferred location for the proposed new build community centre is the site of the former Hayfield pub and they have actively campaigned since the closure of the former community centre and demolition of the Hayfield to have an input into the considerations surrounding the future development of the site and that of the former community centre.
 - They were advised in December 2005 by LCC Development Dept that it is likely that some of the "green space" behind the former Hayfield pub will be required for the JSC and car park and that no proposals for the site of the former centre will be considered or progressed until a decision is taken about specific land requirements of the JSC.
 - CCCAG sent out an invitation to the wider Chapeltown community to attend a public meeting on 21st September on this very issue. The invitation and publicity material circulated by CCCAG implicitly links their campaign for a new centre to what they perceive to be is a lack of clarity on community space within the JSC development, and no formal mechanism for them to make representation for community space to be considered as an option.
 - Prior to the public meeting on 21st September, the Area Management Team invited representatives from CCCAG to a meeting attended by representatives of the LIFT project team to share the early findings of the community facilities review and advise them of the proposed land requirements of the JSC which had recently been made available.
19. Appendix 2 is a summary of the LIFT proposals presented to CCCAG and to those attending the public meeting on 21st September. Appendix 3 is a sketch design of the proposed lay-out.

20. It is evident from the facts and figures presented that some of the “green space” behind the former Hayfield pub will be required for the JSC and car park. An option under consideration is to compensate any use of this green space by incorporating all or part of the site of the former community centre as part of a new reconfigured area of green space.
21. The public meeting was well attended by supporters for a new community centre for Chapeltown. It is evident from comments made at the meeting that the perceived lack of transparency over the development process of the JSC has fed the growing feelings within the community that the JSC will be imposed on them without their views being adequately expressed. This view was expressed vociferously at the public meeting, and coupled with the campaign for a new community centre on this site, led to fierce opposition to the JSC expressed by all who attended.
22. Any delay to the LIFT development in Chapeltown has a potential impact on the proposals for the 2 other JSCs for Kirkstall and Harehills. This is because the PFI credits have been allocated for all 3 JSCs on the basis that they will be developed simultaneously. The Department for Communities and Local Government will consider withdrawing the credits if there is a delay to the programme due to increased costs that will not be met by the original PFI offer.
23. The Area Committee is requested to “uncouple” these issues when giving consideration to the land transfer request submitted by CCCAG. In the context of this review the Area Committee is asked to consider if there a case for a new centre, given the provision already available as highlighted in the findings of this review. If there is a case for a new community centre, supported by the council through making available suitable land at less than best market value as requested by CCCAG, then an options appraisal would need to be undertaken to identify the best possible site.

Conclusions

24. This review has been undertaken following the principles and policy of the Community Centres Review approved by the Executive Board, with regard to the extent of current community provision in Chapeltown. The current level of community provision in Chapeltown and the potential impact on provision of the Extended Schools agenda indicates that any justification for the Council to dispose of land at less than best consideration is unwarranted. Evidence from this review indicates that there is not a case for a new build, and that improved coordination of existing facilities, together with improved marketing and support for new management arrangements will enhance services to the local community. The impact of a new build community centre would be to extend the duplication of provision within a limited market, potentially weakening existing community facilities future sustainability. Additional issues for consideration by the Area Committee are outlined in the section below.

A way forward

25. The findings of this review highlight a lack of coordination of existing community facilities. This creates opportunities to improve community provision through some form

of consolidation of existing provision. Discussions have taken place with the Leeds West Indian Centre as part of this review process. The West Indian Centre Limited is a trading organisation located on land vested with Leeds City Council Neighbourhoods and Housing Department. The centre is a popular local facility which is used for community uses and social events i.e. weddings and parties, conferences, job fairs, and as a community café.

26. In 2001 it was agreed that the centre would be owned and run by the Leeds West Indian Charitable Trust with the former members of the centre operating as a trading company. The trading company operates the licensed premises. Discussions have taken place with management committee representatives from both the charitable and trading arms regarding the future ambitions for the West Indian Centre and the possibility of future expansion and development to become a performance venue and community centre for Chapeltown. This includes a need for re-branding and marketing of the centre. The management committees have indicated their broad support for this and for the move to a single management arrangement.
27. The North East Area Management Team are supporting them in submitting a sustainable business plan and have set up meetings with social enterprise business advisers to assist them in coming together to form a single social enterprise.
28. This review has considered opportunities for wider access by the community to school facilities through the development of a cluster of extended schools across Chapeltown and Harehills. Space2@BrackenEdge is working with Bracken Edge Primary School, Bankside Primary School and Holy Rosary and St Anne's Primary School to provide a range of activities to local communities. The Extended Schools agenda works with local providers and agencies to provide access to a core offer of extended services. These schools have many facilities that could, and often already do, benefit their local communities. Facilities include sport halls and fields, ICT, playgrounds, classrooms, libraries, assembly and dining halls and numerous other physical facilities and educational resources.
29. An Extending Communities Conference hosted by Space2@BrackenEdge on 12th June 2006 highlighted the opportunities available to Chapeltown through the extended schools agenda by ensuring that schools open their facilities to their local communities. This can be during school hours and/or before and after the school day and at weekends and holidays. Benefits to the Chapeltown community of the extended school cluster include:
 - maximising the use of facilities
 - improved income from facilities
 - improved parent and community familiarity and involvement in the schools
 - improved sense of community
 - improved adult learning opportunities
30. Work is ongoing to develop the extended schools proposals in Chapeltown and the local community have been invited to give their ideas for creating greater access to school facilities and for making schools the ' hub' of community life.

31. Whilst the study found a relatively large number of existing facilities there is a gap in information about what is available leading to a perception of short supply. Better coordination and use of existing facilities could be assisted through the development of a “virtual community centre” – information on what is available held centrally and accessible from different locations. This service could incorporate a centralised booking service and a telephone web based advice line.

Recommendations

32. The Area Committee is requested to refer this report to the Executive Board with the following recommendations:

- That the facilities review demonstrates there is no case for the Council to consider the release of land as requested by CCCAG for the purposes of a new build community centre. This does not preclude CCCAG pursuing options for a new development site in the area at market value.
- That the way forward, as outlined in paragraphs 25 – 31 of the report is supported.

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