

Cabinet Member

17<sup>th</sup> September 2018

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities – Councillor E Ruane

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Deputy Chief Executive (Place)

**Ward(s) affected:**

Foleshill

**Title:**

Foleshill Community Centre Update

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

Foleshill Community Centre (“the Centre”) has been owned by the Council since 1948/1949 and the Council has managed the Centre remotely since April 2015.

The purpose of this report is to update the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities following the expressions of interest exercise’ which was conducted between March and July 2018.

Local charity Feeding Coventry has been selected to take on the Centre, following their successful ‘expression of interest’ submission and their presentation to the interview panel with their proposals.

This is a ‘retrospective’ report following the agreement of Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities to allow Feeding Coventry to enter into lease negotiations with officers from Place Directorate early, which subsequently allowed the charity to secure additional funding.

**Recommendations:**

Cabinet Member is recommended to

1. Endorse the actions of officers from Place Directorate to negotiate terms to complete a lease agreement with Feeding Coventry accordingly.

**List of Appendices included:**

Appendix A: Site Plan of Foleshill Community Centre

**Other useful background papers:**

None

**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: Foleshill Community Centre Update**

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

- 1.1 In January 2018 Cabinet Member for Community Development approved the report titled Foleshill Community Centre Update. Within this report, the recommendation to authorise officers to seek expressions of interest from community organisations to run the centre for the benefit of the whole community was approved.
- 1.2 In March 2018, officers invited community groups to submit 'expressions of interest' by filling in a form online. A total of 9 organisations submitted their online forms for the first part of the exercise, which included producing information on their proposals, previous experience, financial plan and any other information they had wished to include.
- 1.3 Following the submission of the online forms, three organisations were considered as part of the next stage by being invited to an interview where further details of their online submission were discussed and considered further. During this stage the organisations had the opportunity to produce details of their proposals and further demonstrate how they plan to run and manage the centre.
- 1.4 The three organisations who were shortlisted were subsequently scored on their interview and the results of the interview were reported back to officers and Councillors including the Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities. The interviews that took place needed to demonstrate that the organisations would be able to manage the centre appropriately without the need for any further assistance from the Council?, that they had a sound financial plan and that the whole community within Foleshill and beyond is able to use the centre at all reasonable times.
- 1.5 The panel selected the registered charity 'Feeding Coventry' to proceed as the organisation to manage the Centre.
- 1.6 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to allow officers from Place Directorate to continue negotiations and agree terms with Feeding Coventry to sign a long lease agreement on a full repairing and responsibility basis at peppercorn rent.
- 1.7 The charity Feeding Coventry demonstrated the best presentation and proposal to take on the management of the centre for the benefit of the whole community, at all reasonable times. The group provided a sound financial plan, having also had previous building management experience and the proposal included the facility to include all members of the community, regardless of age, sex, religion and socio-economic backgrounds.

### **2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

#### **2.1 Option 1 – Proceed with Feeding Coventry and enter into a lease agreement**

- 2.2 This options allows the Council to proceed with the charity to take on the daily management of the Centre on a long lease and all associated repair and maintenance responsibility will be conducted by the charity. This option is also in line with the Council's corporate objective to have all community centres self-sustaining as stated in Connecting Communities Cabinet Report dated 26<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

#### **2.3 Option 2 – Retain Status Quo**

- 2.4 If the Council continue to do nothing, it would continue to pay the running, repair and maintenance costs of a building with no occupier.

## **2.5 Recommendation**

- 2.6 Option 1 – Proceeding with Feeding Coventry to run the management of the centre for the benefit of the whole community on the basis that the charity successfully completed the 'expressions of interest' exercise and interview.

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

- 3.1 The expressions of interest exercise carried out between March 2018 and July 2018 acted part of the consultation process. Foleshill Ward Members were notified accordingly.

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

- 4.1 Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities has approved the early negotiation for officers to enter into discussions with Feeding Coventry for a long lease agreement.

## **5. Comments from Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services**

### **5.1 Financial implications**

Since the Council resumed management control of the Centre in 2015 it has expended £119,568.60 and generated income of £1,100. This is unsustainable going forward.

These costs, which are primarily in relation to utilities, insurance, grounds maintenance, security and service charges, once transferred to the proposed occupier would equate to an average annual saving to the Council of approximately £28,000.

### **5.2 Legal implications**

Except where it is disposing of property by way of a short lease, the Council has a legal obligation under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to achieve the best consideration reasonably obtainable when disposing of land or property. Where it proposes to dispose of land for less than the best consideration reasonably obtainable it must seek the consent of the Secretary of State. However, the State of State in 2003 issued a general disposal consent where there is no requirement to seek consent where the undervaluation is less than £2m and the council believes that the disposal will secure the improvement of the economic social or environmental wellbeing of the local area.

## **6. Other implications**

### **Property Implications**

The Centre forms part of the Councils Property portfolio. Since the Council resumed management of the Centre it has met all the operating costs of the Centre whilst receiving minimum income to defray costs. The Council will be seeking a community organisation that could run the centre on a sustainable basis (expenditure met from income).

### **6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

By inviting expressions of interest to manage the centre, the Council will seek to use its community resources to ensure the greatest effect to most residents in the area.

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

On taking over management of the community centre the Council carried out health and safety inspections throughout the property and carried out repairs and maintenance and put in place procedures to ensure that the community centre could remain open and in use. The Council does not have the resources or the finances to sustain the current situation long term and if the community centre is to remain in use on site management by a new organisation (Property Guardians) has been put in place to ensure the property is secure.

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

The Council does not have the resources or the finances to sustain the current position. The outcome of the expression of interest exercise has resulted in a sustainable position going forward without the need for the Council to continue to committing resources to the upkeep of the building and which provides maximum benefit for the local community from the site.

## **6.4 Equalities / EIA**

Under the public sector equality duty (s149 Equality Act 2010) the Council must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and other conduct prohibited by the Act, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations, between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. In seeking to lease the building to Feeding Coventry, the Council will be assisting the organisation to meet its aim of working towards a hunger-free Coventry by 2020 and the development of sustainable and just food policies. This aim will benefit all sections of the community including those with protected characteristics.

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

There is a positive impact on the environment arising from proceeding with chosen organisation as the charity Feeding Coventry will be providing a 'Citizen supermarket' delivering discounted and free food.

## **6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

There would be no impact on partner organisations

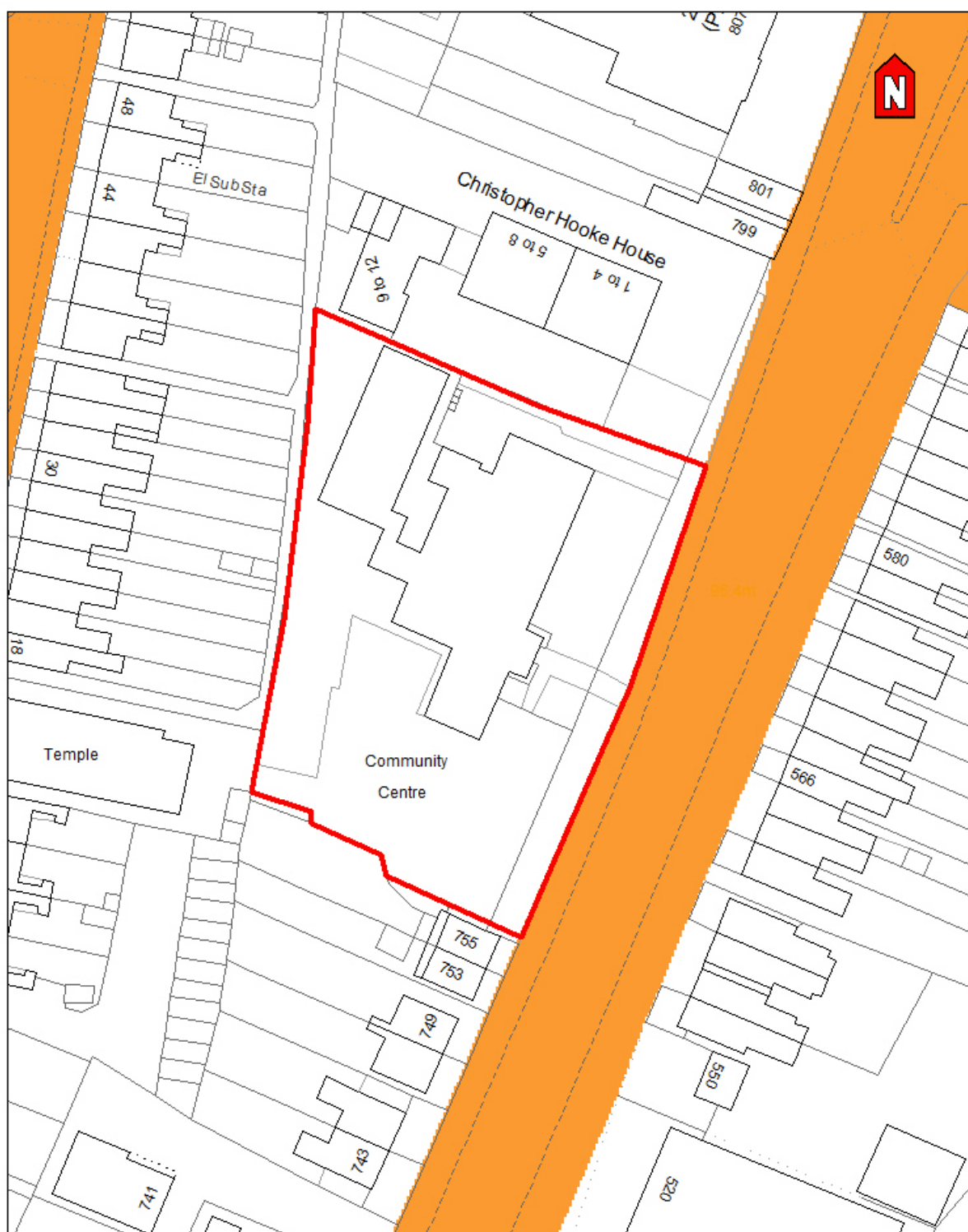
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Enquiries should be directed to the above person.

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Jon Roy-Gardner	Community Development Officer	Place	30.07.2018	31.07.2018
Richard Moon	Director Property Management & Development Services	Place	30.07.2018	13.08.2018
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Director: Martin Yardley	Executive Director Place	Resources	13.08.2018	16.07.2018
Members: Cllr Ed Ruane			03.09.2018	03.09.2018

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## Appendix A – Site Plan Foleshill Community Centre



PLACES DIRECTORATE  
CORPORATE PROPERTY SERVICES  
9TH FLOOR, CIVIC CENTRE 4  
MUCH PARK STREET  
COVENTRY CV1 2PY  
02476 833384

  
Coventry City Council

Martin Yardley - Director of Place Directorate  
Nigel Clews - Property Asset Management

**757 Foleshill Road, CV6 5HS**  
**0.687 Acres / GIA: 775 sqm**

Scale 1:1250 Drawn by AW Date 03.10.2015

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