

To: City Executive Board

Date: 3rd September 2008 **Item No:**

Report of: Head of Community Housing and Community Development

Title of Report: Northway Community Centre improvements

Summary and Recommendations

Purpose of report: To provide a business case for the additional budget allocation of £30,000 to improve IT facilities at Northway Community Centre

Key decision No

Executive lead members: Councillor Turner
Councillor Bance

Report Approved by:

Finance: Chris Kaye

Legal: Lindsay Cane

Head of Service: Graham Stratford

Policy Framework: Stronger and more inclusive communities – support social and economic regeneration, particularly in deprived communities

Recommendation(s): In light of the asset management review, City Executive Board is requested to decide whether to proceed with the improvement scheme and approve the budget amendment allocation of £30,000 to improve Northway Community Centre

Background

1. At the Council meeting on 30th June 2008, budget amendments were approved for a number of different initiatives.
2. Attached is a business case for the improvement of Northway Community Centre to incorporate the IT Hub.
3. There is currently an asset management review taking place within the City Council and a discussion has taken place with the lead officer to look at the development potential of Northway within the Strategic Asset Management Plan. It is thought that it will be at least three years, and (in current market conditions) most likely five, before the site is likely to be redeveloped.
4. The Business Case also explores why incurring this expenditure represents better value than other possible options such as reopening the IT hub in the shop, and possibly using some of the spare offices in the adjoining building for meeting space.

Recommendation

5. In light of the asset management review, City Executive Board is requested to decide whether to proceed with the improvement scheme and approve the budget amendment allocation of £30,000 to improve Northway Community Centre

Name and contact details of author:

Angela Cristofoli, Area Co-ordinator

acristofoli@oxford.gov.uk

☎01865 252688

Background papers: None

Business Case

Northway Community Centre – IT Hub

Project Title: Development of Northway Community Centre

Date: 6th August 2008

Responsible Board: CEB

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ed Turner / Councillor Antonia Bance

Links to OCC Priority: Stronger and more inclusive communities

Sponsor: Angela Cristofoli (on behalf of NEAC)

Project Manager: John Bellenger, Manager, Built Environment

Project Administrator: N/A

Version No: 1.0

Approvals:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Distribution:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

1. Background

The Northway Community Centre and the Northway Sports Centre are located in the former school building in Maltfield Road, Northway which is owned by Oxford City Council. There have been discussions about the possible redevelopment of the site however until such time as the redevelopment takes place the current community centre is failing to meet many of the needs of the local community.

A lack of investment over the years has contributed to the run down feel and look of many parts of Northway. There is also statistical data to confirm this as the area immediately adjacent to Northway Community Centre has a worse Indices of Multiple Deprivation ranking in 2007 compared to 2004. It has moved from a middle ranking to a high ranking where it is amongst the top 33% most deprived Super Output Areas in England. The significant indicators contributing to the current level of deprivation include low income, low educational achievement and lack of access to services

The current Community Centre is predominantly a social club, comprising a lounge bar, function suite and a small committee room. A formally constituted community association manages the community centre. The association has 500 members from which a voluntary management committee is elected. The community association employ a full time manager and part time staff.

In line with the City Council's agreed strategy for community centres, the Northway Community Association is committed to the *VISIBLE* process. As such the Community Association have undertaken a preliminary self-assessment of their current standing in relation to the needs of the local community. The results of the assessment shows that although the Community Association is well managed and provides an excellent programme of adult social activities, it is failing to provide sufficient other opportunities to meet the wider needs of the local community.

2. Project definition

- **Project objectives**

- (i) to provide an upgraded community centre facility which utilises the current space more effectively.(see project deliverables)
- (ii) the community association to provide a range of social, cultural and recreational activities which will include an IT centre. The community association will work with other partners to develop, maintain and monitor this facility.

- **Project scope**

The Northway Community Association has worked with its membership to show that there is a local need for a more diverse programme of activities such as art, dance, after school clubs, computer training,

holiday activities and sport. There is also a more general need to provide more accessible facilities for local groups. Unfortunately the current '*social club*' type layout of the community centre does not lend itself to adequately cater for these needs. The Community Association have frequent requests about additional activities being run in the Centre and in particular when people will be able to access the IT facilities.

- **Project deliverables**

The project has a detailed building development plan to improve the facility which has been designed through discussions involving Northway Community Association and Oxford City Council Officers.

The plan will be implemented in four phases with the work managed through the Building Design team at Oxford City Council and will consist of:

- a. Convert the existing redundant weights room in the Northway Sports Centre in to a meeting / activity room for the Northway Community Centre
- b. Convert the existing small committee room in the Northway Community Centre into an IT suite / training space for the local community.
- c. Carry out alterations to the existing snooker and social club areas in the Northway community Centre to allow access to the new meeting room.
- d. Develop a new meeting room within the existing social club.

- **Project desired outcomes**

A detailed building development plan has been produced taking into account the identified needs established through the Community Association. If the plans are implemented, the improved use of space within the community centre will provide a local facility more able to meet the needs of local people. The plans will enable the IT Hub to be re-established and discussions have taken place with Oxfordshire County Council on making this happen.

3. Initial business case

The benefits of undertaking this project are:

- that it fits in with the Council's strategic priority for 2008-2011 to build stronger and safer communities – supporting the development of strong, cohesive communities by providing a local facility to support cultural, recreational and sports activities. It also contributes to social regeneration within a deprived neighbourhood.

- the development of a dedicated IT suite / training space will help local people to participate in learning and develop skills.
- it would greatly assist Northway Community Association in obtaining the 'Visible' standard for community organisations more rapidly.
- The IT Hub was previously located in a shop in Westlands Drive which was closed in 2007 as there was no ongoing funding to keep it open. Incorporating it within the Community Centre will ensure that IT facilities are available again for the local community. It will also save any recurring revenue costs of providing a separate facility for IT access. If the shop were to be reopened, there would be the cost of the lease plus utility bills together with having to find the revenue costs to provide a person to open the shop. This would not be a cost-effective option and would rely on providing additional staff hours. By improving the layout of the Community Centre, there is increased space to provide a range of activities without the additional revenue costs that would arise from running a separate facility.
- The computer equipment previously located in the Westlands Drive shop has now been transferred to Northway Community Centre. Once it can be set up again, the Learning Communities project, Oxfordshire County Council will be able to run courses/training sessions on site.
- The adjoining building which provides office accommodation for City Council staff currently has some spare offices and this has been considered as to whether it would be suitable some of the Community Centre. This would not be a cost-effective option as it would require additional staffing as the facilities would be in different buildings.
- Overall the Community Association has developed a plan for the Centre to incorporate the IT equipment. This will provide the best value for money than either using adjacent office space or a shop in Westlands Drive as there will not be additional ongoing revenue implications of employing additional staff to run the facilities.

4. Risks and Uncertainties

Risk & Description	Likelihood	Impact (High/Medium/Low)	Counter Measures
--------------------	------------	-----------------------------	------------------

Allocation of full £76,000 from Oxford City Council to fund development of Northway Community Centre	Already have secured £43,438 through North-East Area Committee. Additional £30,000 allocated through Council.	Low	Could seek external funding but with uncertainties on possible future redevelopment, it would be difficult to secure funding.
If the Council's asset management strategy identifies that this site be redeveloped, this could prevent any investment in the current community centre	Uncertain. No time scale set out and has been discussed for many years. Current advice is that it is likely to be at least 3 years before any redevelopment takes place.	Medium It would intensify the local community's frustration over lack of investment or opportunity to develop the Community Centre. Also not able to meet Visible status	Should the site be redeveloped within the next 3 years – planning restrictions will need to ensure that a modern purpose built community centre is provided from S106 receipts

5. Timescales

The building development work will be carried out through Oxford City Council and will commence in October and be finished by the end of January 2009.

6. Acceptance criteria

- Building work completed on time and within budget
- The Councils building design team will ensure that any necessary planning and building permissions are obtained prior to work commencing on site.

Oxford Building Solutions will undertake the building work in compliance with competitive tendering legislation

- Once the facility is improved, to establish monitoring arrangements on how the new facility is used. This will look at both the accessibility of the centre and the range of activities provided by Northway Community Centre for local people to ensure that the provision of services/activities are fair and accessible to all

7. Costs

The costs of the project have been established through the Building Design team:

Project phases	Task	Cost (£)
1.	Create a new committee / meeting room in the sports hall weights room	25,908
2.	Creation of IT suite in the existing Committee Room	9,456
3.	Access corridor in existing multi-purpose (Snooker) Room	23,593
4.	Formation of new meeting room / committee room in the bar	14,481
TOTAL COST		73,438
North-East Area Committee capital allocation (agreed 15 th July 2008)		43,438
Corporate budget amendment allocation		30,000

Detailed costings are attached at Appendix 1

8. Interfaces

This project does not overlap with any other that will hamper its completion. However there is a further phase to explore. Once the building development plan is implemented, the Community Association have agreed to work with the City Council, with a view to the community association becoming responsible for the day to day management of all community facilities at the site including the sports centre and football pitches. This would involve further discussions with City Works but is an opportunity to further support community led initiatives and enable communities to manage facilities for themselves.

9. Whole Life Cost / Sustainability

This project would greatly enhance a local community facility and enable the Community Association to provide access to a greater range of activities for the local community. It will also enable other activities to be run from the Centre e.g. the IT Hub.

The Community Association would continue to manage the Community Centre, so there are no ongoing revenue costs for the Council to meet.

10. Equalities

This project will enable Northway Community Association to provide enhanced facilities that increase access for the local community to participate in a range of activities.

It also targets an area of the City which has a significant level of deprivation and previously has had little investment in community facilities.

11. Environmental Impact

There are no climate change or other environmental impacts ensuing from this work. However there is an opportunity to see if any of proposed work can encourage higher standards of energy efficiency and the use of renewable energy in the Community Centre. Environmental Health will be involved in further discussions with the Project team and the Community Association to provide further advice.

Appendix 1

BUDGET COSTINGS - PROPOSED ALTERATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE / MEETING ROOMS AND IT SUITE NORTHWAY COMMUNITY CENTRE

Phase 1 - Convert the existing redundant weights room in the Northway Sports Centre in to meeting / activity room for the Northway Community Centre

1.1	Installation of new connecting door		£3,300
1.2	Modifications to heating in snooker room		£800
1.3	Modifications to bench seating	say	£250
1.4	Modifications to door to Gym ~ block up		£1,750
1.5	Strip out existing fixtures and fittings		£1,400
1.6	Install suspended ceiling		£1,750
1.7	Replace lighting		£1,500
1.8	Modifications to heating ~ connect to Community Centre		£2,000
1.9	Replacement windows		£1,120
1.10	Replacement external door		£500
1.11	Replacement carpet throughout		£1,320
1.12	Decoration throughout		£2,500
1.13	Extend fire alarm system and connect to Community Centre		£600
1.14	Install new power circuits and connect to Community Centre		£600
1.15	Install window blinds		£200
		Sub total	£19,590
		Contingency @ 15%	£2,939
		Fees at 15%	£3,379
		TOTAL	£25,908

Phase 2 - Convert the existing small committee room in the Northway Community Centre into an IT suite / training space.

2.1	Modification / replacement lighting		£1,200
2.2	Modifications to power circuits		£800
2.3	Installation of data wiring		£1,200
2.4	Installation / modifications to ventilation		£700
2.5	Decoration		£2,000
2.6	Replacement flooring		£750
2.7	Furniture moving costs	say	£500
		Sub total	£7,150
		Contingency @ 15%	£1,073
		Fees at 15%	£1,233
		TOTAL	£9,456

Phase 3 - Carry out alterations to the existing snooker and social club areas in the Northway community Centre to allow access to the new meeting room

3.1	Installation of new connecting door		£2,000
3.2	Form new stud partitions to create access corridor		£1,500
3.3	Modifications to lighting		£1,000
3.4	Modifications to power		£500
3.5	Alterations to ceiling		£750
3.6	Decoration		£1,000
3.7	Modifications to carpets		£200
3.8	Modification to fire alarms		£500
3.8	Ventilation with heat recovery		£3,500
		Sub total	£10,950
		Contingency @ 15%	£1,643
		Fees at 15%	£1,889
		TOTAL	£14,481

Phase 4 - Develop a new community hall within the existing social club

4.1	Block up existing door to multi - purpose room and make good.		£1,750
4.2	Form new door to snooker room		£3,300
4.3	Form new stud partitions to create committee room		£2,650
4.4	Modifications to lighting		£1,000
4.5	Modifications to power		£500
4.6	Alterations to ceiling		£1,240
4.7	Decoration		£2,000
4.8	Modifications to bench seating		£400
4.9	Modifications to carpets		£200
4.10	Modification to fire alarms		£500
4.11	Ventilation with heat recovery		£3,500
4.12	Double doors to form rear lobby		£800
		Sub total	£17,840
		Contingency @ 15%	£2,676
		Fees at 15%	£3,077
		TOTAL	£23,593

TOTAL COSTS FOR ALL PHASES (including contingencies and fees) £73,438