

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 2 September  
2021

**Title:** Community Services budget funding for the current financial year

**Portfolio Holders:** Cllr C Day, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Youth, Public Safety, Emergency Planning and liaison with the Police, Fire & Rescue Services; and Cllr R Freeman, Portfolio Holder for Council and Public Services

**Report Author:** Roger Harborough, Director of Public Services **Key decision:** No

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## Summary

1. The report recommends that funding be made available if required to support delivery of community services on an interim basis through day centres. The Community Services Review Working Group recommendations will inform future arrangements and related budget preparation for 2021-22.

## Recommendations

2. That Cabinet approves release of the current budget provision of up to £94,500 to support delivery of community services on an interim basis through day centres
3. The attached guidance will form the framework for considering requests for interim budget support.

## Financial Implications

4. The Council has up to £94,500 within the approved budget for the on going running costs of day centres that it can make available in the current financial year to 31 March 2022. This will be to support local communities to provide a community service hub. It may be able to use other current budget provision should a proposal be submitted that warrants early support that cannot be accommodated within the running costs budget.

## Background Papers

5. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

## Impact

- 6.

Communication/Consultation	Communities are represented on the Working Group through relevant ward members. The CVSU is also included. Direct engagement with potential providers has also taken place.
Community Safety	A Management Committee overseeing a facility that provides services to vulnerable persons has safeguarding responsibilities.
Equalities	Day centres and community service hubs are intended to contribute to addressing the needs of vulnerable persons in the community. The impact on persons with protected characteristics will be considered in the assessment of requests for budget support as set out in the attached guidance.
Health and Safety	A Management Committee overseeing a facility that employs staff and uses volunteers to make services available to the public is bound by workplace law. This legislation is underpinned by The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. This Act requires such entities to protect their employees and others (e.g. members of the public, volunteers, clients and customers) from risks to their health and safety arising out of, or in connection with, their work activities (e.g. hiring out a facility, providing luncheons etc.).
Human Rights/Legal Implications	See above
Sustainability	
Ward-specific impacts	Day centres have formerly operated in Great Dunmow, Saffron Walden, Stansted, Takeley and Thaxted but were intended to serve surrounding communities too
Workforce/Workplace	Within existing resources

## Situation

7. The concept of a community service hub or drop-in centre has developed from a recognition that the day centres that operated in Great Dunmow, Saffron

Walden, Stansted Mountfitchet and Thaxted may no longer be the most appropriate response to the needs of local communities. Measures to restrict the spread of COVID infection necessitated their closure in March 2020. The lifting of restrictions on people gathering indoors from 19 July 2021 has led the council to consider what support it should offer in the short term.

8. The offer of budget support is an interim measure to enable those communities who already have a clear proposition, be it to:
  - re-open on the former model with adjustments as necessary.
  - the development of a new operating model; or
  - launch a trial of a new operating model.
9. Local communities are best placed to consider what is appropriate for their residents to respond to the societal and economic changes that have occurred over the past year or so.
10. A review has been instigated to consider the appropriate approach beyond the balance of the financial year with the aim of stimulating a re-imagining of day centres, but the working group needs time to complete this task.
11. The target communities are those that previously had a day centre. It is recognised that other rural communities across the district will have a range of community support initiatives. These will be considered in the on - going review of community services delivery by the working group.

## Risk Analysis

12.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Vulnerable persons who attended day centres prior to national COVID restrictions being imposed in March 2020 will become increasingly isolated without re-opening	2 Limited use was made of centres by older persons	2 Adverse effect on their health and wellbeing	Alternative support mechanisms
Re-opening of centres/ new	3 Double vaccination	3 Vaccination reduces the	Staff, users and volunteers will need to

community hubs will involve social mixing and potential exposure to infection	does not provide immunity from infection with the dominance of the Delta variant	risk of serious illness and hospital admission, but not for everybody	observe guidance on safe occupancy limits, ventilation, use of masks, hand hygiene, and cleaning surfaces; Guidance to be issued to providers.
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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.