

AREA COMMITTEE COMMENTS ON THE COMMUNITY CENTRE STRATEGY.

1. The Community Centre Strategy was presented to each Area Committee during the September cycle. The Committees were recommended to endorse the strategy.
2. **South East Area Committee on the 4th of September 2006.**

Several members expressed concern that management disputes had occurred at some Community Centres and that a few had been dominated by small groups. In such cases, where there were disputes and serious problems, it was necessary for the Council to step in and take over the management of the Centre. However, the long-term aim should remain that of enabling and empowering people to manage their local centre in accordance with local needs and wishes. On balance the Committee felt that a citywide strategy should be developed to encompass all Community Centres.

Resolved: -

To ask that the Committee's views be taken into account;

To await the outcome of consultation before commenting further.

3. **Cowley Area Committee on the 6th of September 2006.**

The Committee agreed:

- (a) Not to endorse the report as it felt that more focused information and direction was required;
- (b) To make the following comments;
 - (i) Not all of the Council owned Community Centres were listed in the report in their correct areas, e.g. Bullingdon community Centre was not listed under Cowley Area Committee;
 - (ii) On the maps provided with the reports not all of the "community" facilities, especially private ones and schools were listed and should be based on Area Committee boundaries;

- (iii) Need to have information from Neighbourhood Renewal on the current facilities and services available in the Community Centres in the Cowley Area Committee area;
- (iv) Rationalisation of some facilities in the area should be considered in order to invest in new or improved facilities in better locations in the area;
- (v) Concerns raised over no new licensed premises in any Community Centre;
- (vi) Area Committees did not receive feedback from Community Associations and clarification should be given on what exactly is the relationship between Community Associations and the City Council;
- (vii) Lack of space in existing Community Centres for storage;
- (viii) Some concern that at “block booking” of space in Community Centres for office space was happening, leading to reduced space available for community activities.
- (ix) That Neighbourhood Renewal should work on a structure that clearly states what is expected from a Management Committee/Association of a Community Centre.
- (c) To note that the Government and the National Lottery were supporting the “Visible Communities” model for Community Associations to apply for Lottery funding etc.

4. North Area Committee on the 7th of September 2006.

Nick Lee said that when developments especially large ones were built, consideration should be given at the planning application stage to the need of community facilities such as community centres. Andrew Nairne said that community centres were very important in connecting together the communities that surrounded them.

Councillor Armitage said that the report detailed a maintenance backlog of £3m, however this figure should be viewed with caution, as there were a number of ways that funding could be obtained to address maintenance issues. He also said that it was the clear intention of the Administration that the administration of community centres should be the responsibility of the Area Committees as decisions on what, where and when on facilities was best decided locally.

Councillor Brudin said that he was concerned that artificial boundaries could be created by using just Area Committee boundaries and that communities and

community centres should be considered in the broader sense as people from one area could and did use facilities in another. He suggested that it would be better to use catchment areas.

The Committee agreed:

- (a) To endorse the approach of the Community Centre Strategy;
- (b) To note the following comments;
 - (i) Community Centres were important in connecting with the communities that surrounded them;
 - (ii) Important that other Strategies also linked into the Community Centres Strategy;
 - (iii) Important that communities were considered on catchment areas rather than on the artificial boundaries of an Area Committee.

5. Central South and West Committee on the 13th of September 2006.

Councillor Alan Armitage, in his capacity as portfolioholder responsible for community centre, highlighted the desire to delegate decisions regarding community centres to area committees and spoke about the four-stage approach advocated in the strategy.

Councillor Susanna Pressel referred to the possible effects changes to those involved in the management of community centres might have on the operation of centres. In relation to the suggestion that centres market themselves to potential partners, she suggested that it would be more logical for this to be carried out centrally in relation to organisations that operated across the city. In relation to the suggestion that area committees consider how they manage community centres and allocate sufficient resources to deliver prioritised services, Councillor Pressel said that she did not believe that area committees could be expected to do so unless budgets were devolved to them.

The Chair, in relation to the presence of bars in community centres, referred to the fact that bars worked well in some centres but did not in others and said that he was against a “one size fits all” approach. He also spoke about the strengths of

management committees in some community centres and the need for local involvement in community centres.

County Councillor Deborah Glass Woodin referred to the need to seek the views of community associations on the proposals.

Councillor Alan Armitage accepted that there was a need for some central support concerning marketing and booking of community centres provided that community associations were allowed to operate as they wish.

Resolved:-

(1) to endorse the strategy;

To ask that officers have regard to the comments made by members of the Committee.

6. Neighbourhood Renewal has taken full account of the comments raised by Area Committees. The comments do not materially change the strategy all be it for the maps of centres, which will be up dated during stage two of the process. Many of the comments are operational matters and will be addressed by the Community Development and Regeneration Manager.