

**Committee:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 27 March 2014  
**Title:** New Partnerships  
**Portfolio Holder:** Cllr Howard Rolfe

**Agenda Item**

**11**

Key decision: **No**

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## Summary

1. The Council owns a number of assets that it is currently looking to use more effectively. It is developing partnership opportunities to introduce additional services or to maintain existing ones for the benefit of the residents of Uttlesford.

## Recommendations

2. To approve:
  - i. the partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for the use of the ground floor of the Lodge for an initial 2 year period.
  - ii. the partnership with Essex County Council's Library Service to use the Thaxted Community Information Centre (TCIC) as the new location for the library.

## Financial Implications

3. The use of the Lodge will be at zero rent. The use of the TCIC will be on a commercial basis with the rent to be agreed. The increase in incoming rent would be matched by additional rent payable to the primary landlord.

## Background Papers

4. None

## Impact

Communication/Consultation	Thaxted District Councillors and Thaxted Parish Council have been kept informed of the TCIC developments.
Community Safety	No impact.
Equalities	No impact.
Health and Safety	No impact.

Human Rights/Legal Implications	No impact.
Sustainability	No impact.
Ward-specific impacts	Saffron Walden Audley and Thaxted
Workforce/Workplace	No impact.

## Situation

### The Lodge House

5. The Council is the owner of the Lodge House and in recent years it has been used as offices and latterly for storage. The council approached the DWP in the autumn of 2013 to discuss the options around the services offered by the DWP and in particular JobCentre Plus. It was quickly identified that the provision of a training centre would mean Uttlesford residents could attend courses in Saffron Walden rather than having to travel outside of the district at their own cost. The DWP has indicated that such courses would in part be targeted at helping long term unemployed people back into work. In addition the DWP has expressed a wish to work with other agencies to deliver additional support to claimants.
6. Work has been undertaken on the Lodge House to provide a training room downstairs for the use of the DWP and at the same time the provision of a large meeting room/ training facility for use by UDC, and potentially other organisations, upstairs.
7. Once the building works have been completed the DWP will be arranging for the whole of the building to be re-decorated in lieu of any form of rent.
8. The initial agreement between UDC and the DWP will be until March 2016 at no cost to the DWP.

### Thaxted Community Information Centre (TCIC)

9. TCIC has been run by the council for a number of years. In more recent times the council has sub-let a room to Thaxted Parish Council and space to the Police. Unfortunately due to financial pressures the Police withdrew from the arrangement a couple of years ago. This has left UDC with an underutilised space which in turn has meant the landlord received a reduced rent.
10. The Library Service has been looking to relocate Thaxted Library from its current location in the grounds of Clarence House to a site in the centre of the village. Discussions have been held with Essex County Council and agreement in principle has been reached with them to relocate the library into the TCIC.

11. At present the library is only open a few mornings each week. By moving to the TCIC the library will be open 6/7 days per week depending upon the time of year.
12. In anticipation of the approval to proceed a tender has been issued for the necessary internal alterations. The cost of the alterations will be met by Essex County Council.
13. Discussions are being held with the landlord about a new 14 year lease which will give all parties a significant period of certainty of service delivery. The landlord has agreed to the necessary works being undertaken.
14. Once the lease has been agreed with the landlord the sub-lease will be finalised with the Library Service. The annual rent is expected to be £7,000 per annum.

## Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the DWP do not make use of the Lodge House	1 – A Memorandum of understanding and a 2 year agreement are being put in place.	1 – Would need to find alternative use for the room	The MOU and agreement should ensure appropriate use
ECC do not proceed with the move of the Library	1 – Letter of intent received and contractual negotiations in place.	1 – TCIC would carry on as now	Assurance received and awarding of tender will confirm commitment

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.