

Strategic Framework for Community Centre Provision	14th June 2016
To: The Leisure and Development Committee For Information	

Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, Healthy & Engaged Communities
Outcome	Council will work to develop and promote stable and cohesive communities across the Borough
Lead Officer	Julie Welsh - Head of Community & Culture
Cost: (If applicable)	

The purpose of the report is to provide an update to Elected Members in relation to the development of a Strategic Framework for the provision of community centres in the Borough.

Background

Causeway Coast and Glens Shadow Council approved a Community Development Strategy in March 2015. One of the key strategic priorities within the strategy is 'Supporting Communities to achieve their maximum level of sustainability', which includes facilitating the strategic development of a Community Centre Policy for the Council.

An Audit of Community Centres and Halls was carried out in Spring 2015 by the 4 legacy Councils of Ballymoney, Coleraine, Limavady and Moyle in association with Community Foundation NI (*Audit of Community Centres and Halls (Mar 2015) Blu Zebra*).

The Audit mapped out the location, scale and use of those community facilities that fitted the 'community centre' definition, ie. a multipurpose centre available for community use, and or service provision by a range of user groups or for public hire. A range of other community facilities were not included in the remit of the report such as church halls, parish centres, orange halls, GAA clubs etc.

Further to the completion of this Audit, a workshop was held in June 2015 to facilitate further discussion among Elected Members on the key conclusions and observations of the Audit Report, in order to help inform and shape future vision and strategy in relation to community centre provision.

The report highlighted that there was a need to carry out a wider audit of facilities in the entire area in order to get a full picture of what level of activity and opportunity lies in existing buildings, in order to reduce duplication, promote sharing and increase service provision in local areas.

Alongside the Community Centre strategy development work there were 2 capital projects that were put forward to the new Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council by the legacy Ballymoney Borough Council: Refurbishment works at the Social Centre on Edward Street in Ballymoney; and Acquisition of Ballymoney Music Centre from the Education Authority.

This prompted Council to undertake an Audit of Need in relation to community facility provision in Ballymoney town and prepare an Options Appraisal in relation to how that need could be met. (*Audit of Need and Options Appraisal in relation to Community Facilities in Ballymoney Town (Dec 15) Blu Zebra*) The intention was that this would inform the proposals for investment in the centre of Ballymoney and allow Council to make some rational decisions in relation to capital expenditure. This could be viewed as a test case from which the learning and decision making could be applied to develop a Strategic Framework for decision making at a strategic level.

Further to the completion of the Audit of Need and Options Appraisal in relation to Community Facilities in Ballymoney Town, work has been progressing on the development of a Strategic Framework for Community Centre Provision. The Strategic Framework will lay out Council's position in relation to the future provision of Community Centres in the Borough including how to promote better use of underused centres; decision making in relation to renovation/disposal of centres that aren't fit for purpose; dealing with requests for financial assistance from voluntary organisations; and how it works with other providers in areas where there isn't Council provision.

Members will be invited to participate in a further workshop in which they can continue to inform the progression of Council's vision and framework for community centre provision.