

Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities

26 February, 2026

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities - Councillor N Akhtar

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of People & Facilities Management

Ward(s) affected:

Lower Stoke

Title:

Stoke Aldermoor Life Centre

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive summary:

Stoke Aldermoor Life Centre at Roundhouse Road Coventry ("the Centre") is a Council-owned facility that has been managed by the volunteers of Stoke Aldermoor Community Association since their occupation of the Centre in 2007. In October 2021, the organisation underwent a transition and became the Stoke Aldermoor Community Foundation, (a Charitable Incorporated Organisation CE27004) and registered as Charity Number 1196286). On 18 November 2021, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities approved the granting of a one-year lease to the newly formed organisation. This lease approval was contingent upon the submission of a sustainable business case. Following a period of legal processes and negotiations, the lease was completed on 26th October 2022 for a term until 25th October 2023. To date, the Trustees of Stoke Aldermoor Community Foundation ("the Trustees") have continued to remain in use and occupation of the Centre and have operated and managed the Centre.

Despite extensive discussions and support provided, officers have been unable to recommend the granting of a further lease to the Trustees of Stoke Aldermoor Community Foundation. The Trustees have faced several challenges in managing the Centre effectively. After careful consideration, the Trustees have decided that they would like to step away from the Centre and for the Council to initiate an Expression of Interest (EOI) process. The objective of this process is for officers to identify and secure a new organisation that can take on the operation and management of the Centre and complete a formal lease.

The purpose of this report is to update the Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities on the current situation and to seek approval for officers to carry out an EOI exercise.

This exercise will determine whether other community groups are interested in operating and delivering community activities at the Centre. Importantly, this process will be conducted while the Trustees continue to manage the day-to-day activities within the Centre, ensuring the continuation of services at the Centre for the benefit of the wider community.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities is recommended to:

1. Delegate authority to the Director of People and Facilities Management to seek expressions of interest in the Stoke Aldermoor Life Centre whilst the Stoke Aldermoor Community Association remains in situ.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of People and Facilities Management, following consultation with the Director of Property Services and Development, the Director for Planning and Performance and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities to grant a new 3-year lease of the Centre to the successful organisation.
3. Delegate authority to officers to negotiate, agree and complete the initial three-year lease with the successful organisation following the Expression of Interest process

List of Appendices included:

The following appendices are attached to the report:

Appendix 1 - Stoke Aldermoor Life Centre Site Plan

Other useful background papers:

None

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

No

Has it 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: Stoke Aldermoor Life Centre

1. Context

- 1.1. Stoke Aldermoor Community Association (SACA) has been based at the Stoke Aldermoor Life Centre, a Council-owned property within the operational portfolio, since 2007. The association originally occupied the premises on an informal basis until 2022, when their tenure was formalised through the granting of a short term one year lease to Stoke Aldermoor Community Foundation.
- 1.2. The intention of the short-term lease was to give the Trustees of the Stoke Aldermoor Community Foundation a trial period to see how they managed the operation of the Centre in accordance with the covenants under the lease with the intention of a longer lease being granted if successful.
- 1.3. SACA provides a variety of activities for the benefit of the local community. Primarily they provide space for community organisations to hire, to meet the needs of the local community, two of which are the Pinley over 60's group and sewing group, the Stoke Aldermoor Stitchers.
- 1.4. In February 2016, a Cabinet report entitled "Connecting Communities Phase 1" endorsed a recommendation that all community centres should become self-sustaining by March 2017, without receiving subsidies for repairs and maintenance. Furthermore, it advised that Community Associations enter into leases to this effect. While most community centres have entered long-term leases, the Centre is among the few remaining to complete the process. In October 2022, SACA transitioned to Stoke Aldermoor Community Foundation (SACF), a registered charity able to enter a short-term lease.
- 1.5. On 18 November 2021, the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities, approved a one-year lease linked to a business case outlining sustainable operation of the centre. This lease was completed on 26th October 2022 following an extended process and expired on 25th October 2023. The Trustees of Stoke Aldermoor Community Foundation continue to occupy the Centre; however, officers have not recommended a further lease is granted by the Council due to operational challenges faced by the Trustees.
- 1.6. The Trustees have determined that it is in the best interests for the future of the Centre for the Council to seek expressions of interest from alternative organisations to assume its management and operation.
- 1.7. Approval is sought for officers to invite community groups to submit expressions of interest to manage and operate the Centre. Upon completion of this process, a three-year initial lease will be offered to the selected community group, which will then assume full management and maintenance responsibilities for the Centre. It is essential that the chosen organisation promotes the community use of the Centre for the benefit of all residents of Lower Stoke, and the selection criteria will require evidence of robust financial planning, previous building management experience, and inclusive proposals catering to all members of the community, irrespective of age,

gender, religion, or socio-economic status. The Trustees of Stoke Aldermoor Community Foundation will continue operating at the Centre

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1. **Option 1. Seek expressions of interest from community organisations whilst existing occupiers of the Centre remain in-situ during this exercise. (Recommended)**
- 2.2. This option allows Council officers to conduct a transparent EOI exercise whilst searching for an appropriate community association to manage the Centre to benefit the whole community.
- 2.3. This option will allow interested organisations to come forward and demonstrate how they plan to run the Centre sustainably for benefit the whole community. SACF will not be considered as part of the EOI exercise, and officers will negotiate a suitable time with the Trustee to agree vacant possession to allow the new organisation to plan accordingly.
- 2.4. **Option 2. Retain Status Quo (Not Recommended)**
- 2.5. If the Council do nothing, it is likely SACF will give notice in respect of their use and occupation leaving the Centre vacant which will lead to the building deteriorating and incur significant void costs. The valuable community provision will cease which provides much needed community space and activities in an area of need.
- 2.6. The Trustees are already experiencing difficulties in operating the Centre and are unable to meet all of their financial commitments. It is likely that the charity may need to take further steps to consider their long-term future.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1. The EOI exercise would be carried out, and this would act as part of the consultation process. Lower Stoke Ward Councillors will be notified and invited to comment on the EOI process, the results of which will be considered for inclusion in the process.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. If the Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities proceeds with the recommended Option 1, it is anticipated that the EOI process would commence at the earliest opportunity and be open for a period of 4 weeks.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Resources and Director of Law and Governance

- 5.1. Financial Implications - If the expression of interest process is successful and a suitable community organisation is found to occupy the property; there will be no material financial implications arising from this decision. However, if new occupiers cannot be secured, or if a decision is taken not to proceed with an expression of

interest process, the Council will be required to maintain and secure the vacant property, which would result in additional costs.

- 5.2. Legal Implications- There are no major legal implications associated with this report. However, legal comment has been received. Officers within Legal Services will negotiate, agree and complete the initial three-year lease with the successful organisation following the EOI process
- 5.3. Property Implications - The Centre forms part of the Councils Operational Property portfolio. The Council has provided some assistance to the property incurring some operational expenditure whilst Adult Education were in occupation to ensure the health and safety of the building, Adult Education left this premises in December 2025 and therefore, this assistance ceased. The Council will be seeking a community organisation that could run the centre on a sustainable basis (expenditure met from income) whilst retaining responsibility for major lifecycle / structural costs for the initial 3-year term.

6. Other implications

6.1. How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan>

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?

The Council has engaged constructively with the Trustees and provided ongoing support in conjunction with the community resilience team. Essential repairs and maintenance were completed where health and safety risks were identified.

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 will result in a sustainable position going forward without the need for operational Council subsidy and which provides maximum benefit for the local community from the site.

6.4. Equalities / EIA?

A full EIA would be undertaken on completion of the expression of interest stage.

6.5. Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?

There are no impacts on the environment arising from the expression of interest exercise.

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

There are no implications for any partner organisations.

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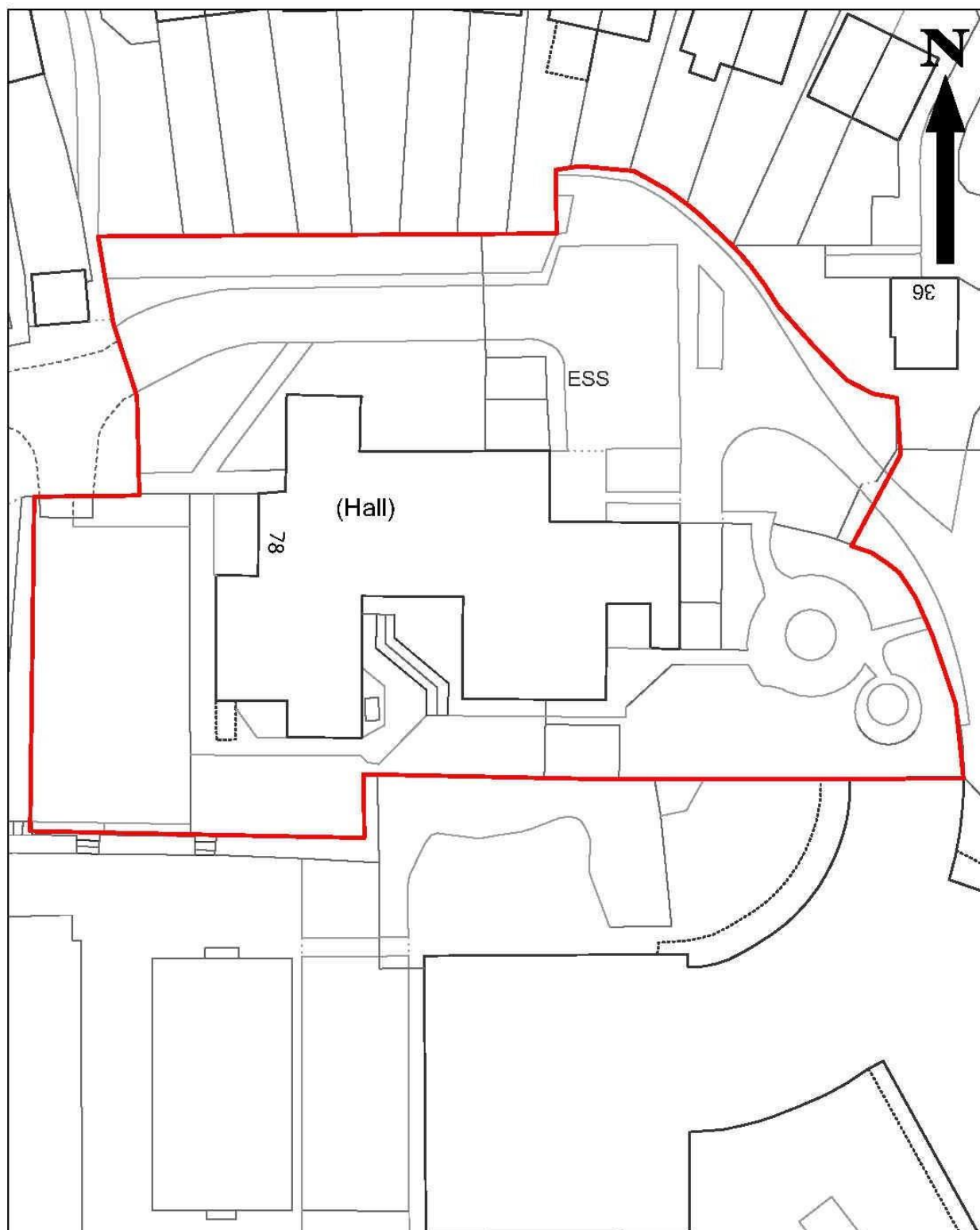
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Enquiries should be directed to the above person

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Suzanne Bennett	Governance Services Officer	Law and Governance	05/02/2026	05/02/2026
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Director: Susanna Chilton	Director of People and Facilities Management	People and Facilities Management	12/02/2026	12/02/2026
Councillor N Akhtar	Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing		16/02/2026	16/02/2026

This report is published on the council's website: www.coventry.gov.uk/meetings

Appendix 1



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PROPERTY
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COVENTRY
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Stoke Aldermoor Life Centre - Lease Plan

Drawn By: LB
Scale : 1:500 @ A4
Date:02/11/2021

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Richard Moon - Director, Project Management & Property Services