

<b>Strategic Framework for Community Centre Provision</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> October 2016</b>
<b>To: Leisure and Development Committee For Information</b>	

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2015-19)</b>	
<b>Strategic Theme</b>	Resilient, Healthy & Engaged Communities
<b>Outcome</b>	Council will work to develop and promote stable and cohesive communities across the Borough
<b>Lead Officers</b>	Head of Community & Culture Community Development Manager
<b>Cost:</b> (If applicable)	N/A

**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**

One of the key strategic priorities within the Causeway Coast and Glens Community Development Strategy includes facilitating the strategic development of a Community Centre Policy for the Council.

The purpose of developing a Strategic Framework for Community Centre Provision is to have a framework that will determine Council's position in relation to the future provision of community centres in the Borough and to address the key questions of:

- What is Council's vision for the provision of Community Centre in the Borough?
- How do we establish if there is a need or demand for community centre in a particular area?
- What are the ways in which that need can be met?

Work has been ongoing in carrying out background research and detailed mapping exercises including an Audit of Community Centres and Halls in Causeway Coast and Glens (Mar 2015) and Audit of Need and Options Appraisal in relation to Community Facilities in Ballymoney Town (Dec 15).

A workshop took place on 18<sup>th</sup> August for Elected Members to consider emerging options for a Strategic Framework for Community Centres. Following discussion at the workshop the following are the key points for consideration in the emerging Strategic Framework:

### **Proposed Vision/ Overall Outcome**

*To have shared, welcoming, accessible, fit for purpose community centres which provide a range of activities and services to address the needs of all sections of the community.*

## **Standards for Community Centre provision**

- Geographical Accessibility – travel distance either in travel by car times in rural areas or travel by foot times in urban areas.
- Physical Accessibility - types of spaces available in the building, Disability access.
- State of repair / upkeep of the building.
- Availability of building – opening times.
- Occupancy rates.
- Operation management arrangements for booking and operating the building.
- Shared and welcoming for all.
- Affordable to use.
- Diversity of user groups/ service providers.
- Satisfaction of users.

## **Determining the need/demand**

In order to determine the need for community centre provision in an area it is proposed that a mapping exercise takes place to review what existing facilities are available in the area and assess them against the standards above. The demand for community centre provision can be determined by carrying out a survey of the local community to assess the current usage of community facilities in the area and what the demand is for new services/activities, as well as considering the socio economic makeup of the area.

Research was undertaken recently within a selection of 9 Council owned community centres indicates that:

- 83% of users of the Council owned community centres surveyed visit at least once per week;
- Usage times peak in evening at 44% compared to slightly lower usage in morning (34.1%) and afternoon (30.4%);
- The most popular types of activities are playgroup / pre-school / parent and toddler groups, which accounted for 27.1% of uses; arts and craft/gardening activities accounted for 14.4% of uses, followed by exercise classes (5.6%) and luncheon clubs (5.4%);
- 39.2% users travelled one mile or less; 57.5% travelled between 2-3 and 10 miles to the centre;
- 77% of users travel by car; 19% of users walked and 5% relied on public transport or community transport.

## **Options for Provision**

In the event that a need is identified for increased community centre provision in an area (based on standards detailed above), there are a number of ways in which this can be addressed. The presumption would not be in favour of Council building new community centres.

*i. Utilise existing facilities in an area.*

Improve the accessibility and quality of existing facilities in an area through support provided by Community Development team to voluntary community centre providers, opening up their facilities to new users and developing improved programmes of activities/services.

*ii. Support third party community centre provision.*

Council supports voluntary organisations through consideration of application to Council's Capital Grants Programme for renovation/extension of existing space or new build, and provides support through Community Development/Funding Unit to source full funding package.

*iii. Council provision.*

Council renovates/extends existing Council owned community centre.

A further workshop will take place for Elected Members on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November to consider a final draft Strategic Framework for Community Centre Provision document which will be provided to Elected Members in advance of the workshop.