

Report to Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Agenda
Item:
A.2

Meeting Date: 13th October 2016
Portfolio: Communities and Housing
Key Decision: Not Applicable:
Within Policy and
Budget Framework NO
Public / Private Public

Title: COMMUNITY CENTRE & FEDERATION UPDATE
Report of: The Deputy Chief Executive
Report Number: SD21/16

Purpose / Summary:

Carlisle City Council currently supports 11 Community Associations to run and manage Community Centres across the district. This report provides an overview of the current financial position, how associations have been supported over recent years and the intentions of the Carlisle and District Federation of Community Organisations moving into the future.

Recommendations:

Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel are asked to note the information in this report and in the verbal updates provided by Council Officers and the Chair of the Carlisle and District Federation of Community Organisation and consider and comment on current relationships.

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Carlisle City Council currently supports 11 Community Associations to run and manage Community Centres across the district. A Service Level Agreement is used to monitor the relationship between the City Council and Community Associations and the Community Associations performance.

Revenue funding is provided directly to Community Associations following the submission of a business plan by the Community Association on an annual basis. In total Carlisle City Council's budgeted revenue funding for Community Associations in 2015/16 stands at £235,600. In addition to this revenue funding a collective Information Technology budget of £3,300 is available to support Community Associations and a Training Budget is allocated for Community Associations to fund joint training sessions, this amounts to £9,000.

Alongside this direct / devolved funding support, Carlisle City Council own 9 of the Community Centres. As the owner of these buildings Carlisle City Council undertake the reactive and planned maintenance on these buildings and insure them, with the exception of Down a Gate Community Centre which is on full repairing lease. Longtown is currently being held in trust and as part of this agreement Carlisle City Council also undertake any planned or reactive maintenance. In total Carlisle City Council has budgeted £128,100 for planned and reactive maintenance and a further £28,000 for buildings insurance in 2015/16. Some Community Associations also benefit from horticultural maintenance valued at a cumulative £8,900 by the City Council. Carlisle City Council's total budgeted spend on Community Associations / Centres therefore stands at £412,900 (discounting accommodation and support re-charges).

Carlisle City Council also offer a range of in-kind and other support, including discretionary rate relief to the Community Associations as registered charities; IT consultancy and support; and business development advice and general liaison.

Prior to the 2016/17 financial year, Carlisle City Councils budgeted expenditure on the grant funding stream stood at £291,500. The Council's own budgetary challenges (over recent and future years) were well known to Community Associations and the Carlisle and District Federation of Community Organisations and in February 2015 Carlisle City Council started to consult with associations on how to deliver a cumulative saving of £94,000 from the Community Centre grant funding stream over a 3 year period.

A number of consultation events were held throughout 2015, and in April 2016 the Council implemented a new 3 year funding proposal in agreement with all centres. Some centres opted for a phased reduction over a 3 year period and others opted for a one off reduction.

To further support community associations through this difficult process, Carlisle City Council secured £10,000 from the Community Ownership and Management of Assets Programme. The aim of this project was to improve the financial sustainability of centres, increase and improve asset management, develop better co-ordination of services between centres including joint procurement opportunities and improve services delivered by centres for the benefit of the local community.

Working in conjunction with the Carlisle and District Federation of Community Organisation, the City Council used the funding to deliver a series of capacity building training workshops focussing on business planning, charitable income generation and trade, partnerships and consortia, trustees training and marketing and promotion. Each of the 11 community associations also received the support of a dedicated relationship manager throughout the project alongside 6 additional days of specialist consultancy.

Around the same time, the Carlisle and District Federation of Community Associations was also awarded 5.5 days of consultancy support from the Community Ownership Management of Assets programme to help the Federation to produce a development plan, to support them to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and to aid them with funding a management/ development role for the Federation.

As a result of this work the Federation reconstituted itself as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation in April 2016 in the context of its National Federation winding up earlier this year, the continued worsening financial climate for its members, and the increasing importance of the services it provides to the communities in the area. The Federation's object is to assist its members by providing management, governance and other support. It intends in the first instance to develop information, capacity building and training resources, and joint tendering, funding applications and commissioning arrangements for the benefit of its members. It also wishes to establish a formal partnership with Carlisle City and Cumbria County Councils to help develop the contribution which its members can make to the plans for the area. The Federation is currently seeking funding to enable it to employ a Business and Development Manager to help take this work forward.

The City Council's lead officers and the Chair of the Carlisle and District Federation of Community Organisations will be attending the COSP meeting to take questions on recent changes to funding relationships, the support provided to Community Centres and the further development of the relationship with the Federation.

2. PROPOSALS

2.1 N/App

3. CONSULTATION

3.1 N/App

4. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel requested an update on the current status of relationships with Community Centres and the Federation in light of changes in recent months.

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**Appendices
attached to report:**

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- **None**

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS:

Chief Executive's -

Deputy Chief Executive –

Economic Development –

Governance –

Local Environment –

Resources -