



Stevenage ***BOROUGH COUNCIL***

**Have your say on the
future development of
community centres
across the town**

Why Change?

Stevenage Borough Council currently maintains and offers grant support to 15 community centres across the town. These centres are managed by independent community associations and vary in delivery, opening hours and structure. Many centres have historical partnership arrangements with Stevenage Borough Council that are now outdated and often lead to a lack of creativity and innovation in how centres are used by their local community.

New modern options for the delivery of high quality and innovative community centre delivery now need developing alongside consultation with existing community associations and residents

What has happened to date?

A review of the current delivery model started in 2017. This initial review built upon reviews undertaken in 2003 and 2008. The review explored current operations across all sites and utilised Stevenage Community Association Network meetings to better understand some of the joint challenges and opportunities.

Community Associations were also invited to complete a questionnaire on current operations. This was combined with desk based research via Companies House and the Charity Commission. Based on feedback and direct engagement with community centres via the community development team strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were captured to help summarise the findings.

The review considered learning from elsewhere and explored a range of delivery models in existence which might be considered in the Stevenage context:

- 1. Community hubs – as neighbourhood service delivery points for a range of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) and public services, such as health care and housing support.**
- 2. Community ownership – Community Asset Transfer of sites to individual groups.**
- 3. VCS infrastructure – The development of an overarching trust for the management and operation of all community buildings.**
- 4. Cooperative models – Partnership models between local authorities and community organisations to drive effective operational models and social dividend for local communities.**

As part of the review process a Policy Advisory Session was held with elected members.

The session highlighted the need to consult with the town's residents on their needs and aspirations for 21st century community buildings in Stevenage.

The feedback reflected the need to develop a cooperative approach to engaging with existing community associations in the consultation and development of new models for community centre delivery and the need to address some of the operational challenges presented as part of this exercise.

The feedback highlighted the importance of community based buildings in Stevenage in achieving social cohesion, cultural development and access to specialist services, highlighting the commitment of Stevenage as a cooperative council in building stronger communities.

The review to date has highlighted the importance of engaging the broader population of Stevenage in establishing a vision for Community Centres of the future.

The review has highlighted the need to work more co-operatively with Community Associations to develop a future operating model. A co-operative agreement will establish a partnership approach over the coming year. The council will formalise its support for community associations through Rent in Kind, a 2019/20 delivery grant and dedicated community development support. In return Community Associations will be asked to ensure good governance and legal compliance arrangements and to support broader community development and community wellbeing objectives.

The alternative of maintaining current arrangements is not being presented as an option as it does not help to address more immediate issues facing community centres.

What are we consulting on?

We wish to consult residents in establishing a vision for community centre delivery across the town in the future. This consultation will work alongside co-operative partnership arrangements with community associations in identifying models of delivery for community centres in the future.

Who would this affect?

The consultation will affect future outcomes in the delivery of community centres across Stevenage

How will the consultation work?

Our consultation will form two parts to ensure we achieve a broad base of opinion and views from across the town. Consultation will run from _____ to _____

Focus Groups

Six focus groups will be organised in the following areas across the town:

(ADD)

Focus groups enable up to 10 local residents in each area to input ideas, opinions and views in a structured group work activity based on current community centre delivery models and potential new models. We will work with local resident and community centre groups in delivering these focus group sessions during 2019.

If you would like to take part in a focus group one of the above focus group sessions please contact:

Consultation Roadshow

We will be holding two consultation roadshow events at the following locations on the following dates/dates:

These events are open to all residents to attend, but we would appreciate you confirming your attendance at either event by following the link to the Eventbrite page

A consultation for young people aged 11-18 will be held by Stevenage Borough Youth Council on:

To attend please follow the link the Eventbrite page and register your place:

Digital Consultation Questionnaire

Our digital consultation will be available from to . To submit your views please fill out the consultation questionnaire and make sure it reaches us by

The survey is available online at:

(ADD)

Paper copies of the questionnaire are available on request in your local community centre foyer.

**You can send your completed questionnaire to the following freepost address
(ADD)**

If you need help to complete the questionnaire or have any questions about the consultation please call 01438 242247 or email

What happens next?

(ADD)