Transforming Neighbourhood Services East & Central Area

Version: Final

Decision to be taken by: Assistant City Mayor Neighbourhood Services

Date: 3 November 2017

Lead director: John Leach

Useful information

■ Ward(s) affected: Castle, Evington, North Evington, Spinney Hills, Wycliffe, Stoneygate

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■ Report version number: FINAL

1. Summary

1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide an overview of progress to date of the Transforming Neighbourhood Services (TNS) Programme
- Present a summary of the results of engagement work and consultation carried out in the East and Central area of the city
- Present a model for the East and Central area of the city for approval to proceed into delivery phase

The City Mayor and Executive are asked to:

1) To note the activity that has taken place to date
2) To agree the model as presented in the report into implementation
3) To note the comments and recommendations of the Neighbourhoods and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission and the Housing Scrutiny Commission
4) To reflect the anticipated revenue savings in the approved budget and budget strategy, and reduce the budgets accordingly from December 2018
5) To note the release of £500k from the corporate Service Transformation Fund, being the indicative capital costs of the required building alterations and improvements
6) To delegate authority to the Director of Finance to determine the specific budget ceilings affected

2. Main report:

2.1 Background

The TNS programme is scoped to identify different ways of organising how services are delivered within the neighbourhoods of the city of Leicester, with a view to reducing the costs of delivery by around 30% while maintaining the quality of our services.

The programme approach is to consider each of 6 geographical areas in turn to identify methods by which the service delivery model can be transformed through opportunities to co-locate services and make better use of the assets available.

Initially the scope of the programme covered four service areas:

- Community Services

- Libraries
- Adult Skills & Learning
- Neighbourhood based customer services

In addition some other council services with a presence in the neighbourhoods were included where they could form a part of the future delivery model, for example, by sharing locations.

In October 2015 the Council announced a city-wide review of its buildings called "Using Buildings Better" (UBB). The Transforming Neighbourhood Services programme now forms part of this wider programme and is extended to include other neighbourhood based service points. In the east and central area this has meant the inclusion of neighbourhood housing offices. Whilst there are no stand-alone youth centres in the east and central area, two youth centres which are located within neighbourhood buildings are also included. The inclusion in UBB also enables dependencies with other relevant areas of work including a wider review of staff accommodation and channel shift to be better managed.

The full scope of the east and central area includes the following buildings:

Property	**Ward**
Knighton Library	Castle
Coleman Neighbourhood Centre	Evington
Evington Library	Evington
Rowlatts Hill Neighbourhood Housing Office	Evington
Coleman Lodge Community Centre	North Evington
Humberstone Neighbourhood Housing Office	North Evington
St Barnabas Library	North Evington
African Caribbean Centre	Wycliffe
Highfields Library	Wycliffe
St Matthews Centre	Wycliffe
St Peters Neighbourhood Housing Office	Wycliffe

Under the Council's Using Buildings Better programme Children, Young People and Family (CYPF) Centres form part of the Early Help work stream. However CYPF

Centres and council pre-school provision are considered within the TNS programme where there are opportunities to achieve joined up solutions for groups of buildings.

2.2 Development of the draft model

In order to develop a draft model the following activities have been undertaken:

- Data collection exercise to identify the buildings in scope, costs associated, services provided, usage statistics, historical information
- An initial engagement exercise was carried out for the city as a whole between April and July 2013 to raise awareness and gain an overview of the general views and attitudes of residents towards neighbourhood services
- An in-depth and focussed engagement process was carried out in the east and central area from 9th January to 19th February 2017 to collect suggestions and comments from service users and residents
- Analysis of the data collected and the responses received through the engagement exercise to construct a draft model, which was presented to the City Mayor and Executive in May 2017.
- Assessments of equalities impact of the options proposed
- Consultation on the draft model from 14th June to 25th July 2017, involving a series of meetings with resident groups, stakeholder and community groups and the availability of a form to provide feedback, comments and suggestions on the draft proposals (see section 2.2.1)
- Refinement of the model into that proposed in this report following the results of the consultation and further design work surrounding the proposed projects

2.2.1 Consultation Activity

Details of the previous engagements between April - July 2013 and January - February 2017 have been previously reported. The main outcomes of these previous exercises were:

- Good support for the principle of retaining services over buildings
- Strong support for the co-location of services, providing busy places from which multiple services can be accessed
- Some support for transferring of assets through the Community Asset Transfer procedure
- Some concern to ensure existing groups continue to have fair and equal access should buildings undergo community asset transfer
- Significant support for libraries and the functions they perform and likewise for activities in community and youth centres.
- There is potential for using buildings better by bringing services together in some buildings

A full report of the engagement activity carried out in January and February 2017 is attached to this document as Appendix B.

Following the previous report to Executive in May 2017, a consultation exercise has been carried out on the draft proposals that were presented to the City Mayor and Executive at that time. Views were sought on the suitability and practicality of those proposals.

The consultation took place between 14th June and 25th July 2017. A wide range of

stakeholders developed during the engagement phase were contacted to promote the consultation and to gain views on the proposals. Two area wide open meetigns were held at Coleman Neighbourhood Centre and St Matthews Centre. In addition meetings were held with stakeholder groups, community groups who currently use the buildings and informal meetings and conversations were held throughout the consultation period.

A consultation questionnaire was promoted online and at all Council run buildings and GP surgeries in the area throughout the duration of the exercise. The questionnaire was also available in Gujarati, Punjabi, Urdu and Somali. Promotional materials were displayed in a wide range of public buildings including community, youth and leisure centres, GP surgeries and schools. An early press release generated articles in the local newspapers. Letters were sent to all council housing tenants within the catchment areas of the three housing offices included in this consultation. Posters were displayed in communal areas in council housing blocks to promote awareness of the consultation. Social media and library e-newsletters were used to promote the consultation to subscribers.

A full report of the consultation carried out in June and July 2017 is attached to this document as Appendix A

2.2.2 Consultation Outcomes and Alterations to the Proposals

In total, at the closure of the consultation on the 25th July a total of 527 completed response forms have been received. This was a lower response rate compared to the initial engagement exercise in January and February. The following points provide a summary of the outcomes of the consultation:

Consultation Meetings and Focus Groups – key outcomes

- People attending the groups were supportive of the sites that they currently use, but there was a general acceptance that locality based services are more important than particular buildings
- There was a positive response to proposals for better use of Evington and Knighton Libraries by providing out of hours access for inducted community groups, and interest was expressed in being part of this development.
- There was concern about the busy-ness and additional parking pressures for facilities proposed to host additional services such as St Matthews Centre and St Barnabas Library.
- There were concerns expressed by some council housing tenants that travel distances to proposed relocated housing office services would be increased. It was highlighted that consideration would need to be given to access to housing services for all council housing tenants, including those with mobility issues and those for whom English is not a first language.
- There was strong support and a range of suggestions for proposals to invest in retained buildings, and in particular Highfields Library and St Matthews Centre.
- Enquiries and discussions were held around the potential for asset transfer of some buildings proposed for release under the proposals.

Questionnaire – key outcomes

- There is good support for the services and activities offered by community centres and a high level of support for library services. Satisfaction that these services would continue to be delivered under the proposals.

- Support for proposals to provide access to library space out of hours for inducted groups, but concern to ensure that library resources remain secure.
- A relatively high number of responses from users of three housing offices proposed for service relocation. In general residents would prefer that the services remain where they are, and are concerned about increased travel distances and parking.
- A high number of responses from users of the African Caribbean Centre, the majority in support of the activities undertaken there.
- Support for the idea of multi-service centres such as the proposals for St Matthews Centre and St Barnabas Library, but also concern to ensure that the space and services are not over stretched.

Lessons Learned

The following are a summary of the lessons learned from the engagement and consultation process throughout the TNS programme:

- The method of engagement with the groups has resulted in a high quality level of response, particularly given the ability to tailor conversations to answer specific concerns when meeting groups individually
- There was a significantly increased response rate for the initial engagement exercise. This could be due to the early engagement of stakeholders and users groups at the early stage of the process for the east and central area.
- The users of existing networks and contacts has been particularly effective in this area. The letters sent to all housing tenants in the catchment area have ensured a good level of awareness and feedback, especially with regard to the proposals for changes to housing offices.
- The overall approach of involving Ward Councillors, local MPs, stakeholders and members of the public early has been good as it helps to ensure that all concerns are heard, and provides sufficient time to respond to these concerns on an evidence basis
- The process undertaken has led to good co-operation between stakeholder individuals and groups, as well as other services
- The process has highlighted the potential staffing impact on staff whose primary base is one of the sites proposed for closure and the need to commence an appropriate change consultation process

2.2.3 Impact of Consultation on Model

Following the consultation the following considerations have been taken into account for the proposed model for the east and central area:

- Concern was raised at public meetings and in responses to the questionnaire with regard to the busy reception area and ground floor facilities at St Matthews Centre. Works are proposed to provide additional interview cubicles and to explore options to reconfigure the reception area in the building to ensure additional housing business from the St Peters estate can be accommodated.
- Concerns were raised regarding limited parking facilities outside St Barnabas Library where some housing services are proposed to relocate. It is proposed to review parking arrangements outside the library as part of a project to move in Humberstone and Rowlatts Hill Neighbourhood Housing Office support.

2.3 Draft Model Summary

2.3.1 Principles of the model

The following principles have been used to develop this model:

- Retention of locality based services are a higher priority than the retention of specific buildings
- A key principle of shared buildings providing multiple services
- A reduction of around 30% of current spend on building running costs is to be achieved.
- The services provided should remain and where possible be enhanced
- At this stage the model is based around the use of the buildings only. The implementation of the changes may have an impact on some staff based at these buildings.
- Opportunities for alternative use should be investigated for buildings identified as surplus to requirements.

2.3.2 Rationale

A target saving of a 30% reduction in building running costs based on the cost of Neighbourhood Services buildings has been identified through the TNS programme. In addition there is a requirement to identify building running cost savings for other public facing buildings in the area under the Using Buildings Better programme and via other elements of the Using Buildings Better programme including staff accommodation and channel shift.

The proposals are to invest in well located and well used buildings to deliver multi-service centres. This was a popular suggestion for re-organising services during the engagement period. The following buildings are proposed based on analysis of the responses from the stakeholder engagement exercises and local buildings data.

2.3.3 Draft Model in detail

The overall model is to reduce the number of buildings in operation by combining the services provided into fewer, multi-purpose centres. The main focus of these centres will be St Matthews Centre, St Barnabas Library, Highfields Library, Knighton Library, Evington Library, the Coleman Neighbourhood Centre and the African Caribbean Centre.

The following section describes the proposed model in relation to each building in the area.

St Matthews Centre

(The consultation highlighted that this is a busy centre and that consideration should be given to installation of another interview room to accommodate increased business from the proposed relocation of the St Peters Housing office. Residents also highlighted that queue management in the reception area should be reviewed. Users wanted outstanding redecoration works beyond the reception and library areas to be undertaken.)

The recommendation is to invest in the centre to provide additional capacity for housing office enquiries relocating from St Peters Neighbourhood Housing Office and

to complete redecoration works to support operations at the busy centre.

- Retain the centre which already hosts a wide range of services including a library, youth centre and housing front desk
- Invest in the centre to complete redecoration works and to provide extra interview rooms for use by housing customers
- Accommodate St Peters Neighbourhood Housing Office as part of the existing housing offer

St Peters Housing Office

(There was concern from some council housing tenants in the Highfields estate about accessing the office under the proposal to relocate to St Matthews Centre.)

The recommendation is to relocate services into the multi-service centre at St Matthews Centre. It is noted that there is a major refurbishment project ongoing at St Peters high rise accommodation and that the relocation of the housing office must work closely with this project to ensure a smooth delivery of both projects.

- Move services into the improved St Matthews Centre
- Convert the housing office into additional housing

Highfields Library

(There was very strong support for the library during the initial engagement. Proposals to retain the library and to invest in the building were positively welcomed during the consultation period)

The recommendation is to retain the library and to invest in the building to support the ongoing high volumes of use.

- Retain the library
- Redecorate the library and improve facilities in the building
- Install an accessible public WC

African Caribbean Centre

(The consultation highlighted the high value placed on the centre by the wider community across the whole of the city. There were a range of views expressed around the effectiveness of the current partnership arrangements at the centre.)

It is recommended that the building is retained and that further work be undertaken to explore ways to reduce the running costs.

- Retain the building
- Explore ways of reducing centre running costs working with stakeholders and partners

St Barnabas Library

(The library was well supported especially during the initial engagement period. Proposals to create a multi-service centre to support council housing tenants from the current Rowlatts Hill and Humberstone offices were well received by existing library users. Some concerns were raised with regard to parking, which is limited to on street).

It is recommended to relocate services from Humberstone and Rowlatts Hill housing offices into the library to deliver a multi-service centre. Adult Learning classes will continue to be delivered from the building and it is anticipated that welfare support and advice services will also be delivered from the building. Some alterations will be

required to update the reception desk, install council self-service facilities and to accommodate private interview space.

- Retain the library
- Move Humberstone and Rowlatts Hill Housing Office front facing services into the St Barnabas Library building
- Install self-service equipment for improved local access to council services

Humberstone Neighbourhood Housing Office

(The consultation demonstrated some concern around potential limited parking at St Barnabas Library)

It is recommended that the service be moved into the St Barnabas Library building and that options for disposal of the building be explored.

- Move services into the improved St Barnabas Library building
- Explore options for disposal of the building including lease or sale

Rowlatts Hill Neighbourhood Housing Office

(The consultation demonstrated some concern over travel to St Barnabas library and potential limited parking there. Some respondents suggested moving the office into the neighbouring Coleman Neighbourhood Centre although it was noted this building has limited general opening hours and that the available space is preferred for community activities).

It is recommended that the service be moved into the St Barnabas Library building and that options for disposal of the building be explored.

- Move services into the improved St Barnabas Library building
- Explore options for disposal of the NHO building including lease, sale or clearance for potential housing development

Coleman Neighbourhood Centre

(The proposal to retain the site was welcomed during the consultation period. However some previous interest in Community Asset Transfer was renewed. Some respondents suggested moving the Rowlatts Hill Neighbourhood Housing Office into the Coleman Centre).

It is recommended that the centre and ball court be retained with some small works undertaken to improve ease of access for key-fob holding groups.

- Retain the centre and the ball court
- Work with groups to increase use of the building
- Undertake some small works to improve self-access systems for community groups

Coleman Lodge Community Centre

(There was renewed interest in potential Community Asset Transfer of the building from existing users. There was also concern from existing users that they would be displaced depending on the disposal method)

It is recommended to withdraw from the centre and to work with existing groups to find alternative options for their activities. Some groups may be able to relocate to the nearby Coleman Neighbourhood Centre.

- Explore options for disposal of the building including sale, lease or clearance for

potential housing development
- Work with groups to identify the best location for their needs

Evington Library
(There was good interest in the proposal to make the library available for use by inducted community groups outside of regular opening hours)
It is recommended to retain the library and to invest in the facility to install key fob access and to redesign the existing layout to make this more flexible.

- Retain the library
- Install key fob access to the library for community group use out of hours

Knighton Library
(There was a positive response to proposals to retain the library and proposals to create access for inducted groups out of hours were welcomed).
It is recommended to retain the library and to invest in the facility to install key fob access, a public WC and to redesign the existing layout to make this more flexible.

Proposals
- Retain the library
- Install key fob access to the library for community group use out of hours

2.3.4 Summary of alternative options considered following consultation

(a) Rowlatts Hill Neighbourhood Housing Office
There is an option to relocate a front facing office to the neighbouring Coleman Neighbourhood Centre which is to be retained. However this centre has limited staffed opening hours and would therefore represent a reduced service. Furthermore there is no reception desk or interview rooms, therefore some of the existing community space would need to be converted reducing the community offer at the centre. The centre would not be well located to accommodate services for users from the Humberstone Neighbourhood Housing Office and would not therefore represent a good overall solution.

(b) St Peters Housing Office
Two alternative locations were suggested for St Peters Housing Office services. Highfields Library was suggested but it was noted that the library is very busy and there is insufficient space to accommodate interview rooms and a reconfigured shared reception facility suitable for the housing function. The African Caribbean Centre was also suggested, but this option is not ideal as there is a stepped approach to the main entrance (lift access is available for customers with mobility issues).

2.4 Costs and Benefits

2.4.1 Current Costs

Neighbourhood Services
The budgeted running costs (based on financial year 2015 / 16) for **Neighbourhood Services** buildings scoped into the east and central area are shown in the table below:

Neighbourhood Services Buildings	Building running

	costs budget 2015/16
St Matthews Centre	125,500
African Caribbean Centre	45,100
Coleman Neighbourhood Centre	20,000
Highfields Library	25,700
Coleman Lodge Community Centre	6,000
Knighton Library	16,600
St Barnabas Library	44,200
Evington Library	17,600
Total	**300,700**

The budgeted running costs (based on financial year 2015 / 16) for the Housing section are shown in the table below:

Housing Building	Building running costs budget 2015/16
Humberstone Housing Office	36,000
Rowlatts Hill Housing Office	27,000
St Peters Housing Office	15,000

Notes on the above tables:

- The figures in the tables above relate to the running costs of the building only and do not include staffing costs or income.

Based on the guide savings target of 30% of overall building running costs for Neighbourhood Services buildings in the east and central area, a reduction of approximately £90,000 is required.

2.4.2 One-off costs

In order to support the proposals, investment is required for building enabling works. A contingency sum is reserved for unforeseen costs.

For the implementation of this model initial visual building surveys have been carried out to estimate the costs to carry out the alterations required. The following table shows indicative capital costs to carry out the work required:

Budget	**Estimated Allocation**
Building works	£400k
Contingency	£100k
Total	**£500k**

Costs include a provision for internal and professional fees. Funding for these one-off costs will be sourced from the Corporate Transformation Budget as per a previous agreement.

2.4.3 Financial Benefits

At the point of releasing the buildings the following financial benefits will be available (full year basis):

Building	**Fund**	**Efficiencies (1 Year)**	**Efficiencies (5 Years)**
Knighton Library (room hire)	General	£3,000	£15,000
Evington Library (room hire)	General	£3,000	£15,000
Coleman Lodge Community Centre	General	£6,000	£30,000
Housing office space - income	General	£25,000	£125,000
Total	**General**	**£37,000**	**£185,000**
Humberstone Housing Office	HRA	£36,000	£180,000
Rowlatts Hill Housing Office	HRA	£27,000	£135,000
St Peters Housing Office	HRA	£15,000	£75,000
Office space at St Barnabas and St Matthews	HRA	-£25,000	-£125,000
Total	**HRA**	**£53,000**	**£265,000**
Total Savings		**£90,000**	**£450,000**

Comparing the total savings shown in the table above (£90,000) with the total Neighbourhood Services building running costs of the area(£300,700) shows that this is in line with the principle of the programme of aiming to reduce building running costs by at least 30%.

Notes on the above tables:
Efficiency savings are based on the budgeted building running costs for 2015/16 minus the non-transferable income generated by the building.

Additional financial benefits

The proposed savings relate specifically to building running costs incurred by

Neighbourhood Services and Housing. However the proposed changes also help to reduce existing financial pressures on building management and maintenance costs.

The model is in line with a review of the Neighbourhood Services organisation which has already been completed and which was implemented in January 2016 and which delivers £586k savings.

2.4.4 Non-financial benefits

There are a number of non-financial benefits that apply to this draft model as follows:

- The result would be continued delivery of services while achieving a 30% reduction in spending
- The model is in line with the majority of views received from the engagement process i.e. increase co-location of services in the most appropriate buildings for the area.
- Convenient, co-located services, new services and some longer opening hours
- Better use of buildings, especially with regard to community space.
- Investment in multi-service sites ensures the longer-term viability of the services in the area
- A potential reduction in energy use of approximately 30% and associated carbon dioxide savings that will contribute towards achieving corporate environmental improvement objective to reduce the council's greenhouse gas emissions

2.5 Risks and Dependencies

The following list describes the risks and issues currently identified

- For all improvement works the identification and remedial actions required arising from the presence of asbestos may increase the costs and delay completion of any works.
- There are some individual groups in the area which have specific needs which may be difficult to relocate in alternative locations. In some cases the most suitable alternative locations may be available in non-council settings.
- There are a number of interdependencies to consider as part of the TNS work which includes the remodelling and reduction of the Council's early help services (youth service, children centres and family support services) Proposals from TNS and Early Help Remodelling include the disposal (meaning sale, transfer or demolition).

The following list describes the dependencies that have been identified to this point:

- The Using Buildings Better programme encompasses six work streams to review the wider council buildings estate. TNS proposals will need to link in with assumptions and proposals put forward by other work streams as part of the overall picture. There will be crossover with the accommodation strategy where back office functions are linked to TNS proposals.
- Youth remodelling Board will review council provision of pre-school and children, young people and family centres. Decisions will impact upon the delivery of services in some Neighbourhood Buildings, and on assumptions with regard to alternative provision in the local area.
- The completion of the projects will rely significantly on other support services

within the council, particularly property, planning, and housing.

3. Details of Scrutiny

The Scrutiny Commission has been kept updated with regard to the progress of TNS and recently Using Buildings Better Programmes.

The final proposals were presented to the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission on 6 September 2017 and to the Housing Scrutiny Commission on 18 September 2017.

4. Financial, legal and other implications

4.1 Financial implications

The proposed changes are expected to save £90k p.a., of which £37k is attributable to the General Fund and £53k to the Housing Revenue Account. The savings will count towards the TNS Spending Review target of reducing costs by 30% across the City and should be fully effective by the end of 2018/19. To facilitate the wider use of the retained buildings, £500k will be released from the corporate Service Transformation Fund, being the indicative capital costs of the required building alterations and improvements

Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, ext. 37 4081

4.2 Legal implications

The Council has designed the consultation to be legally compliant and in this report the product of the consultation has been conscientiously taken into account to form the recommended proposals. The realistic alternative options have also been considered in a transparent way, with the reasons why they were discounted outlined at 2.3.4.

If the model is approved procurement and legal support in relation to the capital works will be required.

Jenis Taylor- Principal Solicitor (Commercial, Property & Planning Team)

As this Report refers to the potential disposal of certain properties by way of lease, further advice should be taken from the Council's Legal and Estates Sections once these have been considered further in respect of the terms of any future disposal and the Council's legal powers to dispose.

John McIvor
Principal Lawyer (Commercial, Property & Planning Team)

4.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

The Council has corporate targets to reduce both its own and city-wide carbon emissions by 50%. The consolidation of neighbourhood buildings and the co-location of services proposed in the report will contribute towards achieving the targets. In addition, there may be opportunities to make the retained buildings more energy efficient as part of any refurbishment or alterations.

- Mark Jeffcote, Environment Team (x37 2251)

4.4 Equalities Implications

The council's Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set out in the Equality Act 2010 requires decision makers to be aware of and take account of the impact of its proposals on those likely to be affected.

The process undertaken to determine the development of proposals which would identify different ways of working and produce the required savings highlighted in the report is based on engagement exercises and consultation with those communities/stakeholders affected - as detailed in appendix A describing findings of the focus groups and public consultation undertaken and the responses received.

The proposals put forward in the report, based on consultation findings, promote continued local provision of council services with some services suggested for delivery in alternative nearby local settings. Some of the points raised for specific buildings have cited equalities implications regarding physical access to buildings (such as the need for added disabled parking bays nearby) and concerns about continued community access to local facilities should they be considered for community asset transfer. As in keeping with previous TNS building refurbishments, inclusive design principles should be followed to ensure maximum access to and use of local council buildings by the communities they serve.

The proposals also reflect the work being undertaken by the council in regard to channel shift and the Using Buildings Better programme.

Surinder Singh/Sukhi Biring Equalities Officers Tel 37 4148/4175

5. Background information and other papers:

None

6. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A – TNS East & Central consultation report

Appendix B – TNS East & Central engagement report

Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment

8. Is this a "key decision"?

Yes.

9. If a key decision please explain reason

The decision affects changes to service delivery in 6 wards in east and central Leicester.