

Draft guidance on requesting budget support from UDC for community services hubs

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. No pre-allocation of funding by target community should be assumed. Allocations in response to proposals will be assessed on a competitive basis against the following primary quality criteria:
 - The evidence of need to support the case to support that a proposal should be accorded priority.
 - The deliverability of the proposal – how long is it going to take to get up and running or to develop a new operating model; have all the key issues been considered.

- Evidence of a partnership approach.
8. Any funding offer will be at the council's discretion. The release of funding by the council will require the funder to enter into a funding agreement. Where it is proposed to re-open on the former model with adjustments, existing management agreements will also need to be re-negotiated.
 9. In line with the principle of devolution to local communities, propositions for funding should take account that the council is not providing staff to run any community service hubs or offering further direct support to providers, for example to meet their responsibilities to meet health and safety, safeguarding or as employers.
 10. The council will continue to make available premises that were used as day centres, but proposals do not need to be based on existing property assets. There may be more appropriate venues locally where shared use arrangements would spread overhead costs. A review of the property assets needed to support the delivery of community services in the long term is part of the remit of the working group.
 11. As this is an interim arrangement to meet needs in the short term, and revenue funding is only for the remainder of the current financial year, there is a short window for requests for budget support. These must be received by Fiona Gardiner, Community Health and Wellbeing Manager, Uttlesford District Council by Monday 30th September 2021.
 12. Requests may be made by a local council, a voluntary sector body or community interest company. In case of a voluntary body or CIC, applications should contain evidence of support from the relevant local council.