

Appendix 1: Connecting Communities Phase 2 - Interim Consultation Report (October 2016)

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on activity undertaken so far, during the consultation process for Connecting Communities Phase 2. The report outlines the approach taken and feedback to date.

2. Background

The Connecting Communities Programme focuses on how services might be delivered differently in the communities and neighbourhoods where there is most need, within the resources that are available.

Connecting Communities Phase 2 comprises of two key proposals:

- To develop integrated family hubs for 0 – 19 year olds, located in areas of highest need and;
- To develop sustainable, modern and comprehensive libraries as community hubs.

A period of informal engagement on these outline proposals took place during July and August 2016. Further to this, public consultation commenced on 12 September 2016 and will end on 12 December 2016.

A range of consultation activity has taken place, and is planned, with stakeholders. This is to ensure that those stakeholders most impacted by the proposals, should they be implemented, have an opportunity to share their views and influence future service delivery models.

Appendix A outlines the consultation approach taken for each proposal and feedback to date. An update on progress with discussions about local community groups and organisations playing a greater role in the delivery of support and services is also provided.

3. Consultation Overview

The consultation has been promoted through:

- Social Media – Facebook, Twitter
- Website and use of the Council's website banner
www.coventry.gov.uk/connectingcommunities
- Contact with service providers, partnership board members
- Posters and consultation corners in children's centres, youth centres and libraries
- Letters to people using mailing lists
- Leaflets outlining the proposals
- "How to Get Involved" sheets – translated into 10 languages
- Communication to Elected Members
- Community engagement

All individuals, groups and organisations contacted or spoken to, have been actively encouraged to share information about the proposals and the consultation with other interested parties. Presentations from workshop discussions, information about how community groups and organisations can get involved in the consultation or in the provision of services in the future is available on the Connecting Communities webpages, along with current service provision financial information, service factsheets and detailed information about libraries and youth services.

In total, as at the end of week commencing 17th October, over 8,000 people have been contacted by letter or e-mail, circa 40 consultation meetings have taken place with over 350 attendees. In addition, the Connecting Communities webpages have been viewed circa 6,200 times.

Individuals and organisations are invited to take part in the consultation in a variety of ways, including attendance at workshops and meetings, completing survey responses (online or in hard copy), through telephone discussion or email contact. People are actively encouraged to share their views in any way and as many times as they choose.

This note provides an overview of feedback to date, and should be read in this context. The report does not seek to reach any conclusion about the outcome of the consultation or the impact that consultation feedback received to date may have on current proposals. Final analysis of feedback will be completed when the consultation has ended but will be a culmination of analysis completed throughout the process. Final proposals will be taken to the City Council's Cabinet as a set of recommendations, informed by the consultation, for consideration and approval. The Cabinet Report will be made publically available in line with the Council's reporting procedures.

4. Feedback to Date

An overview of feedback to date, is provided below (in no particular order):

- Respondents have commented on service access issues, suggesting that access could be significantly impacted upon and that travel costs could increase.
- General concerns about the implications of implementation of the proposals, including from staff and communities about potential job losses and how services might be delivered differently.
- Concerns that future service provision could be reduced and overstretched, due to increased demand or a reduction in staff.
- Good levels of interest from community/resident groups and others in exploring how they might play a more active role in supporting or delivering services in local communities.
- Ongoing queries around the support that community groups would be given by the Council, if they were to take on responsibility for service delivery e.g. training and volunteer support.

Analysis of consultation feedback is completed and Frequently Asked Questions are reviewed and refreshed on an ongoing basis during the consultation.

Clarification about the nature and potential impact of all of the proposals will continue to be provided during the consultation process to ensure that they are fully understood and that people are able to meaningfully share their views.

As part of the consultation, we continue to encourage alternative suggestions and ideas to deliver the required £3.8m savings target associated with Connecting Communities Phase 2.

5. Equalities

Initial Equality Consultation Analysis (ECA) documents were produced prior to the start of the consultation process. These will be reviewed and updated during and following the consultation to reflect any additional information received about the potential impact of the proposals, specifically on those groups of people with protected characteristics.

The equalities question on the consultation survey uses a tick box format (with an open ended comment box). Respondents are more likely to answer tick box questions than open ended questions, however, this format of question allows respondents who are against the proposals to emphasise the negative impact by ticking all the protected groups. Further detail on emerging equalities themes to date can be found in **Appendix A**.

6. Statutory Requirements

The Council recognises its statutory duties in these service areas and has carefully considered the proposals for libraries and family hubs (children's centres and youth service) to ensure that in the event the decision is made to change the way in which these services are delivered; including potentially reducing the level of service provision, it will continue to meet the statutory requirements.

7. Summary

Feedback on the proposals is actively encouraged up to the end of the consultation period.

8. Outline Timescales

- **12 September to 12 December 2016** – Consultation on proposals and savings
- **February 2017** – Cabinet decision on final recommendations following public consultation
- **April 2017** – Commence implementation

Consultation feedback is reviewed and analysed regularly throughout the duration of the consultation period, it is therefore anticipated that final recommendations will be made shortly after the consultation period has ended.

Appendix A – Consultation Feedback Overview

Proposal 1 - To develop integrated family hubs for 0 – 19 year olds, located in areas of highest need

1) Consultation Overview

Feedback on this proposal has been sought through:

Workshops for local communities potentially impacted by the proposals in 13 locations across the city (with some of these also seeking feedback on the libraries proposal). 5 workshops have taken place to date with approximately 30 members of the public in attendance.

Staff meetings - 4 have taken place to date, with approximately 90 staff in attendance.

Discussion with school Head Teachers. There have been 7 specific meetings with schools to date and further meetings are planned.

A total of 195 consultation responses have also been received (87 for children’s centres and nurseries and 108 relating to the youth service). Some of these represent the views of more than one person, where a response has been submitted to record the outcome of feedback from a group of people or organisations.

Furthermore, there are consultation areas in all Children’s Centres and Youth Centres with information about the proposals and ballot boxes where completed surveys can be posted.

A consultation workshop has taken place with key partners, which will be instrumental in shaping service delivery within the proposed Family Hubs – 27 people attended including representatives from Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust, the voluntary sector including Ignite and Voluntary Action Coventry, West Midlands Police, Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group (CRCCG) and University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire.

2) Feedback to Date

Key feedback themes emerging in relation to the **Children’s Centres and nurseries** elements of the Family hub proposal include:

- Potential for increased access difficulties and longer distances to travel
- Concern about the loss of, or over stretched, services
- Concern about the potential for a detrimental impact on children’s development
- Queries about the Local Authority’s ability to meet statutory requirements
- Mixed views regarding the potential for enhanced partnerships with communities

Key feedback themes emerging in relation to the **Youth Service** element of the Family hub proposal include:

- Concern that crime could increase and that there will be nowhere for young people to go
- A view that other organisations could keep youth work going with support from the Council, at least at the start.

3) Equality Analysis

Emerging equalities impacts identified to date are provided below:

Children's Centres and Nurseries

- Young people are recorded as being negatively impacted, although responses are unclear about how.
- A perceived negative impact on pregnant/breastfeeding women relating to concerns about loss of key services and valuable support offered through Children's Centres
- The impact on disabled people in relation to concerns about difficulties with access and the distance to travel to proposed family hubs

Youth Service

- Negative impact on young people
 - Loss of services and opportunities for young people's development
 - Suggestion that this will lead to an increase in antisocial behaviour
- 2 responses specifically relate to loss of service for young people with special educational needs and disabilities
- Relatively high negative impact recorded for people of particular race/ethnicity and people with disability, but not explained in comments

4) Petitions

We are aware of 1 petition (relating to the Family Hubs proposal) which is currently listed on the change.org website. This has 336 signatures as at 24th October 2016. The petition states:

"Stop Coventry youth centres from being closed down and turned into family hubs".

5) Emerging Opportunities

Early indications suggest that there is a good appetite from local schools and Private, Voluntary and Independent Sector (PVI) organisations to deliver some Council run nursery provision and youth activities.

Proposal 2 - To develop sustainable, modern and comprehensive libraries as community hubs.

1) Consultation Overview

Feedback on this proposal has been sought through:

Drop-in sessions and meetings for staff and the public at all 16 libraries across the city. A total of 19 have taken place to date, with approximately 18 staff and 220 members of the public in attendance.

A total of 197 consultation responses have also been received. Some of these represent the views of more than one person, where a response has been submitted to record the outcome of feedback from a group of people or organisations.

There are also consultation areas in the libraries with information about the proposals and ballot boxes where completed surveys can be posted.

A number of community based meetings and discussions have taken place, focusing on those libraries that currently fall within the scope **community-led library delivery models**. This has included:

1 public drop-in meeting took place at the library and 2 meetings have taken place with Finham Parish Council	Discussions ongoing with Finham Parish Council.
2 meetings with Cheylesmore Community Centre in relation to Cheylesmore Library plus an agenda item at the Cheylesmore Ward Forum	Community Centre keen to pursue proposal for community-led library, with support from local community.
2 locality meetings and a public drop-in meeting have taken place in Earlsdon	A group of individuals have met in Earlsdon to discuss potential to deliver a community-run library. They are keen to look at successful Community Library models elsewhere in the country and a visit has been arranged to Sheffield for all groups interested in Community Libraries.
1 locality meeting and a public drop-in session have taken place in Coundon	No current options for community-led provision.
1 locality meeting and a public meeting have taken place in relation to Caludon Library	Initial discussions with Caludon Castle School.

2) Feedback to Date

Key feedback themes emerging in relation to the libraries proposal include:

- Increased access difficulties (however, in some cases, and specifically in relation to Hillfields library) respondents commented that access would be significantly improved
- Views that the library service is vital and that libraries meet an important social need and help prevent social isolation and promote well-being
- Concerns that changes will result in a negative impact on vulnerable people

- Concerns that volunteers would not have appropriate experience, or that there would be safeguarding issues, and that finding sufficient volunteers would be unrealistic (however some felt that individuals could play a role and that plenty of people would want to get involved given the opportunity)
- Comments made that savings should be made elsewhere
- The need for the Council to be clear about ongoing support that community groups would be given by the Council
- Views that partnership working is a good idea

3) Equality Analysis

Emerging equalities impacts identified to date are provided below:

- Older people and people with disabilities are perceived to be impacted the most by this proposal in terms of ability to access the service and consequent isolation
- Negative impact on children and young people – loss of safe space and study facilities
- Positive impact of proposed relocation of Hillfields library on older people and minority ethnic groups – more convenient and accessible

4) Petitions

We are also aware of 3 petitions in relation to the library service. These relate to Caludon Library (x 1) and all Coventry libraries (x 2).

A written petition was submitted to the Council on 2nd August 2016. This was organised by a Caludon resident and has gathered 43 signatures as at 24th October 2016. The petition states:

“This petition is to stop Caludon Library from closing. Caludon Library is important because people can take out books, go on computers, get help with homework and enter reading challenges.”

An e-petition was submitted to the Council on 21st July 2016 (via change.org). This has 519 signatures as at 24th October 2016. The petition states:

“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!”

A written petition was submitted to the Council on 6th September 2016. This was organised by a Tile Hill resident and has gathered 1906 signatures as at 24th October 2016. The petition states:

“We, the undersigned, protest at the cuts planned by Coventry City Council threatening libraries across the city. Libraries are an essential safe space, open new doors and horizons to enquiring minds, and are central to healthy, local communities.”

5) Emerging Opportunities

Early indications suggest that there is an appetite in some areas of the city, for local communities to play a greater role in the delivery of library services. In addition to the table shown on page 6, there has been some interest from a local community group in supporting both the youth and library service in Allesley and lots of interest in relation to relocating Hillfields library to the WATCH Centre, include strong public support for this move to take place (shown through consultation to date).