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Cabinet

30 August 2016

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Education and Skills – Councillor Maton  
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People – Councillor Ruane

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Executive Director People

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

Connecting Communities Phase 2

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**Is this a key decision?**

**No** – although this matter affects all wards, as the proposals are for a period of consultation, the matter is not deemed to be a key decision.

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**Executive Summary:**

Bringing together children's centres and youth services into integrated early help family hubs for 0-19 year olds located in the areas of greatest need and reshaping the Council's library service are the central proposals in this report. This will enable the Council to target resources to greatest need in response to the very challenging financial situation it faces because of central Government reduction in the resources it is making available to the City Council.

The grant Coventry received from central Government has reduced by 44% from 2010/11 to 2016/17 and by 2020 this is estimated to reduce further to a 55% reduction. The budget for the People Directorate is 70% of the Council's net budget and so the services provided by the People Directorate needs to contribute significantly towards those savings.

The scale of grant cuts means the current delivery of services as is no longer sustainable. As a result of the Council's financial position and the needs of residents there needs to be radical changes in the delivery of services. This means working closely with residents and partners in new ways to maximise the total public funding that remains to support the most vulnerable in the city. The delivery of the savings programme described in this report contributes to the total savings required of £35million by 2017/18.

It is also likely that further savings across Council services will be needed in the future requiring more work to reshape how to achieve better outcomes for people in Coventry.

The Connecting Communities programme focuses on how services might be delivered differently in the communities and neighbourhoods where there is most need, and within the resources available. In February 2016, the Council's Cabinet approved implementation of Phase 1 savings of £1.2m full-year effect in relation to libraries, play centres, community centres, youth service commissioning and public conveniences. These proposals are on track to deliver the £1m savings target set for 2016/17 (and £1.2m on-going) as part of the original £5m savings target for City Centre First set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

Coventry's long term strategy is to focus on avoiding crude cuts through closer partnership working with statutory and voluntary agencies, and communities. The Connecting Communities approach is to work with others to redesign services that can be delivered within the resources available, focusing on supporting those areas that are most in need. Connecting Communities is the overarching transformational change programme for the Council's People Directorate which delivers a wide range of key frontline services to Coventry residents and as such further phases are likely to be forthcoming at a later point.

This report recommends moving into public consultation following a period of intensive engagement work with employees, partners, community and voluntary groups and residents on two specific proposals to deliver the remaining Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) target of £3.8m of the original City Centre First programme for 2017/18 which has now been incorporated into the wider Connecting Communities change programme.

### **Recommendations:**

Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve a period of consultation from 12 September 2016 to 12 December 2016 on two proposals to change the way that services are delivered in order to achieve savings of £3.8 million for 2017/18 as required by the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) original City Centre First Programme (now Connecting Communities Phase 2). The proposals for change for 2017/18 are:

#### **I - Family Hubs**

- i) To develop eight integrated family hubs for 0 to 19 year olds from the current children's centres and youth services, located in areas of highest need, specifically at the following current children's centres: Bell Green, Foleshill, Tile Hill, Radford, Moat House (Wood End), Middle Ride (Willenhall), Gosford Park and Hillfields.
- ii) For the Council to end children's centre provision from the following children's centres: Barley Lea (Stoke Aldermoor), Canley, St Augustine (Radford), Stoke Heath, Richard Lee (Wyken) and Spon Gate (Spon End) and to seek expressions of interest from schools, private, voluntary and independent (PVI) operators to provide nursery provision for 2, 3, and 4 year olds in the these children's centre buildings.
- iii) To end children's centre contracts with private, voluntary and independent providers at Tommies, Flutterbies and Valley House and also to investigate potential opportunities for efficiencies within the Children's Centre in the Hillfields area, which may become a family hub.
- iv) To end all Council directly provided term-time nursery provision in children's centres (Foleshill, Tile Hill, Radford, Moat House (Wood End), Middle Ride, Bell Green,

Barley Lea (Stoke Aldermoor), Canley and Stoke Heath) and to seek expressions of interest from schools, private, voluntary and independent (PVI) operators to provide nursery provision for 2, 3, and 4 year olds in the these children's centre buildings.

- v) To retain Council delivery of a targeted and specialist youth offer focused on young people who are hardest to reach and most vulnerable as part of the family hub model; and
- vi) To end Council provided universal youth work provision in the following 16 locations: Youth Centres: African Caribbean Centre for Young People (Freehold Street, Hillfields), Hillfields Young People's Centre (Yardley Street, Hillfields), Jardine Crescent Young People's Centre, On Target Youth Centre (Doe Bank Lane, Spon End), People's Place (Acorn Street, Stoke Aldermoor), Stoke Park Youth Centre, Whoberley Youth Centre, Wood End Youth Centre (The Venny); and Community venues at Bell Green Community Centre, Cheylesmore Community Centre, Hagar Community Centre, Henley Green Community Centre, Jubilee Crescent Community Centre, Stoke Heath Community Centre, Xcel Leisure Centre (Canley) and Baginton Fields School.

## **II - Libraries**

- vii) To develop sustainable, modern and comprehensive libraries as community hubs in three broad categories: core libraries, partnership libraries and community libraries.
- viii) To retain five core library services; Central Library, Bell Green, Foleshill, Stoke and Tile Hill with a reduced budget and increased self-service and volunteering opportunities as well as seeking to share space with partners wherever possible.
- ix) To develop partnership library services in Stoke Aldermoor, Canley, Hillfields, Radford (Jubilee Crescent) and Allesley Park with a reduced budget and through further investigation of opportunities to locate library services in the same buildings as community organisations or services and to make increased use of volunteering opportunities.
- x) To seek interest from organisations and community groups who wish to provide ancillary library provision in Caludon (Wyken), Cheylesmore, Coundon, Finham and Earlsdon and where this is not successful, to cease to provide libraries in these areas.

## **2 Approve the following recommendations for the transition fund:**

- Variations to the transition fund process to enable Officers to collaborate with stakeholders to encourage Expressions of Interest that will enable the delivery of proposals outlined above.
- Re-open the Transition Fund process to run in parallel with the consultation process and timescales described above.
- Recommendations for awarding to be covered through the report to the Cabinet on the outcome of the consultation process. Where this is in possible awards of Transition Fund will continue to be made by the Executive Director of Resources

**3** Approve the following recommendation for the community delivery requirements:

- To support officers continuing to develop the Council's requirements of organisations and community groups where activities move from being Council-led to being led by other organisations or community groups.

**List of Appendices included:**

Appendix A - Proposals for 2017/18 (Connecting Communities, Phase 2).

Appendix B - Community Requirements

Appendix C - Transition Fund administration process outline – revised version

Appendix D - Equality Consultation Analyses

Appendix E - Connecting Communities Programme Impact Analysis

**Other useful background papers:**

Connecting Communities – Cabinet Report – 26 November 2015

Connecting Communities – Cabinet Report – 23 February 2016

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No

**Will this report go to Council?**

No

## **Report title: Connecting Communities Phase 2**

### **1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 Connecting Communities replaced the previous City Centre First programme as a wide ranging programme of transformational change to enable city council resources to be prioritised in areas where there is most need, focusing on making the best use of statutory and voluntary sector organisations, groups and local communities.
- 1.2 To reflect the importance of delivering services effectively in neighbourhoods, Connecting Communities aims to:
- Transform the provision of public services by identifying existing community strengths, resources and aspirations in communities to deliver services differently;
  - Work with and support communities and organisations who want to develop and deliver alternative support and services in their communities;
  - Invest in ways of delivering high quality services;
  - Focus key services in areas of highest need; and
  - Deliver better services at lower cost.
- 1.3 The Council's budget setting report for 2016/17 includes the original City Centre First programme (first included in the MTFs for 2015/16 budget setting) of £1 million in 2016/17, rising to £5 million in 2017/18.
- 1.4 The report makes a series of recommendations relating to the progression of Phase 2 of the programme, including a recommendation to carry out public consultation on two proposals to deliver the remaining MTFs target of £3.8 million savings needed for 2017/18. If delivered, alongside those proposals that formed Connecting Communities Phase 1, this would meet the £5 million overall savings target discussed above.
- 1.5 The report further recommends improvements to the original process followed for award of Transition Funding, focusing on better collaboration between community groups and organisations. Feedback to date makes it clear that this is required to enable informed decision-making.

### **1.6 Connecting Communities – Phase 2**

- 1.6.1 In early July 2016, outline proposals for phase 2 were published, with a view to proactively seek feedback and suggestions from key stakeholders on how the proposals could be developed or improved. This engagement signifies the beginning of a process to enter into open dialogue with the public about the future of key areas of service delivery.
- 1.6.2 The proposals are described in detail in this report and focus on key changes to models of delivery of library services and support to children and young people aged 0 – 19 years and their families.
- 1.6.3 Since sharing these early proposals, targeted engagement has taken place with people and groups who have an interest in the future of the service areas directly affected by the proposed changes including library provision, children's centres, nursery provision and youth services.

This engagement has included:

- Workshops for both libraries and family hubs, attended by a total of 35 people representing 19 groups/organisations. Groups who expressed an interest in the Transition Fund during Connecting Communities Phase 1 were invited to attend these workshops along with others who have requested involvement in such discussions. The Council's record of discussion at these workshops has been published and can be seen here [http://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/41/community\\_and\\_living/2651/connecting\\_communities\\_programme/3](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/info/41/community_and_living/2651/connecting_communities_programme/3);
- Written communication to Head Teachers where Children's Centres are located on school sites to understand the appetite for further discussion about delivery of early years' provision. To date 6 of the 8 have responded and requested a meeting to explore further;
- Written communication to 110 Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector childcare providers to seek interest in further discussion about the delivery of early years provision on existing Children's Centre sites;
- Staff discussion with those staff directly affected by the proposals through staff meetings, briefings and workshops;
- 2 staff lunchtime briefings, offered to all Council staff, attended by circa 85 staff.
- Officer attendance at community meetings;
- Discussion and written responses to a number of direct enquiries to the Council to request information; and
- An event in the Wood End/Henley Green/Manor Farm area of the city to encourage honest discussion about how the Council, partner organisations and the local community could work together more effectively in the future, attended by 45 people. See section 1.6.12 for further information.

1.6.4 To date, one petition to save Coventry libraries has been registered with the City Council, with 7 signatures as at (8 August 2016). The petition wording is *"Coventry City Council has just revealed proposals that Caludon, Cheylesmore, Coundon, Finham and Earlsdon Libraries will shut if community groups do not take them on. Aldermoor, Canley, Hillfields, Jubilee Crescent and Allesley Park are also under threat as the Council want to make cuts of £1 million. But this is just a proposal! Let's make our voice heard by the Council and stop these changes. Libraries are the centres of our local communities and they support vulnerable people. Protect our childrens' education!"*. The petition can be viewed here <https://myaccount.coventry.gov.uk/Petitions>

1.6.5 A further two petitions have been registered with change.org. These petitions relate to the youth service and the libraries service, with 178 signatures and 358 signatures respectively, as at 8 August 2016.

1.6.6 The change.org youth service petition wording is *"The closure of youth centres in and around Coventry City will leave kids without places to go to have fun, make friends and socialise with the community. As a child myself who attends the xcel leisure centre which is one of the centres rumoured for closure I am utterly devastated and I will do everything and anything to prevent it. In the xcel leisure centre I attend Canley youth theatre a group which has inspired hope, laughter and tears. In the centre itself lies so many memories and I consider it as a home it is our centre and the Coventry City Council cannot close it down. Coventry City Council should research the great work Canley youth theatre has done and all the other groups which are in the centre to realise what an amazing effect it has on young people like myself. Not only would you be taking down a building you would be taking down a museum of living memories. People need to realise that not all kids are wreckless juveniles and our centre proves that. We have kids of all different backgrounds, races, religions and sexualities however we are all one big family and we all enjoy where*

*we are and what we do. We don't want this great sense of unity friendship, family taking away or the transferable skills we learn everything we attend. It will take away young people's spirits and it will diminish the strong community we share together. Please sign this petition to help this cause. Thank you".* The petition can be viewed here <https://www.change.org/p/coventry-city-council-stop-coventry-youth-centres-from-being-closed-down-and-turned-into-family-hubs>

(Note that this petition implies that the Xcel Leisure Centre would close. This is **not** the case and the Xcel Leisure Centre is not in the scope of Connecting Communities Phase 2. The recommendation in the Executive Summary of this report: I – Family Hubs vi), is to end Council provided universal youth work provision at the Xcel Leisure Centre Canley).

- 1.6.7 The change.org library service petition wording is **Save Coventry Libraries! Coventry City Council has just revealed proposals that Caludon, Cheylesmore, Coundon, Finham and Earlsdon Libraries will shut if community groups do not take them on. Aldermoor, Canley, Hillfields, Jubilee Crescent and Allesley Park are also under threat as the Council want to make cuts of £1 million. But this is just a proposal! Let's make our voice heard by the Council and stop these changes. Libraries are the centres of our local communities and they support vulnerable people. Protect our childrens' education!** The petition can be viewed here <https://www.change.org/p/coventry-city-council-save-coventry-libraries>

(Note that the wording for the libraries petition at paragraph 1.6.7 above is the same wording as the libraries petition at 1.6.4).

- 1.6.8 The final position with these petitions, along with any further petitions that may be received, will be reported to Cabinet along with the outcome of the consultation.
- 1.6.9 Feedback to date will be used to develop the proposals contained in this report and to inform work carried out during the proposed consultation. It is clear, overall, that while there are understandable concerns about the implications of the proposals there are good levels of interest from partners, community and residents groups and others in exploring how they might play a more active role in supporting or delivering services and support in local communities. This is dependent though on the Council providing clarity and detail about what is required. Feedback to date can be summarised as follows:

## **Libraries**

- There is a high level of anxiety in relation to the proposed library changes, evidenced through the response from the "Save Coventry Libraries" campaign which has included a number of protests over the summer.
- Community representatives require more detail about the Council's requirements of them if they are to consider a future role in library service delivery, including the areas that are not negotiable on the Council's part. Specifically, groups have asked about responsibilities for IT, property, book stock, library management systems, staffing, volunteers, insurance, key holders, management and more.
- There is a concern about the impact of a potentially reduced library service in South Coventry if the current proposals are implemented.
- It was suggested that there is an opportunity for libraries to generate income through library café's, by providing hot desks and meetings spaces for other organisations etc.

## **Family Hubs**

- Clarity is required about the operational delivery model, to improve people's understanding about how the model will work in practice including building occupancy and pathways through services where a range of partners will be working together.
- There is a recognition that the delivery timescale is tight and will require a commitment from all partners to enable delivery and to manage the impact of the changes that are proposed, specifically the impact on young people whose support may change/cease as a result.
- There is a concern about the potential impact on specific areas of the city, as the model is developed.

## **Youth Service**

- Some Youth Centres operate as a base for a range of community activities; not only as a centre for young people. This model could potentially be further developed and formalised to understand local community appetite to take responsibility for the building and support currently provided but also to encourage innovation.
- There is the potential for groups who work with young people to work together and for the Council to broker new relationships.
- There is an interest from groups working with young people to work across age ranges and explore opportunities for young people to work with older people to develop skills.
- There is recognition that community groups are often experienced fundraisers but need initial funding to kick-start new initiatives.

## **Staff have commented that:**

- There are concerns about personal impact but also impact on people that staff support.
- There is a suggestion that a transition process for providers is developed and support by Council staff, to enable skills and knowledge sharing.
- There has been a request for impact of changes and reductions across service areas to be considered as a whole rather than in isolation.
- Recognition is needed of potential improvements and benefits of proposals.
- There needs to be a focus on "partnership working" and not just "integrated working".

## **Overall**

- Assurances are sought about the long-term sustainability of proposals and how implementation and ongoing provision will be monitored.
- Concerns that the Council is spending money on "vanity projects" rather than other areas such as those impacted by the proposals described in this report. In response to this, a set of Frequently Asked Questions has been published here [http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/4303/faqs\\_on\\_savings\\_across\\_council](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/4303/faqs_on_savings_across_council)
- A range of views on the role of volunteers have been received, with some seeing volunteering as an opportunity for people develop skills and confidence and others being concerned that volunteers should be viewed as a replacement for paid staff. A City Council Volunteering Guidance document is being produced to support Council services who wish to promote volunteering opportunities.
- Recognition of opportunities for cross-fertilisation of ideas and use of resources including building spaces.
- Request for open and transparent discussion with the Council and honesty about services that may be at risk if communities do not play a greater, or sole, delivery role.



A range of suggestions were received in relation to areas for consideration as the proposals are consulted upon and further developed, including:

- The use of social media as a consultation tool including specific local community Facebook pages.
- Potential opportunities to work more closely with statutory sector partners, local universities and businesses (local and national) to seek interest in joint working across sectors, sponsorship of services as they develop, encouraging apprenticeships and volunteers.

1.6.10 Not all groups and individuals invited to take part in discussions have been available but most have asked to be updated as work progresses. A small number of groups have contacted the Council to confirm that they do not wish to engage with officers as they do not agree with the proposals and their engagement could be considered as support of what is proposed.

1.6.11 Engagement will continue over the summer and, subject to approval, will lead naturally into the proposed consultation period. Frequently asked Questions will be developed, and published, in response to questions raised during the engagement period and ongoing.

1.6.12 Engagement in the Wood End, Henley Green, Manor Farm area of the city to identify appetite for co-production and collaboration has taken place. This included an event attended by forty-five people representing community groups and organisations, the Cabinet Member for Education & Skills, the Cabinet Member for Community Development, ward councillors, Council services, Police, Fire Service, Whitefriars and other organisations with an interest in the area. Fourteen topics for collaboration were identified and representatives of communities have prioritised four areas to progress in the first instance: Co-production of a family hub and public health services for 0-19 year olds; Revitalising the Moat House Leisure and Neighbourhood Centre into a focal point for community activities and services; Safety and security; Extending existing local networks and positive activities to involve more vulnerable adults. Moat House Trust will continue to facilitate positive engagement between organisations and the wider communities. It will also work with the Council and other partners to evaluate this form of engagement with a view to rolling out good practice widely across the city.

1.6.13 It is proposed that a series of proposals are consulted upon in order to deliver 2017/18 savings originally outlined as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) City Centre First programme which are now incorporated into the wider Connecting Communities change programme.

## **1.7 Scope of Connecting Communities**

1.7.8 The scope of Connecting Communities Phase 2 includes:

- 17 libraries (including those within phase 1);
- Eight youth centres and youth services provided in seven community venues and 1 special school;
- 13 children's centres managed by the Council, 1 commissioned internally and three operated by the private, voluntary or independent (PVI) sector; and
- Nursery provision in nine Council-managed Childrens centres.

## **1.8 Delivering the financial requirement for 2017/18 (Connecting Communities – Phase 2)**

- 1.8.8 A description of each of the services included within Connecting Communities Phase 2, along with an outline of each of the proposals and rationale for these is provided below. Proposals are also provided in full in **Appendix A**. The table containing the individual financial impact is included at paragraph 2.2.2.
- 1.8.9 It is recommended that a period of consultation be undertaken to explore the following proposals whilst at the same time undertaking an equality impact assessment to consider the impacts of these proposals and whilst progressing conversations with groups and organisations interested in contributing and leading activities and services

## **1.9 Proposal 1 – Family hubs**

### **Service description**

#### **Children’s centres**

- 1.10.1 Children’s centres in Coventry provide children’s centre activities as part of the core offer for children aged 0 – 5 years old, five days a week (Monday to Friday) at a gross cost of £3.5m per year including property. As at July 2016, a total of 13,475 children were registered and attended sessions..

#### **Nurseries**

- 1.10.2 Nurseries in Coventry children’s centres provide 284 places for 2, 3 and 4 year old funded children, five days a week (Monday to Friday) at a gross cost of £0.9m per year. As at July 2016, a total of 237 children were registered at these nurseries.

#### **Youth Service**

- 1.10.3 The Youth Service provides youth work support in a number of ways and locations to young people, six days a week with universal (open access) provision generally in the evenings and more targeted support during the day at a gross cost £1.4m including property. As at July 2016, a total of circa. 2,700 young people were registered at the 16 youth centres and community venues and around 30 to 100 young people attend each session. In addition detached youth work is carried out in other locations.
- 1.10.4 Detailed information about current service provision across each of the areas described above is in Appendix A of this report.

#### **Proposals**

- 1.10.5 For the Council to develop an integrated model of family support through the development of a series of family hubs that will support people earlier and provide interventions that prevent the need for more intensive involvement by the City Council or other statutory agencies. This approach requires that some existing services will cease to be provided by the City Council in order to ensure that the Family Hub model is appropriately resourced and effectively targeted. Delivery of this proposal requires the following:
- i) To develop eight integrated family hubs for 0 to 19 year olds from the current children’s centres and youth services, located in areas of highest need, specifically

at the following current children's centres: Bell Green, Foleshill, Tile Hill, Radford, Moat House (Wood End), Middle Ride (Willenhall), Gosford Park and Hillfields.

- ii) For the Council to end children's centre provision from the following children's centres: Barley Lea (Stoke Aldermoor), Canley, St Augustine (Radford), Stoke Heath, Richard Lee (Wyken) and Spon Gate (Spon End) and to seek expressions of interest from schools, private, voluntary and independent (PVI) operators to provide nursery provision for 2, 3, and 4 year olds in the these children's centre buildings.
- iii) To end children's centre contracts with Private, Voluntary and Independent providers at Tommies, Flutterbies and Valley House and also to investigate potential opportunities for efficiencies within the Children's Centre in the Hillfields area, which may become a family hub. .
- iv) To end all Council directly provided term-time nursery provision in children's centres (Foleshill, Tile Hill, Radford, Moat House (Wood End), Middle Ride, Bell Green, Barley Lea (Stoke Aldermoor), Canley and Stoke Heath) and to seek expressions of interest from schools, private, voluntary and independent (PVI) operators to provide nursery provision for 2, 3, and 4 year olds in the these children's centre buildings.
- v) To retain Council delivery of a targeted and specialist youth offer focused on young people who are hardest to reach and most vulnerable as part of the family hub model; and
- vi) To end Council provided universal youth work provision in the following 16 locations: Youth Centres: African Caribbean Centre for Young People (Freehold Street, Hillfields), Hillfields Young People's Centre (Yardley Street, Hillfields), Jardine Crescent Young People's Centre, On Target Youth Centre (Doe Bank Lane, Spon End), People's Place (Acorn Street, Stoke Aldermoor), Stoke Park Youth Centre, Whoberley Youth Centre, Wood End Youth Centre (The Venny); and Community venues at Bell Green Community Centre, Cheylesmore Community Centre, Hagard Community Centre, Henley Green Community Centre, Jubilee Crescent Community Centre, Stoke Heath Community Centre, Xcel Leisure Centre (Canley) and Baginton Fields School.

## **Rationale**

### **Overview**

- The proposals described above, within the context of the national direction for funding of local authorities, will focus resources in those areas, and on those families who are in the highest need.
- Family hubs will be part of the Council's early help offer, ensuring that families most in need are able to easily access the co-ordinated support they need, when they need it.

### **Children's Centres and Nurseries**

- The aim of the proposals is to use buildings more effectively to optimise the number of available and funded nursery places for 2, 3 and 4 year olds across Coventry and to increase take up of these places, particularly in areas of disadvantage.
- Engagement with Private Voluntary and Independent nursery providers to date indicates that there is a good appetite from them to deliver increased nursery provision meaning that the Council could end direct delivery of nursery provision.

### **Youth Service**

- The Council will retain a targeted youth support service that is a key component of the Council's Early Help Offer.

- Council-provided youth services are provided free of charge with universal access to young people. Many other activities take place across the city and only circa 2,700 young people of a total circa 32,000 in the city currently access the Council service each year.

## **1.11 Proposal 2 – Libraries**

### **Service description**

The City Council has a duty to provide “a comprehensive and efficient library service” to the people of Coventry. It is for the Council to determine what constitutes a comprehensive and efficient service, whilst having regard to the relevant legislation and guidance.

Currently Coventry discharges this responsibility through the provision of 17 libraries (including phase 1 libraries) located across the city. Total service usage figures for 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 are as follows: visitors: 1.59m; issues: 0.96m; computer sessions: 291k; registered users: 80k. More details are available in Appendix A of this report.

With the advent of new technology and people accessing libraries for much more than book loans, the opportunity exists to consider how library services within the city can be modernised and provide an appropriate service with a reduced resource base.

### **Proposals**

The proposals are:

- vii) To develop sustainable, modern and comprehensive libraries as community hubs in three broad categories: core libraries, partnership libraries and community libraries.
- viii) To retain five core library services; Central Library, Bell Green, Foleshill, Stoke and Tile Hill with a reduced budget and increased self-service and volunteering opportunities as well as seeking to share space with partners wherever possible.
- ix) To develop partnership library services in Stoke Aldermoor, Canley, Hillfields, Radford (Jubilee Crescent) and Allesley Park with a reduced budget and through further investigation of opportunities to locate library services in the same buildings as community organisations or services and to make increased use of volunteering opportunities.
- x) To seek interest from organisations and community groups who wish to provide ancillary library provision in Caludon (Wyken), Cheylesmore, Coundon, Finham and Earlsdon and where this is not successful, to cease to provide libraries in these areas.

### **Rationale**

1.11.1 The proposed approach is in line with the national direction of partnership with local communities and based on levels of deprivation, usage and building condition. The proposal also takes into account the level of potential local community appetite to play a role in future delivery.

## **1.12 Developing integrated services**

- 1.12.1 The council wants to work with communities and organisations of all types to build on some of the good work that is already there to provide universal accessible and integrated services. This would ensure effective targeting of reduced council resource to meet statutory obligation and enable council resource to be targeted on the most vulnerable. The council would facilitate, where necessary, communities and organisations to work together to achieve good quality outcomes for people living in local neighbourhoods.
- 1.12.2 Connecting Communities Phase 2 seeks to build upon existing partnership working in Coventry to move towards integrated community based approaches, ensuring that the benefits for local people are felt before problems escalate and become more costly.

## **1.13 Use of Transition Fund**

- 1.13.1 As part of the 2015/16 budget setting process the Council agreed to establish a one-off £500,000 Transition Fund to support work with residents and communities in developing new approaches to delivering Council services. This fund was increased to £525,000 following a merger with the Community Grant Fund.
- 1.13.2 Initial expressions of interest (EOI) in the fund were invited from groups and organisations during Phase 1 of Connecting Communities and 37 were received in total. To date only one award had been made from the fund, this is because:
- Some EOI's did not relate to Connecting Communities phase 1
  - Some did not demonstrate how long term cost savings could be delivered or how the proposal mitigated the impact of service reductions
  - There was a lack of clarity from the Council about what would be included within the scope of phase 2

Groups or organisations that expressed an interest in the Transition Fund relating to Phase 2 proposals will be invited to engage with the Council to explore and better understand how these might be progressed.

- 1.13.3 It was also recognised that a very structured and formal process was followed for Transition Fund awards but that this was not very conducive to encouraging innovative and viable proposals from local communities.

Following this feedback, it is proposed to re-open the Transition fund process during the proposed consultation period but to take a more collaborative and less formal approach. This process is described in detail in **Appendix C** of this report.

Though less formal, prior to making any recommendations to inform decisions on award, rigorous work will be completed to seek assurances that proposals are viable and sustainable on a long-term basis. This will draw on the experience those local authorities who have successfully managed the transition to community involvement in library provision.

## **1.14 Council requirements and “offer” to support future delivery models**

- 1.14.1 A key theme that has emerged from engagement to date is the requirement from local communities, groups and organisations to be better informed about the services that they may wish to take responsibility for. There are a number of areas that require consideration when considering this approach, and these are covered in Appendix B.

- 1.14.2 It is not proposed to develop a one size fits all approach to this and is anticipated that the exact model is generated through engagement with interested parties. The consultation period will be used to develop this work to enable information to be shared about the range of support that may, or may not, be available, dependent on the service, specific proposal and community offer.
- 1.14.3 Depending on which model is adopted there could be ongoing costs and risks for the Council, and ultimately this will need to inform what we agree with community organisations and other organisations. Delivery of the ongoing overall savings target will need to be a major consideration in decisions taken around alternative delivery, otherwise proposals will be unviable. Recommendations on next steps with this work will be reported to Cabinet along with the outcome of the consultation.

## 2 Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 It is recommended that a period of consultation be undertaken to consider the proposals that have been outlined above in respect of Connecting Communities Phase 2. In respect of the proposed consultation it is recommended that the preferred option on which to consult is Option 1 below, however one other option has been explored and it is proposed that this is also referenced within the consultation to enable stakeholders to provide an informed response.

### 2.2 Option One – Preferred option

- 2.2.1 To redesign of a number of Council services to deliver integrated services in partnership with local communities (Phase 2).

#### Connecting Communities Phase 2 - Delivering the financial requirement for 2017/18

- 2.2.2 A number of changes and service reductions are recommended, which provide an opportunity to test different ways of working through exploring potential alternative community delivery models for specific proposals. If fully implemented a saving of £3.8million would be realised, comprising of:

**Table 1 – delivering the financial requirement for 2017/18**

Proposal	Recommended Changes	2017/18 Saving (Full Year Effect)
<b>1.</b>	<b>To develop integrated family hubs for 0-19 year olds, located in areas of highest need</b>	
1a	Children's Centres/Nursery	£2.2m
1b	Youth Service	£0.6m
<b>2.</b>	<b>To develop sustainable, modern and comprehensive libraries as community hubs</b>	
2a	Libraries	£1.0m
<b>Total 2017/18 Budget Reduction</b>		<b>£3.8m</b>

## **2.3 Option Two**

- 2.3.1 The Council has considered the do nothing option, which would involve not making the planned savings from those services included within the scope of the programme and plugging the resultant gap from other sources. However, this is not recommended as a viable option for the reasons covered below.
- 2.3.2 If all the Council's planned savings are delivered, there is still a £10.5 million shortfall in the 2017/18 budget rising to £34 million in the medium term. By rejecting the savings considered in this report, this would add additional funding pressures for the 2017/18 budget and beyond. The Council has already implemented a large number of proposals to make cuts across a wide range of its services and will continue to do this as part of its on-going and future budget setting processes.
- 2.3.3 There have been tight Government imposed limits on the amount that the Council has been able to raise through council tax and the Council has approved rises very near to the maximum allowed in recent years. It is not viable for the Council to use reserves to meet this saving target because reserves represent a one-off resource and all the Council's reserve balances are earmarked for existing purposes. Neither is it possible to manage savings from the sale of Council assets because these generate one-off capital receipts which cannot be used to fund on-going revenue spend.
- 2.3.4 The Council's 2016/17 budget was set following a reduction in its main Government grant from 2015/16 levels of £16m (11%). In overall terms, the level of Government funding has reduced by around £754 for every Coventry household between 2010/11 and 2016/17. By 2018, the Council is expecting to have suffered nearly a 50% cut in its grant from Government since 2010 and an equivalent fall in its net budget of around 25%. These circumstances are making it increasingly difficult for the Council to balance its budget and it has to consider all areas of expenditure to do this. These include reviewing the Council Tax support scheme, reviewing voluntary sector grant funding and other savings across the customer journey and doing things differently programmes established at 2015/16 budget setting. As a result of these measures the Council will have seen a reduction of its work-force of approximately one-third since 2010.
- 2.3.5 The savings required for connecting communities (phases 1 and 2) represent 7% of the Council wide saving programme for the 15/16 – 17/18 MTFs, and 12% of the total savings required from the People Directorate. If this option is rejected then this will require greater reduction in other areas where there is already significant budget pressures and increasing demand.
- 2.3.6 Connecting Communities principles reflect the need to transform the provision of public services by identifying existing community strengths, resources and aspirations in communities to deliver services differently and this is important irrespective of the financial demands.
- 2.3.7 Taking all this into consideration, the Council's view is that a do nothing option is not appropriate and that it is reasonable to seek ways to rationalise those services included within the programme.

## **2.4 Recommended Option**

- 2.4.1 To undertake a period of consultation in respect of Phase 2 of Connecting Communities.

### **3 Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 This report seeks approval to undertake consultation. The outcome of engagement to date is described in section 1.6 above.

### **4 Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1 Public consultation on delivery of savings required for 2017/18 will begin on 12 September 2016 for a period of circa 90 days, ending on 12 December 2016.

### **5 Comments from Executive Director of Resources**

#### **5.1 Financial implications**

- 5.1.1 The financial implications have been included throughout this report. This section provides a brief summary.

- 5.1.2 The recommendations in this report will enable achievement of the remaining £3.8million savings target allocated to the original City Centre First programme as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. See table 1 in section 2.2.2.

- 5.1.3 The financial assumptions relating to delivery of the £3.8m in 2017/18 are that a full year saving (including property) can be achieved. Any delays in delivery will reduce the level of financial savings that can be achieved in 2017/18. The level of savings that can be achieved have been calculated based on current proposals and a number of assumptions around alternative delivery. As highlighted a number of the considerations will have a financial impact, and assumptions made will need to be tested through engagement and consultation, and refreshed based on finalised recommendations. Delivery of the ongoing overall savings target will need to be a major consideration in decisions taken around alternative delivery, otherwise proposals will be unviable.

- 5.1.4 Investment in the Council's digital offer is currently being funded by existing budgets. The Council is not expecting to make any significant capital investment in corporate property as part of these proposals, neither is it expecting to be in receipt of significant capital receipts. Any capital investment considered following the recommended period of engagement will need to be funded from further savings as a result of the implementation of this strategy. Without identification of further savings or capital receipts this would generate capital pressures.

- 5.1.5 The remaining Transition Fund will be used to support Council stakeholders in accessing one-off funds. The fund will be accessed where; following consultation and engagement with stakeholders, expressions of interest are made that will deliver on-going savings for the Council.

#### **5.2 Legal implications**

- 5.2.1 The proposals outline a number of significant changes to the way in which the Council delivers services to the population of the city, whilst continuing to comply with its statutory responsibilities.

- 5.2.2 Public authority decision makers are under a non-delegable on-going duty to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not (Public sector equality duty - s 149(1) Equality Act 2010).



- 5.2.3 The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.
- 5.2.4 Decision makers must be consciously thinking about these three aims as part of their decision making process with rigour and with an open mind. The duty is to have “due regard”, not to achieve a result but to have due regard to the need to achieve these goals. Consideration must be given to the potential adverse impacts and the measures (if any) that are available to minimise any discriminatory effects.
- 5.2.5 The proposed consultation and resulting updated equality assessment is intended to enable the decision makers to consider the impact and public response to the proposals and any alternative proposals raised. The product of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when the ultimate decision is made.
- 5.2.6 In respect of proposals around library provision S.7 Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 creates a duty upon local authorities to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons. In fulfilling its duty local authorities should have consideration to the desirability of securing adequate stock and encourage people to make full use of the service.
- 5.2.7 In respect of children centres the Childcare Act 2006 places specific duties on local authorities for arrangements to be made so that there are sufficient children’s centres, so far as reasonably practicable, to meet local need. A children’s centre should make available universal and targeted early childhood services either by providing the services at the centre itself or by providing advice and assistance to parents (mothers and fathers) and prospective parents in accessing services provided elsewhere. Local authorities must ensure that children’s centres provide some activities for young children on site.
- 5.2.8 The Act further imposes a duty on local authorities to ensure there is consultation before any significant changes are made to children’s centre provision in their area. Particular attention should be given to ensuring disadvantaged families and minority groups participate in consultations. The consultation should explain how the local authority will continue to meet the needs of families with children under five as part of any reorganisation of services. It should also be clear how respondents’ views can be made known and adequate time should be allowed for those wishing to respond.
- 5.2.9 The Childcare Act 2006 places a duty on local authorities to make arrangements to secure that early childhood services in their area are provided in an integrated manner<sup>3</sup> in order to facilitate access and maximise the benefits of those services to young children and their parents. In discharging this duty, local authorities must have regard to the Statutory Guidance Early Education and Childcare 2006. In discharging this duty, local authorities must have regard to the Statutory Guidance Early Education and Childcare 2006.
- 5.2.10 Section 17(1) of the Children Act 1989 Act imposes on local authorities a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in their area who are in need by providing a range and level of services appropriate to those children’s needs.
- 5.2.11 Section 11(2) of the Children and Families Act 2004 Act applies to a local authority, it imposes a duty to make arrangements for ensuring that its functions of are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 5.2.12 In respect of Youth Services, s.507B of the Education Act 1996 imposes a duty on local authorities so far as reasonably practicable to secure access to sufficient education and

recreational leisure activities for young persons aged 13-19 and certain persons aged 20-24. Such activities must be for the improvement of the well-being, personal and social development of young people.

- 5.2.13 Again, there is a duty on local authorities to consult with young people in relation to changes in youth services provision. Local Authorities must ensure that the views of minority groups and those currently least likely to engage in positive activities are well represented within any consultation. Good quality information about the consultation process and support for young people to participate in the consultation must be provided. Local Authorities must also have regard to the Statutory Guidance on Positive Activities.
- 5.2.14 Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 ('the 1999 Act') and the statutory guidance issued under it imposes a duty on a local authority to 'make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness'. Section 3(2) requires a local authority to consult various people 'for the purpose of' deciding how to fulfil the duty imposed by section 3(1). In deciding how to fulfil that duty, and in making decisions about consultation, a local authority must have regard to guidance issued by Secretary of State.
- 5.2.15 Statutory guidance sets out clear expectations for councils who are considering changing funding to local voluntary or community groups that authorities should seek to avoid passing on disproportionate reductions by not passing on larger reductions to the voluntary and community sector and small businesses as a whole than they take on.
- 5.2.16 There will be other legal implications depending on the final proposal following consultation and these will be highlighted in the implementation report (e.g. TUPE, leases, grant awards etc). The Council will need to demonstrate that the final proposals are sufficient to meet the Council's statutory duties in relation to each service.

## **6 Other implications**

### **6.1 How will this contribute to the Council's priorities?**

<http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan>

The Connecting Communities programme, subject to consultation, will make a positive contribution to the council's priorities, particularly in relation to: a prosperous Coventry; citizens living longer, healthier, independent lives; making Coventry an attractive and enjoyable place to be; ensuring that children and young people are safe, achieve and make a positive contribution; encouraging a creative, active and vibrant city; developing a more equal city with cohesive communities and neighbourhoods.

### **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

A Connecting Communities Programme Delivery Board meets on a monthly basis with cross Council Directorate representation. The Board is supported by an operational group that meets fortnightly to progress actions and manage identified risks. A project risk register has been established for the programme of work. Key risks identified include potential cost, and other, implications of the Council's requirement and "offer" to support community groups and organisations and as described in section 1.14 above, the pace of change required in line with budgetary savings requirements, the need to fully investigate the appetite of others to provide support and services currently provided by the Council. Risks will continue to be identified, mitigations sought and impact managed through this process.

### **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

### **Financial impacts**

The current recommendations will achieve the remaining target of £3.8m in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy targets for 2017/18.

### **Staffing impacts**

The specific proposals for Connecting Communities Phase 2 2017/18 will impact on staff in different ways; there are likely to be staffing reductions in some cases and changes to working hours in others. The proposed changes in library services would lead to a reduction of circa. 30 Full Time Equivalents (FTE); a reduction of circa 23 FTE in children's centres, a reduction of approximately 33 FTE in nurseries and a reduction of circa 12 FTE in Youth Services. Impact on staff within support services will also need to be quantified as part of the implementation process. Staff and trade unions will be fully consulted on the specific content of the proposals for 2017/18 and any subsequent proposals for implementation. Any changes will be managed in accordance with the City Councils' agreement on management of change which aims to manage staffing reductions through management of vacancies, reviews of temporary contracts and avoidance of compulsory redundancies through redeployment or Early Retirement Voluntary Redundancy opportunities where possible.

## **6.2 Equalities / EIA**

Proposals for delivery of savings in 2017/18 (Phase 2) cover libraries, children's centres, nurseries and the youth service. An analysis of equality impacts has been completed for each of the elements of the Phase 2 proposals. Initial Equality Consultation Analysis (ECA) documents for the services that are impacted are attached in **Appendix D** to illustrate the current understanding of the potential impact of implementation of these proposals. ECA's will be developed further during the proposed consultation process. An ECA for the Connecting Communities Programme is provided in **Appendix E**.

## **6.3 Implications for (or impact on) the environment**

None

## **6.4 Implications for partner organisations?**

The programme of work described focuses on changing the current relationship that the Council has with local communities in Coventry, as well as partner organisations, the community and voluntary sector. Subject to the outcome of consultation and engagement, it is envisaged the work will result in closer working and more shared responsibilities and ultimately a transformation of community and partnership working in the city.

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