

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 01 November 2021

Portfolio:	Leisure and Community
Subject:	Review of Community Buildings
Report of:	Director of Leisure and Community
Corporate Priorities:	Leisure opportunities for health and fun

Purpose:

To note the findings of the condition surveys of the Council's community buildings, understand the costs of necessary maintenance works identified in this process and consider the most appropriate allocation of resources to ensure the long-term maintenance of these important community assets.

Executive summary:

The Council owns 16 community buildings that act as a hub for its communities and are well-used for leisure and social activities.

In 2020 each building was surveyed to identify the maintenance to that facility that would be required over the following 5-year period. The findings of the surveys were refined to understand which works were necessary and the responsibility of the Council as detailed in the individual Leases.

The urgent works individually costing over £10,000 that were identified as the responsibility of the Council came to a total of £466,500. In addition, many smaller repairs were also identified that would be required to be carried out over the next 5-year period. These were identified as costing the Council £117,000 in total.

The Executive is asked to allocate funds from the Council's budget to enable the scheduling of the necessary significant repairs and the smaller revenue works to enable the Council to meet its maintenance responsibilities for its community buildings.

Recommendation/Recommended Option:

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (a) approves the allocation of up to £433,000 from the General Fund Revenue Reserve to establish a capital budget for the urgent significant repair works to the Council's community buildings, as identified by the Condition Surveys;
- (b) notes the potential works required to X-perience building, which will be subject to a separate report; and
- (c) notes the smaller necessary repairs, totalling £117,000, identified that are the Council's responsibility as detailed within the Leases held.

Reason:

To ensure the long-term sustainability of the Councils community buildings and to prevent excessive future costly repairs resulting from delayed maintenance.

Cost of proposals:

The capital cost of this proposal amounts to £433,000, to be met from the General Fund Revenue Reserve. Smaller repairs and maintenance will be contained within existing budgets.

Appendices: **Confidential Appendix A - Summary of Community Buildings Condition Surveys**

Background papers: **None**

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	01 November 2021
Subject:	Review of Community Buildings
Briefing by:	Director of Leisure and Community
Portfolio:	Leisure and Community

INTRODUCTION

1. The Council owns 16 community buildings, comprising of 10 community centres, 3 youth centres, a scout hut, a scrap store and a museum. Each of these is leased to a charity, trust or community association which oversees how each is run with the help of a committee.
2. The facilities are all unique, with variations in the following factors:
3. **Age of the building** – Three of the Council's community facilities originate from buildings first constructed in the 17th century; Crofton Community Centre (originally a school), Westbury Manor Museum (formerly the Council offices) and the Frosthole Scrap Store (designed as an isolation hospital). In comparison, the newest of the community facilities is Portchester Community Centre, which opened in 2012. This building was designed specifically for modern community use, containing a variety of rooms to accommodate the needs of any hirers.
4. **Size of facility** - The community buildings range in size from the sprawling Crofton Community Centre, which has 12 separate rooms for hire (including a Sports Hall and a Hall with a stage), to Fareham North West Community Centre, which currently has only one small hall for hire. The size of the facility has a direct impact on the amount of funds it is able to raise through room hire and the attraction of the centre for potential hirers.
5. **Management of the facility** – The larger community facilities have the ability to generate enough income to fund a Centre Manager, reception staff, caretakers and cleaners. For the smallest facilities, these important functions are often undertaken by a small handful of volunteers who are frequently also the building's committee members.
6. **Financial capacity of the organisation** – Whilst the size of the facility has an impact on the income that the centre can attract, the ability of the committee to demonstrate prudent financial management is arguably of greater importance to the long-term stability of the centre. Those that are most effectively managed hold healthy reserves which enable them to further improve their facilities. The facilities lacking good financial

management often fail to afford, or seek funding for, improvements and see reduced hiring levels as a result.

7. Despite the differences between the buildings, each provides an important hub for social and leisure activities, providing residents with the opportunities to remain physically and mentally healthy and connected with their communities. The wide variety of activities they offer include fitness classes, mother and toddler groups, bridge clubs, scouting and guiding groups, art groups, health and wellbeing sessions, youth clubs and home- schooling groups to name but a few.
8. The Council recognises the tremendous value of these community resources and has strong relationships with the people who run them, whether they are committee members or Centre Managers.
9. Once a year, the Leisure and Community Team undertake a 'Health Check' of the facility to make sure that they are being run safely and effectively. During these visits, records of servicing to such things as the centre's electrics, boilers, emergency lighting and fire alarms are checked, the charity's latest Fire Risk Assessment for the building is reviewed and Legionella practices are scrutinised. In addition, the structure of the committee for the community facility is reviewed and future improvement projects for the building are discussed.
10. The purpose of the visit is not purely about ensuring the safety of users but focusses also on identifying support that can be put in place to rectify any gaps in good practice, recruit new committee members where needed and consider external funding opportunities to make planned projects achievable.
11. Much of this support is provided with the assistance of One Community, the Council's Voluntary and Community Sector Organisation, who offer advice regarding volunteers, policies and external funding opportunities.
12. Every quarter, One Community holds a Community Buildings Network meeting which enables committee members and Centre Managers to come together to share best practice with regards to running community facilities.

BACKGROUND

13. In 2008, the Council carried out the last review of its community buildings. From this, a phased implementation plan was developed with the final identified works being completed in 2014. The Executive agreed a budget of £500,000 for these works, with further funding available from the Western Wards community infrastructure levy for larger projects.
14. Since this time, the Council has continued to fund any identified maintenance works on an ad hoc basis from the annual repairs and maintenance budget of £77,500. This budget has not been able to meet demand in recent years, with an overspend of £12,900 in 18/19 and £26,300 in 19/20.

COMMUNITY BUILDINGS REVIEW 2020

15. In 2020, the imminent need for some significant and costly repairs to several of the community facilities was flagged. The decision was made to conduct a thorough review of the state of repair of all the Council's community buildings, to gain an overview of the current position.

16. To support this approach, the Council's Property Team began extensive work to undertake a thorough review and assessment of each community building. Every element of each building was surveyed with details recorded of:
- The overall state of repair
 - Any necessary works that were identified
 - Who was responsible for the identified work, i.e. the Council or the Tenant?
 - The timescale that the works should be carried out within, and
 - The estimated costs of the works
17. In light of the current financial climate, only repairs that were both necessary and legally the Council's responsibility were considered. No other projects, such as those to improve the community facility's offer to its hirers, increase capacity or reduce carbon emissions, were considered.
18. This final point is to note when considering the Council's Climate Change Action Plan, that around 8% of the Council's carbon footprint comes from its community buildings. Although this is not within the remit of this report, the Council's Climate Change Action Plan commits to 'undertaking feasibility studies for how we can improve energy efficiency of our leisure and community centres going forward.'

RESULTS OF THE COMMUNITY BUILDINGS REVIEW

19. The review identified that within the next 5 years the community buildings require works which total over £1 million.
20. However, just over half of these costs are attributable to either the charity, trust or community association that constitutes the 'Tenant' in the Lease, as can be seen in the table below:

FBC Responsibility				Tenant Responsibility			
Urgent – <1 year	Poor 1-2 years	Fair 3-5 years	Total	Urgent <1 year	Poor 1-2 years	Fair 3-5 years	Total
£388,100	£113,805	£81,930	£583,835	£52,385	£308,758	£228,380	£589,523

21. Whilst the total cost of over £500,000 attributable to the charities appears at first to be excessive, it is important to note that this amount is split into varying proportions between the 16 buildings over a period of 5 years.
22. In addition, the majority of costs are anticipated after the first year, giving time for the Council and One Community to support the charities to budget for these expenses or, where possible, identify external funding opportunities.
23. The identified costs to the Council also appear high. However, these figures include three costly roof repairs (to Burridge Village Hall, Bells Lane Scout Hut and Whiteley Community Centre) and 2 boiler replacements (to Crofton Community Centre and

Westbury Manor Museum).

24. As a result of the nature of the particular works listed above, there will be some urgency to proceed with these repairs / replacements in the late Spring and Summer of 2022, as soon as weather permits.
25. The programme of work also includes £80,250 of works to the X-perience centre (comprising £11,500 to replace the boundary wall, £45,000 of substantial works to the building and the balance being routine repairs). The Executive has previously agreed to prepare a town centre masterplan, looking at opportunities for regeneration and new housing developments. Given the age/condition of the centre, its prime location and the plans for Fareham Live now being remobilised, it is felt prudent to pause the substantial works to this building until the masterplan work has been concluded. It is proposed, however, that the identified works to the boundary wall are supported to meet the Council's health and safety requirements. This is reflected in the proposal below.

PROPOSAL

26. This report proposes that the Executive allocate a capital budget of up to £433,000, to enable the necessary maintenance works on its community buildings to be carried out. The funding for the works will be drawn from the Council's General Fund Revenue Reserves, and if Officers are successful in securing external funding for any of the works, then the drawing from reserves will be reduced accordingly. The routine repairs and maintenance will be met from existing repairs budgets within the General Fund (amounting to £90,000 p.a.).
27. To ensure that the Council's community buildings remain in a good state of repair, it is also proposed that the annual Health Checks are extended to include a review of the state of the building. In this way, the Council has an up-to-date picture of the requirements of the community buildings and the ability to avoid costly urgent repairs in the future.

RISK ASSESSMENT

28. The community building reviews have been carried out with great diligence and with a healthy parameter built into the costs. However, it is important to note that this work was undertaken prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. Initial indications are suggesting an increase of approximately 8% in the cost of works because of the pandemic. As a result, the anticipated costs for the identified works may no longer be sufficient.
29. In addition, significant works to the older buildings may prove more complex than anticipated, which in turn may increase the cost of the project.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

30. The establishment of the capital budget of £433,000 can be met from General Fund Revenue Reserves, and the routine repairs and maintenance can be contained within existing revenue budgets.
31. Applications to alternative funding streams are currently being investigated for the boiler at Westbury Manor Museum and the works at Whiteley Community Centre. This may help to further reduce demand on the Capital Development Fund.
32. As previously mentioned, the works funded by the capital budget would be required as soon as a period of good weather can be guaranteed.

33. It is anticipated that for year 1 revenue works would cost in the region of £50,000, for year 2 the figure would be the same, but demand on this budget would reduce to £12,500 across the following 3 years.

CONCLUSION

34. The Council's community buildings are crucial assets, promoting health, wellbeing and social connections.
35. The proposal to allocate funds for the identified necessary maintenance works and ensure a regular review of the condition of the buildings will minimise future excessive costs on urgent repair works and safeguard their continued benefit to the communities.