Committee:	Cabinet	Agenda Item
Date:	15 January 2015	6
Title:	Day Centres	V
Author:	Councillor Iris Evans	Item for decision
	Councillor Elizabeth Godwin	
	Councillor David Morson	

Summary

- 1. The Scrutiny Committee established a task group and terms of reference to review all the Day Centres at its meeting on 24 June 2014 following on from the previous review completed in 2010. The terms of reference were:
 - To assess how each of the five day centres operated and what services were provided.
 - To assess the usage of each centre.
 - To review the locations of the centres.
 - To assess what building works would be required and any likely costs.
 - To evaluate the findings and formulate recommendations for each centre.
- 2. The Day Centres are non-statutory services and since their establishment the national picture has changed. The implications of National initiatives including spending reviews and localism, demographics and local initiatives were considered by the group.
- 3. The Task Group had the benefit of visiting and meeting with the management committees of each of the centres in question Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Takeley, Thaxted and Stansted.
- 4. The report was presented to a meeting of the Scrutiny Committee on 25 November 2014. This report presents the recommendations that the Committee considered it appropriate to put to Cabinet for decision.

Recommendations

- 5. Cabinet is requested to approve the following recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee:
- 6. Officers should be requested to investigate the feasibility of providing a fixed term (1year), part-time resource (18.5 hours) to provide support and assistance to the day centres.
- 7. A review of the management agreements between the Council and the Management Committees that have responsibility for the day centres should be undertaken. This should reflect the changes in responsibilities of both the

council and management committees and include agreed service levels, monitoring and the relevant communication channels.

Financial Implications

8. The fixed term post is an unbudgeted expense. The post would need to be evaluated before a cost is known.

Background Papers

• None.

Impact

9.

Communication/Consultation	Meetings have been held with members of the Day Centre Management Committees, stakeholders, customers and relevant Officers.
	Further consultation will need to be undertaken to identify how service weaknesses can be addresses by any proposals coming out of this report.
Community Safety	Not applicable.
Equalities	All areas of equalities ad safeguarding were considered during the review. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed.
Health and Safety	At present there are no health and safety issues to address.
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None specifically.
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None at present. Any workforce issues which may arise from proposals coming out of this report will be addressed.

Background

10. The Day Centres have been operational for over 30 years to promote the welfare of people over 55 years of age or registered disabled by maintaining a

building for the purposes of recreation and other leisure time occupations and providing meals and refreshments for eligible persons.

- 11. There are five centres located within the district (Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Thaxted, Takeley and Stansted). The day centre buildings (with the exception of Stansted) are owned by this Council.
- 12. The Council is responsible for the buildings including external and internal maintenance, decoration and repairs costs. In addition the Council also pays for the costs of cleaning, electricity, gas, non-domestic rates, water, sewage, fire safety equipment and maintenance. Building and contents insurance for council owned equipment and parking costs incurred by voluntary day centre staff whilst on day centre duties are also paid by the Council.
- 13. The provision of the Day Centre service and management of buildings are the responsibility of the respective individual Management Committee, made up of groups of volunteers. They are completely separate from this Council.
- 14. Management Committees are responsible for the day-to-day running costs, insurances including contents, public and employers liability, licensing fees (if any), repair and replacement of furniture and equipment and health and safety compliance.
- 15. UDC used to allow the use of the buildings to the Management Committees in return for 50 per cent of any surpluses generated (exception of Stansted). However the scrutiny review in 2010 recommended that Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Takeley and Thaxted retain 100 per cent of surpluses (donations and lettings income) to help fund a Management role. This was agreed and implemented in 2012.
- 16. Investigations have discovered that the relationship between this Council and the day centres has changed over time in response to spending reviews and new government initiatives such as localism, Big Society and changing national trends.
- 17. The first centre was established in the late 1980s. To meet the County Council requirements of the "Care in the Community" legislation, the Day Centres provided meals on wheels service. All food would be prepared on site and distributed from the day centres. It was a successful service and due to the demand on the volunteers at the day centres paid staff were employed by this Council and a full time Meals on Wheels Officer oversaw the service.
- 18. The role of the Meals on Wheels Officer evolved and became the Meals on Wheels and Day Centres Officer. The role included maintaining regular contact with all day centres, to attend meetings where appropriate, coordinate maintenance issues and repairs and to provide advice to Management Committees on various issues.
- 19. Following a review in 1995 of the management responsibilities of both this Council and the individual Day Centre Management Committees, it was agreed that management agreements should be put in place. The

management agreements were introduced to provide management committees with the right to use and manage the building as a day centre subject to the provisions stated within the agreement. Over time the Agreement was updated to ensure the management committees provided insurance for contents, public liability, employer's liability, theft and personal accident and other users liability ultimately handing the entire responsibility of the Day Centre to the Committees.

- 20. In 2002 the County Council became entirely responsible for the meals on wheels service leaving this Council with no duty. The WRVS then leased the kitchens at Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow to continue the Meals on Wheels service and this Council negotiated the transfer of staff. This saw the end of the Day Centre Officer role and any Council service provision at the Day Centres. More recently the WRVS have withdrawn from the lease and no longer provide this service.
- 21. Since 2002 the Tenant Participation Officer has provided support to the Management Committees when needed, support which has been extremely valued by each Management Committee.

Current Situation

Management and Staffing

- 22. Each day centre continues to be run by a management committee. The committees are made up of between six and 10 volunteers, including a UDC Member and a Parish or Town Councillor. Recruitment of volunteers, not only to sit on the committee but also to work within the day centre is becoming increasingly difficult and numbers in some cases have decreased since the last scrutiny review.
- 23. The Day Centre Management Committees work to the same Management Agreement, with the aim to promote the welfare of people over 55 years of age or registered disabled. The Agreement has sufficient flexibility to enable each Centre to suit the needs of their customers and communities.
- 24. Whilst there is an obvious benefit in having flexibility within the agreements, having discussed the Management Agreements with the Management Committees, there seemed to be confusion over various issues within it despite guidance being given. This includes their maintenance and repair responsibilities and how to report any issues or to seek advice or assistance.
- 25. Over recent years it appears that some Management Committees are finding it difficult to accommodate the increased requirements that come with running a charity, employing staff, carrying out statutory checks and other facility-related duties.
- 26. During our investigations we discovered that some Management Committees are struggling. Some do not have up to date accounts, no job descriptions in place, some are having difficulties with payroll, some are not aware of their legal duties and responsibilities as employers.

- 27. In addition despite offers of regular Safeguarding training, which has been taken up by some of the committees, it become apparent that all do not have a full understanding of current Safeguarding issues particularly relating to their role as an employer and the use of volunteers and the potential impact on the customers.
- 28. It is important to remember that the Management Committees are all volunteers; none are paid to carry out this role. All put in many extra hours to keep the centres running and to provide a very good service for customers. In some cases they are not aware of the procedures that need to be followed or even how to implement them. This pressure has left some of the smaller committees at breaking point.
- 29. The difficulties some committees are experiencing could be due to the diminishing pool of volunteers to manage the facilities and associated employees/volunteers.
- 30. It was hoped that with the addition of the 50 per cent in donations and letting income that the Committees gained in 2012, it would enable them to fund a management resource. Ideally the resource would manage the centres to alleviate Management Committees and Officers so they are able focus on other areas.
- 31. Three of five Centres have used the income to employ a Manager. The other two centres used the additional funds to support other paid roles such as the Cook, who in those cases also manages the day-to-day running of the centre.
- 32. The specific duties of the paid staff vary between centres and all work additional hours without payment. It has become apparent that this role is not working as effectively in some centres as had been envisaged in the previous review as they continue to need the help and support from Council officers.

Operations and Services

- 33. Visiting the centres, meeting the committees and speaking with the customers demonstrated that the Management Committees and volunteers all continue to work extremely hard and go far beyond what is expected of them to provide a service for their customers, many of whom are regulars and visit more than once a week.
- 34. Surveying the customers using the centres it identified that the majority were aged between 70 to 90 years of age. The number of visitors would range from 10 to 30 on the occasional busier day at some centres.
- 35. Overall the popularity of the Day Centre service in some areas seems to be diminishing, and customer numbers are declining. The appeal of other low priced meals and drinks from other service providers is drawing customers away. In addition many villages and towns have alternatives available through the Church or other community services.

- 36. Takeley and Thaxted are both located opposite the Council's sheltered housing schemes. Upon investigation many of the sheltered housing tenants seem to prefer cooking their own meals and using the common rooms to socialise rather than visiting the centres. Very few sheltered housing tenants actually use the day centres.
- 37. In addition there still appears to be a stigma attached to the Day Centres. Most of the Centres have now changed their names to exclude Day Centre within the title but it seems that people are still put off from visiting them.
- 38. Each Management Committee has tailored their service to the needs of their customers to escape the stigma and to encourage use. Please see appendix 1 for the Day Centre Service Comparison table. Where opening early to serve breakfasts, teas, coffee and cakes works in one place, it was evident that is did not work at another. Thaxted trialled a subsidised bus service to bring customers to the centre for a coffee morning but this failed to bring in additional customers and has since stopped.
- 39. Saffron Walden, The Garden Room, market their service as a café, which seems to be appealing to a different market and attracting some under 70's. It is open all week from 9am to 1.30pm. They offer breakfasts, snacks, cakes, tea, coffee and a two course lunch. It is a popular Centre and often has 20 to 30 people for lunch in addition to the morning trade. The Committee has employed a Manager and the role appears to be working well. The Centre receives generous food and flower donations from Waitrose.
- 40. Crafton Room in Stansted appears to be a popular centre, open three days a week with customers coming in for tea, coffee and cake in the morning and then lunch later. Numbers for lunch range between 20 and 25. Other fundraising events are also successful as is letting of the building. The Committee have employed a manager, who is also the cook and works well above the hours contracted. They have a large pool of volunteers and drivers to ferry people to and from the centre. There is demand to open this centre for five days.
- 41. Takeley Day Centre is open twice a week, operating as a lunch club from 12pm to 1.30pm. Lunch costs £3.50 for two courses. Customer numbers usually reach 25 and no booking is required. Coffee mornings have been trialled but there was no take up. The Committee arrange a raffle once a week and often arrange subsidised day outings. In addition they have regular lettings to the Sparklers and Crocus Day Care. The Committee has decided not to employee a Manager, instead operations are split between the committee who all attend the centre to help out.
- 42. Thaxted Community Centre operates as a lunch club and is open all week from 12pm to 1.30pm. Lunch costs £4.50 for two courses. Customer numbers range between 10 and 15 and booking is required. Customers come in purely for their lunch. The Committee has decided not to employee a Manager and day-to-day management is provided by the cook.

- 43. The Rowena Davey Centre in Great Dunmow is open four days a week from 10am to 1.30pm, where a two course lunch is £5. They also offer tea, coffee and cake. The Centre has seen a reduction in visitors over the years, with Tuesday being the most popular session due to the attraction of the market with roughly 30 customers. Other days see customer numbers reaching between 10 and 15. Volunteers are reducing along with the committee members. There is a worry that the current committee is becoming frustrated and over-worked.
- 44. Research and conversations with Age UK, the Alzheimer's Society and Dementia Support have uncovered that there is a demand for a 'secure' day centre that offers adequate supervision. Some vulnerable adults are unable to attend the day centres as carers feel there is not the required level of support or supervision. Instead people now are now opting for the day centres run by Essex Cares as they have the level of supervision needed.

Buildings and Renovations

45. Some of the buildings are in poor state, which could also distract people from attending.

Stansted

- 46. The building is attractive and is owned by the Parish Council. There is a Licence to Occupy the building and UDC pays £11,600 to the Parish Council, which was the approximate equivalent amount paid to operate the building.
- 47. It appears to be a popular centre with customers coming in for tea, coffee and cake in the morning and then visit for lunch later. Numbers for lunch never fall below 15 and there appears to be demand for opening five days a week. Other fundraising events are also successful as is the letting of the building.
- 48. The Management Committee has good links with the Parish Council for any maintenance/repairs concerns.

Takeley

- 49. The day centre building is a small building, built around 1971. It is brick built and has a flat felted roof with aluminium windows. The last Condition Survey identified that the roof, kitchen and windows would require replacement. The survey also identified that the toilets would be due for refurbishment and the centre is soon due complete internal decoration. The total costs for this work would be approximately £32,000, which all are life-limited and will need doing again. This sum does not include ad-hoc maintenance and repairs that are required with an older building.
- 50. The building would benefit from additional signage as at the moment is quite hard to find.
- 51. The building is rented successfully to ECC Crocus Day Care Unit twice a week and Sparklers, a parent and toddler group, once a week.

Great Dunmow

- 52. The building was purpose built in 1993 and is in fairly good order but is showing signs of usage and wear and tear. The committee are working hard to improve this replacing the carpets, curtains and chairs.
- 53. It is located at the top of a hill in front of Chequers Lane car park, which causes difficulties for those with mobility issues. There is no free parking outside for customers.
- 54. The centre is large and is rented well, generating additional income for the centre.

Thaxted

- 55. This is the newest building and is approximately 8 years old. It is a clean, light and bright purpose-built centre. However it is in need of redecoration.
- 56. The centre is hard to find, it is located up a steep hill opposite Vicarage Mead sheltered housing. There is a lack of signage to the centre the only sign was over grown and hard to see.

Saffron Walden

- 57. The building is formed from an old three storey property, with a much later added single storey extension at the back of the building with a flat roof. The roof has suffered from leaks over a long period.
- 58. The centre is centrally located on Hill Street, which is a busy road and is central to the town. The location of this centre is ideal and enables them to attract a lot of passing trade, which contributes to its use.

Costs

- 59. As explained in paragraph 15 the Management Committees are responsible for the financial provision of the day to day running costs.
- 60. This Council is financially responsible for the buildings (except Stansted) as well as the utilities. Each centre has differing financial requirements due to the size of the buildings, maintenance requirements, depreciation and the days they are open. In order to establish a comparable yearly running cost, to the Council, for each centre (excluding capital works) it was agreed to break the cost down per square meter based on 2013-14 actuals. Please see the table below:

Day Centre	Days Open	Yearly cost per Sq M
Great Dunmow	4	£62.95
Saffron Walden	5	£37.42

Thaxted	5	£89.51
Takeley	2	£145.02

Demographic Research

- 61. From visiting the Centres and speaking with the committees it was established that the over 70s are the main users of the centres.
- 62. District population data of the over 65s and over 75s seems to be divided over three central locations Saffron Walden, Stansted and Great Dunmow. Please see appendix 2 for maps displaying the distribution of the population of the over 65s and the over 75s.

Conclusions

- 63. The implementation of the recommendations from the last review, to allow the Committees to keep all income from lettings and to employ a manager to enable this council to reduced Officer support, has not proved as effective as had been hoped. The Management Committees still require support from Officers, which is impacting on those Officers' main duties.
- 64. The day centres all provide a valuable service to the community. It is felt that this Council should continue to support the provision of the centres. However this review has highlighted that some of the centres are at risk of failing. Aging committees and the lack of volunteers has shown that some centres are in a vulnerable state. If this service is to continue it appears that they will need support and assistance from the Council to ensure their future.
- 65. Currently the only financial support provided by this council is through the use of the buildings, utilities and officer support. The aging buildings will continue to be a financial pressure as demonstrated in paragraph 61.

Risk Analysis

1	
1	•

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Difficulty in recruiting/retaining committee members adversely impact the running of day centres	3 – current levels of committee members at some day centres suggest this is	3 – day centres struggle to operate without effective committees	Fixed term district council post to support day centres

	the case		
The council incurs significant costs in maintaining day centre buildings	3 – costs are detailed in the report	2 – some repair costs are contained within the council's revenue building repairs budget	Repairs are being prioritised through a condition survey

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.

Appendix 1

Day Centre Service Comparison Table (all information correct as at November 2014)

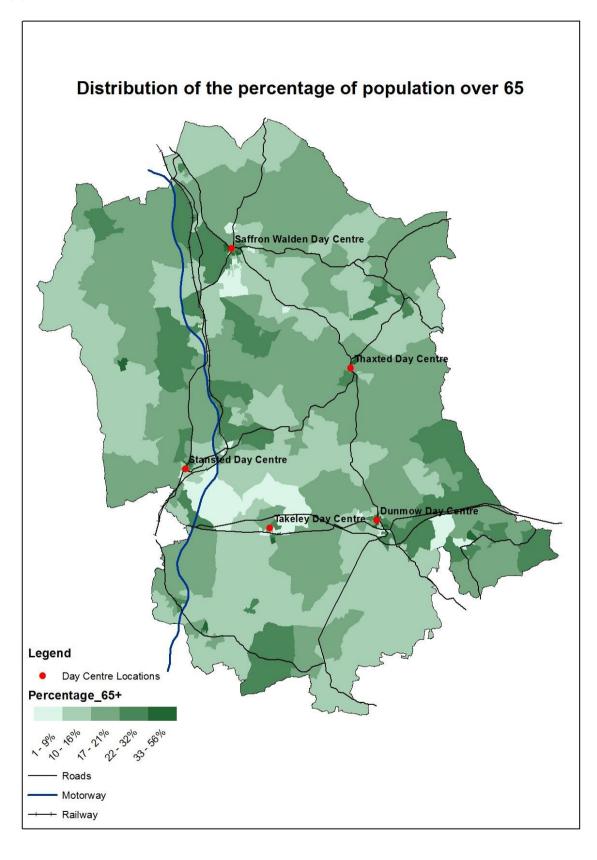
	SAFFRON WALDEN	ON WALDEN GT.DUNMOW TAKELEY		THAXTED	STANSTED	
	Garden Room	Rowena Davey Centre	Takeley Community Centre		Crafton Room	
Re-branded?	 Yes – Garden Room 	 Yes – Rowena Davey Centre 	 Yes – Takeley Community Centre 	 No – Thaxted Day Centre (TDC) 	 Yes – Crafton Room 	
Structure of management	 9 Trustees (volunteers' rep, town and district Council reps) 	 Between 6 – 8 (Incl. President, Manager, UDC rep and Town Council rep). Number on Committee has reduced recently. 	 10 (Incl. President, Treasurer and Secretary). 	 Between 6 – 8 (Incl. Chair, Treasurer, Booking sec, UDC rep). Waiting for new Chair to take over. 	 10 (incl. Manager, Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Parish rep and UDC rep) 	
Manager employed?	• Yes	 Yes 	• No	• No	 Yes 	
Days open	 Mon-Fri (5) 9am - 1:30pm 	 Mon, Tues, Thurs and Fri (4) 10am – 1:30pm 	 Tues and Fri 12 – 1:30pm 	 Mon-Fri (5) 10am – 1:30pm 	 Tues, Thurs and Fri (3) 10am – 2pm 	
Location	 In the centre of town, with good network links (parking, bus, walking). 	 Adjacent to Chequers Lane Car Park, short walk to town centre 	 Centre of village opposite the sheltered housing. 	 In the centre of the village opposite Vicarage Mead sheltered housing. Good parking. No close bus stops. The centre is up a hill. 	 Centre of the village. Good network links. 	

	1									1
Average nos	-	1-5 for breakfast. 20 – 30 for lunch. Various for morning tea, coffee and cake.	•	Mon, Thurs and Fri 15 – 20 for lunch. Tues (market day) various for morning tea and cake. 30 – 50 for lunch.	•	25-30	•	10-20 for lunch.	•	20 for lunch. Various for morning tea, coffee and cake.
Food & Beverages Cost	•	Breakfast £4 Lunch £4.50 Desert £1 Cake £1.50 Snacks (bacon roll £1, toast 50p, sandwich £1.60) Tea 90p Coffee £1.10	•	2 course lunch £5 Cakes 40p Range of snacks (Kitkat, Cheddars)60p Toast 60p Tea 50p Coffee 60p Christmas dinner is free for regulars.	•	2 course lunch £3.50 Christmas dinner is free for regulars.	•	Tea/Coffee & biscuit £1 2 course lunch £4.50	•	Lunch £5 Tea 50p Coffee 50p Scones/Cake 40p
Lunch Booking Required	-	Yes	•	Yes	•	No	•	Yes	•	Yes
Services provided (additional events are run a venues but they are not arranged by the management committees)		Breakfast, tea, coffee, cakes, snacks and lunch. Has tried to run events but proved not to be popular.		Tea, coffee, cakes and lunch.	•	Tuesday raffle. Every 2 months a subsidised day trip will be organised with approx. 20 people each time.		Coffee morning twice a week but they are not popular. Lunch. Coffee and tea for Thaxted walkers. Easter and Christmas signing events.		Tea, Coffee, Cake, Lunch. Weekly bingo, occasional evening fund raising events.
Volunteers		13 – Hard to get. Serving, kitchen and wash up.		10 – Hard to get. Serving, clearing and wash up.		10		10 – hard to get. Serving, clearing and wash up.	nui	ge pool (exact mber not ovided) Drivers Kitchen & serving

					 Washing up.
Promote?	 TIC Local press Community pages Other websites Outside DC Word of mouth 	 Word of mouth Local magazines 	 Adverts in local press 	 Adverts in local shops. Parish magazine. Leaflets. 	 Magazine.
Facility Bookings	 Manager 	 Manager 	 Bookings sec. 	 Bookings sec. 	 Booking sec.
Fire Alarm	 Manager – weekly 	 Manager - weekly 	 Health and Safety representati ve from the committee. 	 Cooks 	 Manager
Health & Safety	 Monthly checks work with UDC 	 Temperature checks. 	 Risk assessments and checks by Health and Safety rep. 	 Monthly UDC checks 	 Manager
Safeguarding	 None, DBS checks are in place. Training offered. 	 Attended UDC training. Unsure of how to apply to centre. 	 None. Training offered. 	 None. Training Offered. 	 Attended UDC training. Unsure of how to apply to centre.
Hygiene Certificate	 Yes – June 2014 	 Yes – June 2013 	 Yes – November 2013 	 Yes – July 2013 	 Yes – August 2013
Registered charity	 Yes 	 Yes 	■ No	■ No	• Yes
Other income?	 Bookings Raffles Grants Donations 	 Bookings 	 Bookings - regular Crocus Day Care & Sparklers. 	 Bookings 	 Grants Fund raising Events – special evenings
Support from local shops	 Various food and flower donations from Waitrose. Locals provide seasonal fruits 	 Butcher offers discounted Turkeys, Co-op provides free 	None	 Local butcher provides free turkey and local shop supplies 	 Locals bring seasonal fruit.

and veg.	tea, coffee and milk.	wine for Christmas.
	Along with everything for the Christmas dinner expect the turkey.	 Locals provide seasonal fruits and veg.

Appendix 2



Appendix 2

