

# Neighbourhood Services & Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission Report

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## **Community Governance Update**

Assistant City Mayor, Councillor Sarah Russell

Lead director: Liz Blyth

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Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2014

## Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All wards
- Report author: Steve Goddard
- Author contact details: 37 1831
- Report version number: 1

### 1. Summary

This report provides an update on the Community Governance arrangements provided through Community Services and covers the 'Getting Involved' scheme; the Community Volunteering scheme; Partnership Agreements with community organisations; Community Management arrangements; Community Asset Transfer and the different roles of Community Services staff supporting these arrangements.

### 2. Recommendations

The Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission is asked to note the report and to make any comments or recommend further action as appropriate.

### 3. Background:

The following updates are provided on arrangements previously considered by the Commission:

**'Getting Involved' and Community Volunteering:** support is currently being provided to groups and individuals who approach directly and groups/individuals who express an interest in engaging with the Council. It is anticipated that a stronger emphasis and wider scale roll-out of these schemes will be explored within neighbourhoods following the establishment of a team of Community Engagement Officers.

**Partnership Agreements:** Community Services have entered into Partnership Agreements on behalf of the Council with the following community organisations:

Manor House Centre Management Group  
Eyres Monsell Community Association (please refer to information below)  
Gilmorton Tenants Association  
Braunstone Frith Tenants Association.

More recently Partnership Agreements have been established with the following groups:

African Caribbean Centre Development Group  
Thurnby Lodge Community Association  
Southfields "Our Community Cares" Community Association.

Community Services is also in discussion with local residents of Aylestone to look at forming a management group for the vacated library building on Richmond Road with the view to entering into a Partnership Agreement to support the future operation and development of community activities at the building.

The Partnership Agreement with the Eyres Monsell Community Association is currently on hold by mutual consent while the association review and re-establish their organisational structures. It is anticipated that the Partnership Agreement will be revisited and re-established once the Community Association is operational.

The Barley Croft Healthy Living Centre is now run on a day to day basis by Barley Croft Primary School which is located on the same site. The new arrangement is supported by a Service Level Agreement (SLA) which uses the recommendations of the Leicester Child Poverty Commission as a basis for prioritising actions and services to be delivered to local residents in Beaumont Leys. The SLA provides a collaborative approach between the Primary School, Health Services and Community Services.

**Community Management:** The Community Services Section has been in negotiation with Leicestershire Centre for Integrated Living (LCIL) about the future management arrangements of West End Community Centre on Andrews Street. As part of the community asset transfer procedure the Council received a request from LCIL for a suitable building to promote their activities and events. Following discussions with Ward Councillors the proposal was discussed at the Westcotes Ward Community meeting where the option was positively received. The Council advertised the opportunity to other community organisation to enable them to express an interest in the West End Centre. No expressions of interest were received and discussions have continued with LCIL to take on the responsibility for the day to day operation of the building through a formal lease arrangement. As part of the arrangements no current community groups using the centre will be displaced and a Partnership Agreement with Community Services will be entered into to ensure that a strong relationship between the Council and LCIL is maintained. It is proposed that lease arrangements will be concluded in early 2014.

The Council has also concluded the formal lease arrangements for the Raven Centre and the 55<sup>th</sup> Scout Hut in the Thurnby Lodge area and the new arrangements were instrumental in the successful conclusion of a complex situation.

The Winstanley Centre in Braunstone is being used by the K&T Performing Art Street Dance Group which has entered into a hire agreement with Community Services. Dance Group have transformed the centre which has space for the community to access and the local residents have positively welcomed the new arrangements for the building. A review of the current arrangement is to take place shortly to identify what other improvements/ collaboration could be developed.

**Community Services posts to support the above:** The Community Services staffing review has been completed and as part of the new structure specific posts have been created to support the initiatives outlined in the report as follows:

**Neighbourhood Development Manager** – post holders have a cross cutting responsibility for an area working with Local Ward Councillors to develop and implement 'neighbourhood plans' based on the priorities of local residents and also have a responsibility for the community centres/ facilities within their geographical areas.

In addition, by working with colleagues from other divisions and external partners, especially in the voluntary and commercial sector, they have a key role in supporting a joined up approach within neighbourhoods to the delivery of services in particular with the housing department, environmental services, libraries and adult skills and learning, as well as other services.

The development of Partnership Agreements will be essential tools for their work to achieve local outcomes. The notion of a flexible approach to community engagement across the city will be crucial to negotiate and deliver timely services and activities to meet the needs and expectations of the local residents.

**Community Engagement Officer** – post holders will support the Neighbourhood Development Manager in a defined geographical area to engage with individuals and groups to contribute to the development and improvement of local neighbourhoods through a range of interventions including:

- Supporting existing groups, organisations, and forums
- Establishing new groups to provide a variety of activities using community centres and other local facilities

The post holder will be the main advocate for the "Getting Involved" initiative which provides a range of different methods in which local residents can get involved, these include:

- Becoming a group leader for a community activity
- Community volunteers to support the general development of a local community centre/ facility
- Community key holders who support the operation of a community centre/ facility
- Community Governance which involves local community activists who are prepared to take on greater ownership of a community centre/ facility, with confidence, and who have the backing of well-established community organisations.

**Operations Development Officer** – the post holder will be responsible for the development and day to day operation of the access control system; provide support and advice to community management groups and organisations on the technical arrangements for a community centre/ facility including health and safety and building maintenance requirements, etc. The post holder will liaise with the Community Engagement Officer(s) to ensure that there is good communication to support groups and organisations in the delivery of activities and events from community centres.

**Community Centre Operations Officer** – post holders will be responsible for a large and medium community centre/ facility in a defined geographical area to ensure that the building is safe and welcoming with excellent customer service, to provide in house support to the groups and organisations that operate from the building; and to meet health and safety requirement and performance targets. Post holders will liaise with the Community Engagement Officer(s) to ensure that there is good communication to support groups and organisations in the delivery of activities and events from community centres/ facilities.

**Operations Development Technicians** – will be responsible for the practical support for groups and events at the small community centres/ facilities together with medium sized centres when they are not staffed. They will provide the “on-call” cover arrangements and assist with the induction and support of key holders.

**Commercial Development Officer** – the post holder will provide advice and practical support to the Neighbourhood Development Manager to enhance the opportunities for the promotion and marketing of services, activities and events. The support for publicising initiatives such as ‘Getting Involved’ will be the responsibility of the Commercial Development Officer.

Community engagement and empowerment are at the heart of the new arrangements building on existing good practice and post holders will be expected to establish strong relationships with local residents to provide tailored and practical day to day information, advice and support.

A glossary of the terms used in the report is outlined in Appendix 1.

#### **4. Details of Scrutiny**

This report is to be presented to the Neighbourhood Services and Community Involvement Scrutiny Commission on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2014.

#### **5. Financial, legal and other implications**

##### 5.1 Financial implications

There are no significant financial implications arising directly from this report.  
Colin Sharpe, Head of Finance, ext. 37 4081

## 5.2 Legal implications

Contract and property lawyers remain available to provide legal advice concerning the agreements proposed in this report. There are no further Legal Implications concerning the Recommendation in this Report. Jane McGovern and Greg Surtees, Legal Services, ext. 37 1421.

## 5.3 Equality Impact Assessment

The report describes a number of activities that aim to provide local community assets for use by local residents. The availability of these local assets and the range of potential activities that they can host will contribute to the following positive equality outcomes for local residents: an opportunity to engage in family and social life; an opportunity to express their identity as well as participate in and influence local community life; an opportunity to take part in potential learning and health related activities. All protected characteristics would benefit from access to these community assets.

Irene Kszyk, Corporate Equalities Lead

## 5.4 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

None.

## **6. Background information and other papers:**

None

## **7. Summary of appendices:**

None

## **8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?**

No

## **9. Is this a “key decision”?**

No

## Glossary of Terms

**Community Asset Transfer** – this is a formal process to transfer the ownership of land and buildings by the Council to communities for less than their market value. This is known as ‘discounted asset transfer’ or ‘asset transfer’. This shift in ownership of land and buildings from public bodies to communities is localism in action, giving greater powers to: community and voluntary sector organisation, community and social enterprises, or individuals looking to form a not-for-private-profit group to benefit their neighbourhood.

**Community Volunteering** – there are two elements to the scheme run in Community Services: Scheme One: a more formal process designed to enable volunteers to gain work based experience/ training from recruitment onwards similar in structure to that which they could expect to be involved in within an actual paid environment.

Scheme Two: designed to recognise that not all volunteers are looking to gain work experience but rather to offer their skills and experience to support their local community facility or organisation.

**‘Getting Involved’** – this is an initiative to encourage local community groups to work alongside the Council to ensure that community centres within their areas meet the needs of local residents. This includes being a community volunteer, a community group leader; or as part of a constituted community organisation.

**Lease Agreement** – this is a legal document for a property or land prepared by the owner which allows another party the use for a specific period and payment. The agreement also sets out the terms of use.

**Partnership Agreement** (in Community Services) - this is an agreement between the Council and another party which has no legal standing but which outlines the responsibilities each party along with their joint responsibilities in relation to a community centre. The Agreement also covers practical arrangements for communications, meetings and funding including room hire incentive payments from the Council.

**Service Level Agreement** – this is a legal document between two parties for the delivery of agreed service outcomes and outputs by one party for specific financial support from the other party.

**Community Management** – a range of different arrangements for constituted groups and organisations to manage/operate Council owned community buildings in association with the City Council.

**Access Control/ Key Holding** – a computerised access control system allowing authorised community key holders to access a community facility for an activity or event without the presence of a Council employee. The system allows for safeguarding of both the key holder and the Council and remote support is provided by the Council on request to ensure that all eventualities are covered.