

Committee:	Scrutiny	Agenda Item
Date:	1 June 2010	5
Title:	Scrutiny review of UDC provided day centres	
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Summary

- 1 This report provides details of progress to date on the scrutiny review of Uttlesford District Council provided day centres.
- 2 Following the agreed terms of reference, the Scrutiny Support Officers have presented a portfolio of research to members of the Scrutiny Review Member Reference Group.
- 3 The Scrutiny Review Member Reference Group comprising Councillors Chambers, C M Dean, Jones and Rolfe met with Diane Burridge (Director of Operations), Michael Perry (Assistant Chief Executive), Roz Millership (Head of Housing Services), Simon Martin (Head of Customer Support & Revenue Services) and Nicole Shephard-Lewis (Tenant Participation Officer) on 10 May 2010. The Scrutiny Review Member Reference Group now makes the recommendations detailed below.

Recommendations

- 4 Members note progress and agree to explore the feasibility of providing an enhanced co-ordinating resource for the day centres, initially on a pilot basis with a view to the resource becoming self-sustaining. The remit given could include investigating partnership opportunities, co-ordinating management requirements, improving income, increasing usage and identifying grant funding opportunities together with a day to day hands-on liaison role between the council and the voluntary management committees.
- 5 That a comparative analysis of the management agreements between the day centre committees and the council be undertaken particularly noting anomalies between different centres and common areas of good practice. Recommendations should then be made for a revision of the management agreements to reflect changes in the responsibilities of both the council and the management committees.

Background Papers

- 6 Agenda and minutes of Scrutiny Committee 2009/10 to date, particularly noting the Uttlesford District Council Scrutiny Committee Review Day Centres Terms of Reference presented to Scrutiny Committee 7 July 2009, Item 5 Appendix.
Day centre service audit – Management committees' feedback and consultation SWOT analysis
Day Centre comparisons matrix (Cllr C M Dean)

Impact

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Communication/Consultation	Meetings have been held with members of the Day Centre Management Committees and the Day Centre Member Review Group and relevant council officers. Further detailed consultation will need to be undertaken to identify how service weaknesses can be addressed by any proposals coming out of this report.
Community Safety	Not applicable.
Equalities	At present there are no equalities issues to address. Further work on proposals coming out of this report will include a full equalities impact assessment
Finance	At present, there are no direct financial implications because further work with a costed proposal will be produced at a later stage.
Health and Safety	At present there are no health and safety issues to address.
Human Rights/Legal implications	There are no human rights implications. At present there are no direct legal implications because work will be done to produce a proposal with full service impact assessments and equalities impact assessments.
Sustainability	At present there are no sustainability issues to address. Further work on proposals coming out of this report will address the sustainability of agreements between the council and the management committees and, if applicable, of any fixed term contract drawn up for the creation of a new post.
Ward-specific impacts	There are five wards in which the day centres are located: Great Dunmow Day Centre (Dunmow South ward); Saffron Walden Day Centre (Saffron Walden Audley ward); Stansted Day Centre (Stansted North ward); Takeley Day Centre (Takeley and the Canfields ward); Thaxted Day Centre (Thaxted ward).
Workforce/Workplace	None at present. Any workforce issues which may arise from proposals coming out of this report will be addressed.

Situation

- 7 A scrutiny review of UDC provided day centres was put into the 2009/10 Scrutiny Committee work plan at the meeting on 14 April 2009. Terms of reference were subsequently approved at the meeting on 7 July 2009 and four members nominated to work with officers (Councillors Chambers, C M Dean, Jones and Rolfe).
- 8 Both officers and members were keen for such a review to be carried out as it was seen that council policy needs to be further developed in this area. This is partly in

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response to changes in the prevailing customer base, diminishing pool of volunteers to manage the facilities and a sense that some centres might become more sustainable and better used by the surrounding community.

- 9 As part of the review, members of the Review Group have visited day centres and met with representatives from the management committees and users.
- 10 Officers have also undertaken a comprehensive programme of research into the budgetary position, management agreements, the extent and standards of usage, customer volumetric and catchment data, future profiling, benchmarking standards, sustainability, details of equivalent provision in other districts and general policy regarding day centres.
- 11 In addition officers also carried out a comprehensive consultation exercise with members of the voluntary day centre management committees and have established links with comparable local organizations.
- 12 All consultees had views on the provision of day centre services and broadly concluded:
 - a) Day centre services are valued by residents and visitors to the district as they provide good value freshly cooked meals and an opportunity for social interaction.
 - b) Staff and volunteers are a valuable asset but there is increasing difficulty in recruiting and retaining voluntary help both to the management committees and for day to day provision within the centres.
 - c) The management committees are unable to accommodate the increased requirements to carry out statutory checks and other facility related duties and are having to make more demands on the Tenant Participation Officer's time, which is limited by competing priorities.
 - d) None of the centres is used to capacity, with the exception of Saffron Walden.
 - e) It was acknowledged that each day centre serves a different community which influences service use.
 - f) The council is generally best placed to continue to take responsibility for providing day centres. (It should be noted however, that in the long term there may be opportunities for strategic partnership working to maintain sustainability and continued fitness for purpose. Members, in any event, feel that day centre services are a valued local facility and should be managed accordingly).
- 13 Members have identified a potentially innovative approach to developing an overall day centre resource. Their vision is for an Uttlesford Day Centres co-ordinator, initially on a pilot basis with a view to this position eventually becoming self-sustaining. The remit given to the post-holder could include investigating partnership opportunities, co-ordinating management requirements, improving income, increasing usage and identifying grant funding opportunities together with a day to day hands-on liaison role between the council and the voluntary management committees. A financial business case will need to be worked up to address the funding of this additional resource. Any recommendations will need to be made to the relevant policy committee.
- 14 Anomalies have been noted in the agreements between the day centre management committees and the District Council. Members suggest that a comparative analysis of the agreements be undertaken particularly noting anomalies and common areas of

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good practice. Recommendations should then be made for a revision of the management agreements to reflect changes in the responsibilities of both the council and the management committees.

- 15 Any changes to policy will need to link in with the Housing Services Plan and be consistent with the council's corporate priorities.
- 16 Further work is now required by officers to advance the Scrutiny Review outcomes. This work will involve:
- a) Looking to future day centre provision. Making associated recommendations.
 - b) Making a comparative analysis of the management agreements between the day centre committees and the council. Then making associated recommendations linked this analytical report.

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Stakeholder expectations are raised.	2 A notional expectation that the Council may be able to do more.	2 The Council needs to operate within an approved budget.	Terms of reference set out the scope of this review and what it aims to achieve and what it doesn't aim to achieve.

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.