



**Reigate & Banstead**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL  
Banstead | Horley | Redhill | Reigate

<b>SIGNED OFF BY</b>	Justine Chatfield, Head of Community Partnerships
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Isabel Wootton, Transformation Manager
<b>TELEPHONE</b>	Tel: 01737 276333
<b>EMAIL</b>	Isabel.Wootton@reigate-banstead.gov.uk
<b>TO</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee; Executive
<b>DATE</b>	Thursday, 15 July 2021 Thursday, 22 July 2021
<b>EXECUTIVE MEMBER</b>	Councillor Rod Ashford, Executive Member for Community Partnerships

<b>KEY DECISION REQUIRED</b>	Y
<b>WARDS AFFECTED</b>	(All Wards);

<b>SUBJECT</b>	Community Centres Transformation
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<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
<p>That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Notes the proposals for the community centres and makes any observations for consideration by the Executive.</li></ul> <p>That the Executive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Approve Option 1 and agree that the community centres in Banstead, Woodhatch and Horley will be operated by the Council as multi-use community centres.</li><li>ii. Agree that a programme of work commences to deliver multi-use community centres.</li></ul>

- iii. Agree to the allocation of £15k from Corporate Plan Delivery Fund Reserve in 2021/22 to deliver re-branding and marketing for the centres.
- iv. Note the development of a budget growth proposal of £71k for new staff resource through service & financial planning for 2022/23 onwards to deliver and sustain this change.
- v. Agree that the oversight of this change and decisions on the operating model and service offer should be delegated to the Head of Community Partnerships in consultation with the Executive Member for Community Partnerships.

## **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The community centres in Banstead, Woodhatch and Horley are significant, but partially underused council assets. They are currently used by a variety of occupiers and hirers and offer an older people's club where membership has declined over recent years. To reverse this decline the Council proposes to transform the centres into multi-use facilities that support the needs of all sections and age groups of the communities they serve, including older residents. The centres will be run in collaboration with local voluntary and community sector partners to provide for a greater focus on community enablement, a key aspect of the Corporate Plan.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The report sets out a vision that our 3 community centres, in Banstead, Woodhatch and Horley, become vibrant, multi-use community centres supporting the breadth of our community.

Extensive engagement work was completed between December 2020 and March 2021 to inform the future of the community centres. This work confirms the value of the current centres' offer to those who use them, but also the significant potential to broaden the offer to the wider community, with a particular focus on providing spaces for residents of all ages to connect and focus on their wellbeing. This broader approach for the centres is about adding to the current offer. It builds on good practice for community spaces, which highlights the importance of focusing on the needs of the local community and engaging them in shaping the offer.

This report therefore recommends Option 1 as set out in this report, that the community centres evolve into multi-use community centres, expanding their reach across the whole community whilst continuing to support older residents. The offer at each centre will be different to reflect the local community and each centre will have its own local development plan. There will be a strong focus on enabling volunteers of all ages to take roles in the

centres that reflect their own interests and sharing these with others. There will be increased collaborative working with other organisations to ensure a broad offer across the whole borough, as well as partnership working with local organisations looking to meet local needs. Our community development team will work closely with our community centres team to support this.

To deliver this vision the report recommends: a programme of work to deliver this change; the allocation of £15k from the Corporate Plan Delivery Fund Reserve in 2021/22 to deliver re-branding and marketing; and, the development and submission of a budget growth proposal of £71k through the service & financial planning process for 2022/23 onwards. This budget growth will allow for additional capacity in the team who will work on developing and promoting the centres. The ongoing budget growth (if approved) will also result in a significantly expanded offer for residents thus increasing the community benefit of the centres.

## **STATUTORY POWERS**

The Council has powers, under the Local Government Act 2000 to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of the Borough's residents.

## **BACKGROUND**

1. The community centres (Banstead, Woodhatch, Horley) operated for over 20 years on a partnership basis between the Council and three separate management committees. In September 2013 the Council Executive agreed to undertake a tendering exercise to procure a Community Centre contractor to operate the community centres. The outcome set for the procurement was to, "Appoint a partner organisation to operate the Council's community centres who will improve the overall range of services offered from the community centres and reduce the revenue costs of operating the centres." Following a tendering process Staywell, a charity specialising in older people's services, were awarded the contract.
2. The centres were operated by Staywell between April 2016 and March 2020. By mutual agreement this contract ended on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 and the running of the centres was brought back into the Council. The initial plan was to review the operation of the community centres over the summer of 2020 with the intention of setting a future vision for the centres in the Autumn of 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic these plans were delayed.

## **KEY INFORMATION**

**The case for change**

3. The primary driver for the change is to increase the community benefit delivered by the community centres to residents.
4. The consultation and engagement undertaken between December 2020 and March 2021 highlights the value that existing users place on the current community centre service. However, this engagement and wider research, also identifies that an “over 50s club” model is now regarded by some as outdated. The older population is growing in the borough but needs are diversifying. The average age of members of the centres is now 82 and membership levels, whilst still healthy at over 1,100 members, are reported to have declined over recent years.
5. Residents highlight in their responses to the community centre survey a wide range of activities and support they think could helpfully be provided from the centres. Residents are supportive of the centres providing older people’s activities. However, their top priority for the centres is the provision of services to support those of all ages experiencing loneliness and isolation. Whilst we can assume that there is a COVID-19 impact to this response it points to a strong desire for centres that enable people of all ages to connect.
6. Recent good practice and research points to the crucial importance in community spaces of service design and delivery with communities. Volunteering is also highlighted in research as a key route to wellbeing for people of all ages.

#### **What will multi-use centres mean**

7. The vision is for the centres to become vibrant multi-use centres. In moving to multi-use community centres the intention is to ensure that these are spaces that continue to meet the needs of older residents and also broaden their reach to the community as a whole. This will be locality based, the centres will seek to reflect the desires and needs of those in their area of the borough.
8. The operating model will focus on volunteer and community enablement, alongside partnership working. The centres already benefit from the significant support of volunteers and the Council will seek to broaden this with additional recruitment, training and support. We want to encourage volunteers of all ages to undertake roles that best reflect their interests and set up groups and activities for others where they wish to. Community Partnerships already has a strong track record of partnership working, with excellent connections to a large number of local stakeholders, providing opportunities to collaborate through the centres to improve outcomes for residents.
9. Centres will work closely with all areas of the Council reaching out to residents, with a particularly strong link to the community development team.
10. The focus on engagement includes the intention to work closely with all those with an interest in the centres including the former management committees. The model being explored is one of “friends” groups who inform centre activities and also fundraise.
11. The Council recognises that transport to the centres is a topic that a number of stakeholders have raised, noting transport was not a key barrier identified in the survey responses. The Council is keen to work in partnership with “friends” groups and others to put arrangements in place that will meet the needs of residents of all ages who wish to come to the centres but do not have existing transport options.

#### **Delivering the change**

12. The change will be managed as a project with workstreams delivering against key elements of the change, to include:
  - Centre specific development plans. As the approach is locality based each centre team is putting in place their own development plans, based around the needs of their own locality, working closely with community partnerships and wider partners.
  - Rebranding, communications and marketing. The consultation and engagement work identifies that residents don't know what the centres offer or if they do know of the offer they largely identify it as only being for older residents. We therefore need to re-brand the centres as centres for all and undertake an ongoing marketing and communications exercise.
  - Training and learning. We will support staff and volunteers at the centres to deliver the new approach, which will involve a range of training and learning opportunities.
13. The community centre project is managed through the People & Place officer Board. Subject to the agreement of the Executive to the recommendations in this report the project will complete the main delivery by the end of November 2021, including recruiting to the new staff posts.
14. It should be noted that the evolution of the centres will be ongoing beyond November 2021 and will involve an element of 'test and learn' as the centres establish what will work best and reflect resident needs and interests.
15. There are strong links to the Council's broader work on community development, wellbeing, older people's services and COVID-19 recovery as well as wider partnership work with Surrey County Council, NHS and other partners. Running the centres from within the Council allows us to work closely with, influence and respond rapidly to this wider agenda. The establishment of the food clubs at centres has already demonstrated this potential and exploratory partnership discussions with local voluntary organisations are already underway.

## OPTIONS

16. Option 1 – Approve the recommendations in this report and commence a programme of work to deliver multi-use centres – **This option is recommended.**
17. Option 2 - The Council could continue to operate the community centres under the existing "As Is" arrangements with a core focus on older residents. However, this is likely to limit improved service delivery and future efficiency. This option is not recommended.
18. Option 3 – The Council could undertake an external tender exercise to procure a Community Centre Service model on a new multi-use basis. However, the experience and learning from the recent contract is that this is not likely to achieve the benefits, in particular the wider community benefits, that the Council is seeking from the centres. This option is not recommended.
19. Option 4 - Cease delivery of service from community centres. It is realised that this option does not fit in with the Council's corporate plan or the responses from

residents through the recent surveys and is unlikely to be accepted. It is included for the sake of completeness only. This option is not recommended.

## LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

20. Section 2(1) of the Local Government Act 2000 enables the Council to use the power to promote well-being where it considers this will achieve any one or more of the following three objectives:
- a) the promotion or improvement of the economic well-being of its area
  - b) the promotion or improvement of the social well-being of its area
  - c) the promotion or improvement of the environmental well-being of its area
21. In operating multi-use community centres the Council is taking account of local circumstances and in particular the wishes and needs of the communities and residents that it serves.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

22. The Council is currently budgeting to spend £292k net to run the service in 2021/22. However, it should be noted that the income target is unlikely to be achieved due to the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic (this will be reflected in the quarterly budget monitoring forecasts).

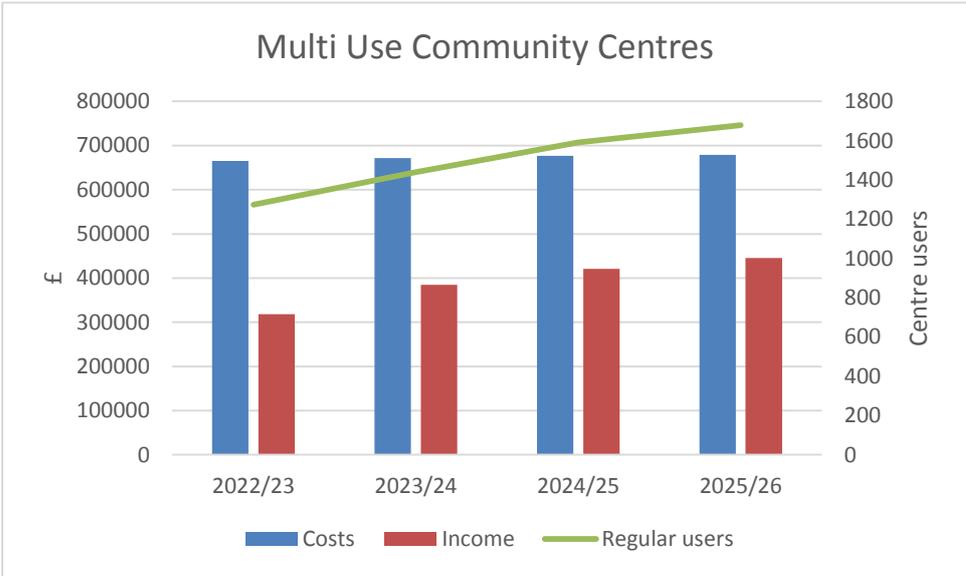
<b>Community Centres Service</b>	<b>Budget 2021/22 £</b>
Expenditure	592,700
Income	(300,600)
<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>292,100</b>

23. The Council is also budgeting to spend £83.2k from the Corporate Plan Delivery Fund to deliver the project in 2021/22 to cover the project manager salary and wider project costs.
24. To enable the centres to expand into multi-use centres reaching a wider number and breadth of the local community we are seeking approval to the allocation of a further £15k from the Corporate Plan Delivery Fund Reserve in 2021/22 to deliver re-branding and marketing for the centres. This is particularly to fund external expertise and materials to support a re-branding and re-launch of the centres and reflects the engagement and consultation feedback (see paragraph 12).
25. This report proposes the submission of a budget growth proposal of £71k through the service & financial planning process for 2022/23 onwards for new staff to start to deliver and sustain the change proposed in this paper. The additional growth is to cover the cost of a team leader post to lead the delivery of the centres and support wide-ranging engagement, a part-time promotions & engagement officer and a contribution to transport to enable work with local partners to contribute to solutions that support travel to the centres for those who could not otherwise do so.

- 26. This funding will allow the service to grow usage of the centres over the next four years and reach the wider community, significantly increasing efficiency and therefore reducing the net cost per regular user.
- 27. A financial comparison has been completed between Option 1 - Multi-Use Community Centres and Option 2 - continuing the "As Is" Offer.

**Option 1 – Multi-Use Community Centres**

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £
Expenditure	665,389	671,462	676,543	678,802
Income	(318,170)	(384,559)	(421,027)	(445,413)
<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>347,218</b>	<b>286,903</b>	<b>255,516</b>	<b>233,389</b>
Projected number of centre users	1,274	1,439	1,591	1,679
Net cost per centre user	273	199	161	139



28. The basis for the multi-use option is:

- The expenditure increases to reflect the increase in staff costs of £71k described above but also a small increase in variable costs linked to the growth of the centre e.g. the cost of food and consumables;
- The income growth comes from increases in the three main income lines for the centres: catering; activity income; and room hire. This is driven by a wider centre offer and increased promotion resulting in increased footfall;
- The wider centre offer and increased promotion result in increasing numbers of centre users from across the community. This will grow over time as the

centres change and become more well known. The ambition for new users reflects membership numbers that were reported previously, so we are confident the centres have capacity, albeit our new offer is a much wider one so we hope to attract a diverse group of users as the centres grow;

- The projections have been completed by centre, based on each of the centres pre-covid levels of usage and the potential for growth.

29. By contrast if we continue with Option 2 “As Is”, we expect to see members of an over 50s club and income gradually fall.

#### Option 2 – Continue “As Is” Offer

	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £
Expenditure	592,700	590,500	588,500	586,500
Income	(291,238)	(282,344)	(273,895)	(265,869)
<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>301,462</b>	<b>308,156</b>	<b>314,605</b>	<b>320,631</b>
Projected number of over 50s club members	995	946	898	853
Net cost per member	303	326	350	376



30. The basis for the “as is” option is:

- The expenditure decreases based on a small decrease in variable costs linked to the decreasing use of the centres e.g. the cost of food and consumables;

- The income decreases because the catering and activity income decrease as use of the centre decreases. The room hire income would remain as it is in the 2021/22 budget;
- The fall in the projected number of members is based on our understanding of member attrition over recent years based on the current over 50s club membership offer. Despite the current team's best efforts to recruit new members the nature of the current offer and the age of the current membership is resulting in attrition, here shown at 5%.

31. Comparison of the two options.

<b>Net Budget Requirement</b>	<b>2021/22 £</b>	<b>2022/23 £</b>	<b>2023/24 £</b>	<b>2024/25 £</b>	<b>2025/26 £</b>
Option 1 - Multi Use Centres	n/a	347,218	286,903	255,516	233,389
Option 2 – “As Is”	292,100	301,462	308,156	314,605	320,631
<b>Increased / (Decreased) Net Costs</b>	n/a	45,756	(21,253)	(59,089)	(87,242)

32. The comparison highlights that:

- the net budget for Option 2 is higher than the 2021/22 budget because we forecast that the income will slightly fall due to lower membership due to attrition, whilst costs remain largely the same because a large proportion of costs are fixed;
- the extra £71k requested for salary growth is included in Option 1 and increases the costs in this option but also drives income growth in comparison to Option 2.

33. A key financial risk to approving Option 1 – Multi-Use Community Centres is the forecast income growth and the extent to which this is achievable. This risk will be mitigated by close financial monitoring but also a ‘test and learn’ approach based on testing with users and partners which activities and offers are most successful, and best meet need, in which centres. This will allow us to identify further growth and therefore income streams as necessary.

**Property Management Considerations**

34. This paper focuses on the community centres service and related budgets. Community centre buildings are managed by the Council’s property team. They will continue to be responsible for maintaining the buildings, for utilities and equipment and for leases and tenancies for occupiers e.g. hairdressers.
35. The current property management budget for community centre buildings is summarised below and is intended to support maintenance of the buildings in their current condition rather than any significant refurbishment.

<b>Property Maintenance</b>	<b>2021/22 £</b>
Revenue Budget Allocation	167,000
Income (leases/tenancies at will)	77,000

36. Community centre buildings, to differing degrees, are 'tired' having not been substantially invested in over recent years. The property team will be reviewing, as part of their broader work programme, the potential for building refurbishment to ensure the centres remain fit for purpose and support delivery of Option 1, including considering as far as possible environmental sustainability targets.
37. If a requirement for additional property maintenance investment is identified, above the existing budget allocations, a business case will be prepared, and budget growth approval sought through the annual service & financial planning process.

### **EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

38. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed, in particular noting the respondents and results of the survey. The intention is to support greater diversity of usage in the community centres. A key recommendation is to ensure close links between the centres and community development colleagues and a wide range of community groups to grow usage in a way that reflects the wide range of needs of the community, this will be ongoing.

### **COMMUNICATION IMPLICATIONS**

39. The decision will be communicated to existing users and volunteers at the centres through newsletters and posters and to partners via a range of partnership channels. A public version of the consultation document will be published on the Council website and the centre pages of the website updated accordingly. Proactive lines will be prepared to confirm the new approach and the continued commitment to the centres.
40. As set out when describing the key project deliverables, the consultation and engagement work identifies that residents don't know what the centres offer or if they do know of the offer they largely identify it as only being for older residents. It is therefore crucial to re-brand the centres as centres for all and undertake a communications and marketing exercise. A proactive communications campaign to re-brand and market the centres and their offer is therefore planned to start from autumn 2021.

### **RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

41. A project risk register has been created and will continue to be actively updated and monitored throughout the life of the community centre project. In particular, as

noted in the financial implications section, there is a risk that the transformation and future operation may cost more than our initial projections or not result in the income growth or efficiency we are anticipating. This will be closely monitored by the Head of Community Partnerships in conjunction with the Head of Finance. If necessary, budget growth would have to be requested through the service & financial planning process as the scope of the development work required is confirmed.

## **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

42. In relation to the staffing of the centres the community centre project includes an HR workstream to deliver changes so that the staffing structure and job roles reflect the new focus on multi-use community centres. This will also include training and ongoing workshops.
43. This change does not involve a Full Time Equivalent (FTE) reduction, noting that subject to Executive agreement to the recommendations in this report there will be a small FTE increase (additional team leader and a part-time promotions & engagement officer).
44. However, with a new focus on delivering vibrant multi-use community spaces there will be a need to make changes in three areas. Firstly, many of the role descriptions are out of date and will require updating to reflect multi-use centres and the new approach. Secondly, the shift patterns of some roles may not meet the business need of multi-use centres and will be reviewed. Thirdly, some staff are not on current Council terms and conditions, it is not practicable from an equality perspective to keep staff on non-standard terms and conditions for the long term and therefore staff will be consulted on moving to Council terms and conditions, this will not have any detrimental impact on staff existing terms and conditions. A full consultation will be undertaken with staff later in 2021 on the proposed changes. No redundancies are anticipated, and all efforts will be made to avoid redundancies.

## **CONSULTATION**

45. A consultation and engagement exercise has been undertaken between December 2020 and March 2021 which has included: 121 interviews with centre users; focus group discussions involving users, hirers and partners; and, surveys of both residents and centre members and volunteers. Over 1,200 responses have been received to the survey. The engagement report is a background paper to this paper. A summary version of the survey responses will also be published on the Council website.
46. Regular meetings have been held with the Executive Member for Community Partnerships. The Executive Member has chaired meetings of a Community Centre All Party Consultative Group. Officers have met with the former management committees of the centres.
47. Further consultation is planned in 2021. In particular with staff to consider the detail of the new operating model and the staff roles that result from this. Also, COVID-19 guidelines allowing, further focus group style engagement residents and partners is planned in 2021 to refine the approach.

48. We continue to engage with a cross-section of partners who do, or are interested in, using the community centres to support the reach of their services into our communities.

### **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

49. The recommendations made here support the delivery of the Council's 2025 corporate plan. In particular the work will deliver against the People objectives to "Work with partners to create strong, safe and welcoming communities" and "Provide targeted and proactive support for our most vulnerable residents".
50. The corporate plan states the Council will "deliver community activities at our community centres around the borough". Noting that the community centres are also places from which the Council will support and work with community development, local community organisations and volunteers.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. Community Centres Survey Report Commentary
2. Community Centres Survey Slides
3. Equality Impact Assessment
4. Community Centre Outline Delivery Plan