

COUNCIL OWNED OR MANAGED COMMUNITY FACILITIES ACROSS DUMFRIES AND GALLOWAY

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with options regarding how lessons can be learnt from the Community Facilities Review to date and how these can be applied with a view to extending the review to the remaining community facilities that are still under Council ownership and management.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:-

2.1 consider the process of the community facilities review to date (paragraphs 3.10 to 3.17);

2.2 note the results of the survey monkey questionnaire (paragraphs 3.18 to 3.23 and **Appendix 4**);

2.3 note the remaining 39 community facilities which are detailed within **Appendix 2 (Table 1, 2 & 3)** which have not formed part of the community facilities review to date;

2.4 agree the six properties noted within **Appendix 2 (Table 3)** and detailed within (paragraph 3.35) should not form part of the Community Facilities Review due to the historic relationship between the buildings and their towns coupled with the high level of usage, however if local communities are interested in managing any of these buildings through one of the options (paragraph 3.13) this should be taken forward;

2.5 agree that the remaining 33 properties should progress through the Community Facilities Review following the process (paragraphs 3.10 to 3.17 and paragraphs 3.24 to 3.40) as part of the budget development process in 2017/2018 & 2018/2019 in two tranches as detailed within **Appendix 3**; and

2.6 agree arrangements for future communications to take forward the Community Facilities Review (paragraphs 3.41 to 3.44).

3. Considerations

Background

3.1 The Council agreed savings of £283k through the Community Facilities Review process in 2013/2014 and 2014/2015.

3.2 At the commencement of the Community Facilities Review in 2013, in total across Dumfries and Galloway there were 68 community facilities owned by Dumfries and Galloway Council, 29 of which have, or are in the process of going through the Community Facilities Review 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 as detailed in **Appendix 1**.

3.3 Community facilities are made up of town halls, village halls and community centres which provide space for groups of individuals and community groups to meet and undertake group activities. Many of the Council's community facilities are run by community based management committees. The arrangements under which these

management committees operate are historical and vary widely across the region including levy or rental payments.

3.4 Historically, the provision of access to community facilities across the region was inconsistent and there was duplication of provision in some communities.

3.5 The basis of the Community Facilities Review was to reduce the cost of community facilities to the Council by transferring the responsibility for managing a facility to a local management committee or Trust for the benefit of the local community coupled with reducing the number of Council buildings in line with the Council policy of 'Fewer but Better Assets'.

3.6 The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 will provide new powers to communities, for example, Community Right to Buy Land, Common Good and Community Planning. It will provide community bodies with a right to request to purchase, lease, manage and/or use land and buildings belonging to local authorities, listed Scottish public bodies or Scottish Ministers.

3.7 It is recognised that Council properties which are not appropriate for direct management by the Council for the future can continue to play a key role in communities and ensure that facilities are not lost to those that need them. This approach allows communities to become empowered; work together to develop the facility; and work in partnership with other organisations to provide a hub for community activity for the benefit of those living within each community, and therefore links directly with the Community Empowerment Act.

3.8 Experience gained from the review during 2013/2014 and 2014/2015 included the need to:

- set up and standardise management agreements/service level agreements;
- build capacity with communities;
- consider staffing implications and Human Resources policies; and
- set realistic timelines.

3.9 In general, communities are in the best position to manage and run their own local community facilities for the benefit of the local community.

Process to Date

3.10 To date, throughout the delivery of the Community Facilities Review 2013/2014 and during 2014/2015 there was a consistent approach and message which has been delivered to communities.

3.11 The rationalisation of community facilities has been managed as a change programme with departmental resources applied for co-ordination including establishing a programme plan/ milestones, repairs completed to buildings following a condition survey, service delivery issues, HR issues, staff and trade union communications and community and customer engagement.

3.12 In conjunction with Property and Architectural Services a standard approach has been taken across the board to ensure that each property is safe and wind and water tight.

This work is progressed following the completion of a condition survey at each facility and agreement of a finalised scope of work in conjunction with Management Committees. Work is funded through the Building/Property (Non-Schools) Capital budget.

3.13 There are four options available to Communities, Management Committee or Trusts which are as follows:

- **Standardised Management agreement** – short term (one to two years). The Council would remain responsible for keeping properties wind and water tight, the maintenance of large pieces of equipment and some elements of Health and safety i.e. legionella. This agreement can be used by management committees as a vehicle to a full asset transfer. Officers will be in regular contact with management committees and would meet with them a minimum of once a year to monitor progress after the facility has been transferred.
- **Long term lease** – 25 years – the Council would remain responsible for keeping properties wind and water tight only. Officers will be in regular contact with management committees and would meet a minimum of once a year to monitor progress after the lease is agreed.
- **Full Asset transfer** – Purchasing the building for less than best consideration price where the community body would be fully responsible for the building (internal & external) and all costs associated with it.
- **Closure** – This option would be deemed appropriate if either the facility has low usage or if the community are unwilling to take responsibility for managing the property (including costs). Alternative provision would be required for existing users.

3.14 In order to standardise the approach taken throughout Dumfries and Galloway under the standardised agreement or long term lease, Management Committees/Trusts are not charged a rental or levy fee, however they are responsible for the costs associated with their individual facilities and these are detailed in Table 1 below:

Table 1

Income/Expenditure costs associated with facilities	RESPONSIBILITY			
	Community - Standardised management agreement (1 – 2 years)	DGC	Community - Long term Lease (25 years)	DGC
Income Collection	√		√	
Electricity	√		√	
Oil/Gas	√		√	
Water	√		√	
National Non Domestic Rates	√		√	
Refuse	√		√	
Care Taker and Cleaning costs	√		√	
Cleaning materials	√		√	
Internal maintenance and repairs	√		√	
External maintenance and repairs	√		√	
Wind and watertight issues		√		√
Building Insurance		√		√
Maintenance and repair of heating system, electrical		√	√	

systems and plumbing systems				
Public Liability Insurance	√		√	
Contents Insurance	√		√	
Hygiene Disposal	√		√	
Pest Control	√		√	
H&S – Portable Appliance testing (PAT)	√		√	
H&S – Legionella Testing		√	√	
H&S – Fire Extinguishers testing		√	√	
H&S – Fire Alarm/emergency light testing		√	√	
H&S – FESE – Fixed Electrical		√		√
H&S - Asbestos		√		√
Marketing & advertising	√		√	

3.15 Officers provide Management Committees/Trusts with the following information (where applicable):

- Background & history to the Community Facilities Review (including Committee reports and decisions);
- Copy of the condition survey;
- Confirmed works to be completed through the Building/Property (Non-Schools) Capital Budget;
- Title Deed Information;
- Actual Income and Expenditure associated with the facility over the last 3 – 4 years;
- Information on where exemptions or discounts may apply particularly in relation to National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR), water charges and refuse charges;
- Information regarding other aspects of costs that the committee may need to take into consideration;
- Information on Charitable Organisations/SCIO's;
- Information on external organisation where further advice may be available;
- DGC's current fees and charges;
- User groups and user figures;
- Options with regards to short term management agreement, long term lease agreement and asset transfer;
- Advice on what training would be available to committees;
- General support and advice throughout and after the process.

3.16 Whilst it is acknowledged that it has been important for committees to have a 'single point of contact' within the Council who can advise and direct them as necessary to seek further advice either from other Council departments or external organisations, the structure of the new Communities Department provides for advice to be made available more locally to support communities through the Community Planning and Engagement Team, as well as liaison on service delivery and operational matters through the Community Assets team.

3.17 Where a community takes over the management of a community facility through a management agreement, there may be an impact to cleaning and caretaker staff. In some cases, employment contracts may transfer from the Council to a management committee via a TUPE transfer. However, there may also be opportunities for facilities to be managed differently when staff members retire or are redeployed.

Survey Monkey Questionnaire

3.18 Members of our communities, Facility Management Committees, User Groups, Community Councils and Ward Members were requested to complete a "Survey Monkey" questionnaire to provide Officers with their views on the Community Facilities Review process to date and to seek their opinions on the approach which has been taken and how this can be improved for the future.

3.19 The survey monkey questionnaire was sent to all parties via email on Wednesday 13 April 2016 and closed at 5pm on Tuesday 26 April 2016.

3.20 Overall, a total of 19 responses were received, representing a 16.6% response rate. **Appendix 4** details the results of the survey in relation to each of the questions asked, however these results have been anonymised to ensure confidentiality.

3.21 Comments are in relation to 15 out of the 29 (51.7%) community facilities across Dumfries and Galloway which formed part of the community facilities review during 2013/2014 & 2014/2015.

3.22 A snapshot of the lessons that can be learnt from the survey monkey questionnaire can be summarised within the following statements:

- Realistic timescales required in order to ensure the feasibility and viability of the facility within the community;
- Consistent, clear and concise information regarding the community facilities review to each and every community/facility;
- Openness and transparency;
- Equipment storage provision within alternate facilities;
- More information regarding funding information;
- Information regarding the condition of the building and works required;
- Transport links;
- Ensure training is made available to all communities and committees who require it particularly around health and safety, funding opportunities and building capacity.

3.23 A copy of this report including the questionnaire results has been sent to all Communities, Facility Management Committees, User Groups, Community Councils and Ward Members who were initially asked to complete the survey.

Remaining Council Owned Community Facilities

3.24 Of the remaining 39 Council owned Community Facilities which have not formed part of the Community Facilities Review to date; 21 facilities are presently run by Management Committees; and 18 facilities are managed and run by Dumfries and Galloway Council. These are detailed in **Appendix 2 (Table 1, 2 & 3)**.

3.25 The total 2015/16 revenue budget for these facilities, exclusive of repairs, maintenance, health and safety and insurance is £474,475 (Communities and Shared Premises budgets).

3.26 To be effective it is acknowledged that the transfer of community facilities requires significant community buy-in and Council engagement. Whilst the reduction in revenue budget associated with maintaining facilities has been significant, it should be recognised that there have been additional benefits for communities and facilities which were anticipated at the outset of the review process. There remains further potential to realise these benefits across the asset base. Officers would therefore recommend commencing this phase of the Community Facility Review with immediate effect, to seek to make progress in transferring facilities and achieve financial savings from 1 April 2017.

3.27 It is anticipated that the **some** communities who use the facilities detailed in **Appendix 2** may have the interest and capacity, with support from Communities staff, to enter into a management agreement, long term lease or asset transfer of the building. However, due to the costs associated with some buildings it will certainly require significant lead in times to engage with groups and bring groups to a point where they will be viable and sustainable. A two-stage approach is therefore recommended across financial years 2017/18 and 2018/19 as detailed within **Appendix 3**.

3.28 It is also recognised that some facilities may be subject to additional complexity due to issues over title, including potential Common Good ownership. By beginning the process of review now, such issues can be highlighted at an early stage to enable financial impact to be taken into account before the 2017/18 budget process.

3.29 Beginning the process of seeking transfer of facilities at this stage in the financial year should enable a detailed appraisal of achievable savings for 2017/18 and 2018/19 to be brought forward as part of the budget process for each of these financial years.

3.30 There will require to be clear agreements with realistic timescales and expectations of the community appetite to assume responsibility for facilities, to coordinate with colleagues in CYPLL and Corporate Services (Property and Architectural Services, (Estates Management team and Architects) and Legal Services) to ensure the title deeds of properties and to determine what leases are in place at present and if these can be updated.

3.31 The facilities which continue to be managed and run by Dumfries and Galloway Council. Therefore in order to transfer these to the community significant work will be required with considerable lead in times in order to engage with the communities, establish a management committee to take on the responsibility of running and managing these facilities and ensure the viability and feasibility of these for the future.

3.32 In order for Dumfries and Galloway Council to ensure we have 'Fewer but better assets' within the heart of our communities, where there is suitable alternate provision available within respective communities, then it would be recommended that some community facilities potentially close through consultation with Ward Members and communities. The final decision for closure would be the responsibility of Communities Committee.

3.33 Where there is no suitable alternate provision for user groups then communities will be requested to take over management or ownership of their local facility through one of the options detailed with paragraph 3.13.

3.34 Where communities do not wish to take management and/or financial responsibility for their facilities then it is recommended that fees and charges/rental payments should be increased to reflect and cover the cost of running the building.

3.35 As detailed within **Appendix 2 (Table 3)**, there are 6 properties (McMillan Hall Newton Stewart, Lochmaben Town Hall, Victoria Halls, Annan, Lockerbie Town Hall, Castle Douglas Town Hall and Dalbeattie Town Hall) throughout Dumfries and Galloway which are managed as Community Facilities, but which due to their historic status and /or current usage are not recommended for inclusion within the Community Facilities Review process at this time. If, however, there is genuine and viable interest in individual communities taking management and financial control of these buildings then this can be taken forward. The revenue budget aligned to these properties is £189,296.

3.36 The 12 Community Facilities which are presently managed and run by Dumfries and Galloway Council have a revenue budget of £74,347 as detailed in **Appendix 2 (Table 1)**.

3.37 The 21 community facilities which are currently run and managed by Management Committees across the region continue to have varying forms of management agreements or leases in place. These are detailed within **Appendix 2 (Table 2)** and have a net revenue budget of £210,832.

3.38 It is recommended that the 18 community facilities detailed in **Appendix 3 (Table 1)** progress through this process in a consistent manner as detailed within this report with a transfer and completion date of 31 March 2017. This would create a potential revenue budget saving of £80,310 effective as of 1 April 2017.

3.39 It is acknowledged that the remaining 15 community facility detailed in **Appendix 3 (Table 2)** may require a longer lead in time due to costs associated with facilities, building capacity within communities and forming management committees within communities. Therefore, it would be recommended that these facilities commence the process immediately but with a view to completing the process by 31 March 2018. This would provide a potential revenue budget saving of £204,869 and would provide full year savings as of 1 April 2018.

3.40 All Communities, Ward Members and Management Committees of specifically mentioned Community Facilities have received a copy of this report and appendices. Their attention has been brought to the recommendations contained within the report.

Proposed Future Communication

3.41 Communication is fundamental to the progress of the Community Facilities Review and officers will communicate with Ward Members linked to community facilities on a minimum of a monthly basis to ensure that there is a full awareness of progress made.

3.42 Officers will also communicate with Community Councils, and other local stakeholders as appropriate, within each area.

3.43 Future reports to Communities Committee will detail specific communication made with Ward Members and Communities to determine and agree appropriate decisions if an agreement cannot be met locally.

3.44 In conjunction with the Communications unit, officers will design a web page specifically for the Community Facilities Review in Dumfries and Galloway on the various options of management of facilities or asset transfer which communities can refer to.

4. Governance Assurance

The Head of Finance and Procurement; the Head of Legal and Democratic Services; and the Senior Manager Property and Architectural Services have been consulted and are in agreement with the terms of the report.

5. Impact Assessment

As this report does not propose a change in policy, the formal adoption of a plan, policy or strategy it is not necessary to complete an Impact Assessment.

Author(s)

NAME	DESIGNATION	CONTACT DETAILS
Karen Brownlie	Service Manager Change Programme	karen.brownlie@dumgal.gov.uk

Approved by

NAME	DESIGNATION
Harry Thomson	Head of Civic and Local Services

Appendices – Four

1 – Dumfries and Galloway Council properties involved in the Community Facilities Review 2013/2014 & 2014/2015

2 – Community Facilities which have not formed part of the Community Facilities Review to date

3 – Community Facilities – linked to the 2017/2018 & 2018/2019 budget savings development process

4 - Community Facilities –Survey Monkey Questionnaire Analysis

Background Papers:-

[Report and Minute - Community and Customer Services Committee - 8 March 2016 - Item 9 - Update on the Community Facilities Review](#)

[Report and Minute - Wigtown Area Committee \(Business\) - 10 February 2016 - Item 7 - Drummore Community Hall](#)

[Report and Minute - Wigtown Area Committee \(Business\) - 13 January 2016 - Item 7 - Update on Community Facilities Review](#)

[Report and Minute - Community and Customer Services Committee - 15 December 2015 - Item 10 - Update on the Community Facilities Review](#)

[Report and Minute - Community and Customer Services Committee - 20 October 2015 - Item 8 - Update on the Community Facilities Review](#)

[Report and Minute - Stewartry Area Committee \(Business\) - 15 July 2015 - Item 8 - Glenkens Community Centre](#)

[Report and Minute - Stewartry Area Committee \(Business\) - 15 July 2015 - Item 9 - Waverley Hall, Creetown](#)

[Report and Minute - Wigtown Area Committee \(Business\) - 1 July 2015 - Item 8 - Sorbie Village Hall, Sorbie](#)

[Report and Minute - Community and Customer Services Committee - 15 April 2014 - Item 4 - Community Facilities Review](#)

[Report and Minute - Dumfries and Galloway Council 6 February 2014 - item 6 - Presentation of Administration Budget 2014/15](#)

[Report and Minute Policy and Resources Committee 21 January 2014 - item 6 - Scrutiny of Budget Proposal 2014/15 - 2016/17](#)

[Report and Minute - Dumfries and Galloway Council 7 February 2013 - Item 6 - The Budget and Council Tax 2013/14](#)
