



# REPORT TO EXECUTIVE

## PORTFOLIO AREA: Community Engagement

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Date of Meeting: 4<sup>th</sup> June 2010

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Public

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Key Decision: No

Recorded in Forward Plan:

No

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Inside Policy Framework

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**Title:** Community Centre Grants

**Report of:** Assistant Director – Community Engagement

**Report reference:** CD04/10

### Summary:

This report:

- Provides information on a meeting held with the Portfolio Holder Health and Communities with community centre managers and trustees regarding the implementation of a decision to reduce the grants to the centres from April 2010.
- Recommends a schedule for amending the grant based on an equal percentage reduction for each centre's allocation.

### Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Executive;

- a) receives the notes of the Community Centres meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2010
- b) adopts the schedule for reduction in grants to community centres based on an equal percentage applied to each centre over three years, as Appendix B.

**Contact Officer:** Keith Gerrard

**Ext:** 7350

**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

## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2010, The Executive confirmed its decision to reduce grants to Community Centres by £68,000 over a three year period. (EX.021/10)
- 1.2 A meeting was held with representatives of community centres trustees and centre managers, to offer them an opportunity to contribute to the discussion about how the reduction would be applied.
- 1.3 That meeting took place on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> April. It did not endorse any specific mechanism to implement the reduction. A commitment was made by the Portfolio Holder for Health and Communities that the Executive would receive a report of the meeting. (Notes of the meeting are attached at Appendix A).
- 1.4 In the light of the outcome of the discussion with centre representatives, the Executive are requested to confirm the mechanism for applying the reductions as an equal percentage from each centre over a three year period starting from April 2010. A schedule showing the adjustment of grants to each Centre on that basis over the three year period, is attached as Appendix B

## **2. CONSULTATION**

- 2.1 Consultation to Date -Two meetings have taken place with representatives from community centres, one in May 2009 and one in April 2010 and the issue has been the subject of regular discussions at centre management committees and at individual meetings between centre managers and council officers. Centres have also been involved in discussions with an external consultant as part of a wider community support service review.
- 2.2 Consultation proposed – no further consultation planned

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Executive:
  - a) receives the notes of the Community Centres meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2010
  - b) adopts the schedule for reduction in grants to community centres based on an equal percentage applied to each centre over three years, as Appendix B. That is 6.2% in year one, 6.7% in year two and 7.2% in year three.

## **4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 To enable the process of making the required financial reduction of community centre grants to be implemented, according to the decision made at the Executive meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2010 (EX.021/10)

## **5 IMPLICATIONS**

- Staffing/Resources – None
- Financial – (Finance to add comments)
- Legal – The Council is responsible for setting of its budget and The Executive is responsible for its implementation providing that this is within budget and also the policy framework. The Executive resolved that cuts of £68,000 to Community centre budgets should be made. This decision was subsequently called in and Community Overview and Scrutiny Panel advised that a)The Executive would ensure that the specific reductions in funding to the individual Centres were determined in a fair and equitable manner; and b)although the Council did not undertake equality impact analysis on partners, discussions would take place with Community Centres on the impact of the reductions in grant which were modest in size relative to the total funding. The purpose of this report is so that the Executive can ensure the reductions in funding are calculated in a fair and equitable manner.
- Corporate – None
- Risk Management – There is a risk that publicity, negative to the Council's reputation, will emerge from the decision to reduce the grants budget to community centres, but there is a coherent response available to this if necessary.
- Environmental – None. The centres' maintenance budget remains in place and this is focussed on ensuring the buildings are environmentally sound.
- Crime and Disorder – none
- Impact on Customers – Any potential impact to customers will be managed through the centre centres' own operational policy. A city council officer attends centre management committees and will monitor this.

- Equality and Diversity – Any potential impact to equality and diversity will be managed through the centre centres' own operational policy. A city council officer attends centre management committees and will monitor this.

## Impact assessments

**Does the change have an impact on the following?**

<b>Equality Impact Screening</b>	<b>Impact Yes/No?</b>	<b>Is the impact positive or negative?</b>
Does the policy/service impact on the following?		
Age	<b>N</b>	
Disability	<b>N</b>	
Race	<b>N</b>	
Gender/ Transgender	<b>N</b>	
Sexual Orientation	<b>N</b>	
Religion or belief	<b>N</b>	
Human Rights	<b>N</b>	
Social exclusion	<b>N</b>	
Health inequalities	<b>N</b>	
Rurality	<b>N</b>	

**If you consider there is either no impact or no negative impact, please give reasons:**

It is not considered that the level of the budget reduction recommended will directly or necessarily have a negative impact on current or potential beneficiaries, volunteers or staff. Individual centre management policies and performance will be monitored by Council officers to ensure this is the case.

**If an equality Impact is necessary, please contact the P&P team.**

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**COMMUNITY CENTRES' SEMINAR**  
**FRIDAY 12<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2010 @ 2PM**  
**COMMITTEE ROOM A, B & C, CIVIC CENTRE**

**PRESENT**

Cllr Trish Vasey	Belah Community Centre
Dave Garlick	“ “
Margaret Armstrong	Botcherby Community Centre
Joan Edgar	“ “
Helen Fisher	“ “
Bob Allan	Brampton Community Centre
Ann Oswin	“ “
Bev Chandler	“ “
Michael Hodgkinson	Currock House Community Centre
Cllr Colin Glover	“ “
Heman Holliday	“ “
Louise Hooper	“ “
Cllr Hugh McDevitt	Denton Holme Community Centre
Malcolm Hannah	“ “
Ann Hannah	“ “
Clair Hannah	“ “
Joyce Ackerley	Greystone Community Centre
Cllr Reg Watson	“ “
Cllr Carole Rutherford	Harraby Community Centre
Margaret Clapperton	“ “
Liz Jackson	“ “
Nigel Williamson	Longtown Memorial Hall Community Centre
Iris Rogan	Morton Community Centre
Geoff Clewlow	“ “
Pam Graham	“ “
Cllr John Bell	“ “
Tony Moynan	Petteril Bank Community Centre
Cllr Dave Wilson	“ “
Cllr Donald Cape	“ “
Cllr Olwyn Luckley	Carlisle City Council, Exec Cttee Member & Portfolio Holder
Peter Mason	“ “
Steven Clinton	“ “
Rob Burns	“ “
Keith Gerrard	“ “
Dave Trussler	“ “
Val Haresign	“ “

Cllr Olwyn Luckley, Portfolio Holder for Health & Communities welcomed everyone and introduced key officers from the City Council.

Cllr Wilson thought the Press should have been invited as the meeting was discussing serious decisions about cuts to the Community Centre grants which affect the community as a whole.

Cllr Luckley said notes will be taken at this meeting and reported back to the Executive.

Cllr McDevitt asked for a copy of the notes be sent to all attendees. Cllr Luckley confirmed this would happen.

Ann Hannah questioned why, when the decision to cut Community Centre grants was defeated at Full Council and now it has gone back to the Executive who are still going ahead with the cuts albeit a lesser figure.

Cllr Luckley referred to the Council's Constitution which, together with legislation, provides the Executive with the power to implement certain decisions even if the Full Council has a different view and that in this case, the Executive had taken serious notice of the Council's decision and made amendments to the savings required.

Rob Burns said that the decision taken had been made under a legal and democratic process and officers have been charged with implementing this decision on behalf of the Council. The purpose of today's meeting was therefore, to discuss how best to make the £68,000 savings over 3 years and not to discuss the validity of the decision. Two potential options have been tabled for discussion but equally this meeting provided an opportunity to discuss any further options that anyone has to make.

Cllr Donald Cape asked why do the savings have to come from Community Centres?

Cllr Luckley said it had been agreed that savings had to come from Community Support budget as a whole and £153,000 savings in total were required. Some of these have already been made from other services within the Community Support budget.

Cllr Glover said that Community Overview & Scrutiny have been involved in this process from the start and he read out a recommendation made by O & S to the Executive which calls upon the Executive not to proceed with cuts to the funding of Community Centres in Carlisle given the central role that all our Community Centres provide in ensuring access for all sections of the community to local cost effective facilities and activities.

He added that the political process had not listened to the voice of the community and he felt that group should not be helping the Executive make this decision.

County Cllr Reg Watson said that the County Council are continuing to put money into community centres and these Centres are run mainly by part time staff and largely by volunteers therefore the City and County Council are basically putting in pennies and getting pounds in return. He felt the Executive should find other sources for the savings.

Cllr McDevitt said he had continually asked for copies of the working papers on which the decision was based on but no-one has been able to supply them.

Cllr Luckley said Cllr McDevitt has had all the papers that are available and he had been part of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel which had discussed the whole Community Services Review.

Cllr Rutherford referred to the debate in Full Council whereby Labour Councillors identified other areas for the savings to come from including the training budget which is not fully utilised.

Cllr Cape was surprised at such a good turn out at the meeting considering they were being asked to make a decision on cuts that affect them.

Bob Allan referred to the two options and found it difficult to work out how the figures had been calculated but he said that for every £1 that the City Council gave, the Centres spend an additional £7 so this is a good investment for the Council.

He also felt unhappy about the timing of these discussions. Community Centres were told in May 2009 at a meeting in Tullie House that the savings had to be made and it was emphasised to Officers then that Centres need plenty of notice to deal with the implications. Centres were then only told a few days before the start of the new financial year that only 50% of their grant would be released and they are now into the new financial year and do not know what balance they will receive.

Rob Burns said that the remainder of the Centres' grants would be paid as soon as a decision on how much they would be reduced by had been taken and he referred again to the 2 options to prompt discussion on the way forward:

Option 1 is a reduction across the board of 6.2% - 7.2% per year over the 3 years  
Option 2 is based on Option C from the Solace Report which the Consultant had based on a set of criteria which had been made available to those present at the meeting.

Cllr Bell said that the Solace Report is now out of date and the reductions listed in Option 2 are 3 year old figures and times have changed since then in the Community Centres. He recommended that the meeting oppose both these options and ask the Executive to preserve the good work that the centres do for their local communities.

Pam Graham said the figures are way out of date as Morton have invested the surplus that they had 3 years ago into improvement works and they will seriously face the possibility of staff redundancies by July if they do not receive the rest of their grant this year.

She added that community centres have had a very good working relationship for many years and if we are asked to choose option 2 it would be setting community against community which is not how they work.

Iris Rogan re-iterated that Morton has invested the surplus that had been identified in Option 2 into enhancing the building.

Cllr Luckley recognised that Centres have funds set aside for development/improvement work and that the figures presented were not actual 'surplus' figures.

Malcolm Hannah said that Centres should not be at the meeting discussing any saving option but let the elected politicians make their decision. Management Committee Members need to go back to their local communities and make them aware of who is making these decisions. He also felt there were other areas of Council spending where savings could come from instead.

Cllr Watson said that although the discussions on these cuts are taking place few weeks before the election, a final decision will not be made till after the elections are over, because the next Executive will not take place until after the elections

Cllr Luckley said the City Council, on behalf of the tax-payer, has to make savings as there is a financial blizzard on the way and statutory responsibilities have to be sustained. There were no easy options to make these savings.

Nigel Williamson said he was opposed to any cuts but reluctantly would have to accept that cuts will happen. Councillor Bloxham and Mallinson are on Longtown's Management Committee and they want Longtown to look at what is best for individual centres, therefore he would go with Option 2 if put to a vote.

Cllr Luckley said the Executive want the community centres views on these options and any other options that may be raised today.

Ann Hannah said that the options had only been received a few days prior to the meeting and therefore have not had the time to take to their Management Committees for discussion. Option 1 could destroy some of the smaller centres and option 2 puts Morton at risk.

Cllr McDevitt referred again to the working papers behind the Solace Report that Officers will not release. Rob Burns stated that Cllr Mc Devitt has had everything that is available and there are no other documents. He said Cllr McDevitt and anyone else, who had requested it, had been given everything that was available and that Cllr McDevitt had also been privy to other discussions as part of the Overview and Scrutiny panels who had discussed the Review in detail.

Cllr Luckley defended Officers and said she has seen everything that is available.

Peter Mason said that the Consultant came up with his own views after meeting with representatives from community centres and taking all aspects into consideration. He agrees that Option 2 is probably no longer viable as some of the financial details are out of date.

Bob Allan asked for clarification – Option 2 was originally Option C in the Solace Report? Rob Burns confirmed this as correct.

Bob Allan also felt that we should not be discussing this at all as it is an awkward issue and he feels the Full Council's resolution "not to proceed with the cuts to community centres" sums up the position.

**Cllr Bell said that it was obvious no Centre want cuts and he proposed that the meeting sends a message back to the Executive to reject outright these options and to state that they do not require any cuts to community centres as they value the service they provide to their local communities and ask the Executive to look elsewhere for the savings.**

Cllr Glover said 'Communities' is an important Portfolio area and we need to engage and empower our communities. He is aware each Directorate has to make savings but he is confident there are other ways to make them. He doesn't feel the Executive is on the communities' side and they need to listen to what their local communities are saying. He feels the Executive have got in wrong this time and it is not too late to put it right.

Rob Burns asked for any further views or opinions – None

**Cllr John Bell's proposal was seconded by Ann Hannah then put to a vote and it was unanimously agreed to send this message back to the Executive.**



Cllr Luckley said she has listened to all the comments and emphasised that the City Council has had a strong relationship with the Community Centres for many years and has seen the work the Community Support Team has given in training and support and the building maintenance team alongside centre developments and this is all very much appreciated. She is sorry we are in this position today but the savings have to be made.

Rob Burns explained the process from now –

- That the Executive had agreed to make an overall saving of £68,000 from the Community Centres Grants and to offer the Centres an opportunity, collectively, to agree how that decision might be implemented. That is why this meeting had been arranged.
- The feelings of the people represented at the meeting would be reported back to the Executive, including the proposal put by Cllr Bell and agreed by all representatives present.
- The Executive would then take account of views of the meeting and make its own decision about how the savings should be implemented

Pam Graham was concerned they have only been paid 50% of their grant on the assumption that this decision would be resolved shortly. (\*\* See note below)

Ann Hannah requested that a copy of the notes be sent to all attendees. Rob confirmed this would happen and thanked all those attending for their frankness and hoped that whatever the outcome, the relationship between the Centres and the Council would remain strong and supportive.

\*\* Since the meeting it has been agreed that another quarter grant payment would be released after 1<sup>st</sup> May.

## Community Centre Grants 2010/11

Appendix 'B'

## Option 1

Description	2010/11	Year 1 (6.2% Reduction)		Year 2 (6.7% Reduction)		Year 3 (7.2% Reduction)		TOTAL SAVING
	Budget	Reduction	Budget	Reduction	Budget	Reduction	Budget	
Down-a -gate Community Centre	8,900	600	8,300	600	7,700	600	7,100	<b>1,800</b>
Belah Community Centre	19,400	1,200	18,200	1,200	17,000	1,200	15,800	<b>3,600</b>
Botcherby Community Centre	25,900	1,600	24,300	1,600	22,700	1,600	21,100	<b>4,800</b>
Brampton Community Centre	42,200	2,600	39,600	2,700	36,900	2,700	34,200	<b>8,000</b>
Currock CommunityCentre	36,700	2,300	34,400	2,300	32,100	2,300	29,800	<b>6,900</b>
Denton Holme Community Centre	21,800	1,400	20,400	1,400	19,000	1,400	17,600	<b>4,200</b>
Greystone Community Centre	16,300	1,000	15,300	1,000	14,300	1,000	13,300	<b>3,000</b>
Harraby Community Centre	43,500	2,700	40,800	2,700	38,100	2,700	35,400	<b>8,100</b>
Longtown Community Centre	54,100	3,400	50,700	3,400	47,300	3,400	43,900	<b>10,200</b>
Morton Community Centre	57,100	3,500	53,600	3,600	50,000	3,600	46,400	<b>10,700</b>
Petteril Bank Community Centre	21,800	1,400	20,400	1,400	19,000	1,400	17,600	<b>4,200</b>
Yewdale Community Centre	14,800	900	13,900	900	13,000	900	12,100	<b>2,700</b>