

Premises Review – Moving Forward on Options

The Role of a Locality Hub

It may be appropriate to take this opportunity to look at the role that hubs have played in supporting locality working. The initial model developed through the cross Staffordshire pilot included a central “community anchor”, a visible building that could serve as a place from where services could be delivered and would be a sign of partners desire to support the community.

As early papers noted:-

A Core base or hub will be available in each area to act as a delivery point for joint services or to act as a focus to develop partnership actions. This hub will be established to provide a range of facilities to support partner needs.

Locality Working bases will act as hubs for the delivery of local services. Since many services will have a base in one building, it will be easier to make contact with local people and will encourage people and organisations to work together.

In the pilot, a hub was in part developed as there was a dearth of available community buildings and also in response to the poor state and underused nature of local commercial premises. When LW was rolled out to four neighbourhoods this element was included due to the success of the pilot hub. Successes included the commencement of service delivery, community engagement and the development of various joint projects from this hub. This in turn led to the design of the LW model and the building of support from strategic and other partners to move from pilot to an agreed way of working.

Since the initial model was established the level of service delivery has not increased significantly at individual hubs (around 10 at each)

The locality hubs have evolved since their start with the Glascote hub based in the local library and the Belgrave hub recently moved to the community fire station. Hubs have certainly played a key and positive role in establishing and nurturing better relationships between partners and between agencies and local people. Hubs have enabled discussions to take place that have led to development of various joint activities as detailed within the Locality Review.

A key benefit of the hubs has been to engage and support local people to participate in a wide range of activity and to develop projects and activity of their own. Many residents have used the hubs to explore ideas to make new contacts and become active in positive ways. It is possible that some activities would not have developed without the hubs but this is difficult to assess. In all localities, there are probably more activities, initiatives and projects that happen outside the hub than within but the hub is where the majority are born.

A linked issue that will impact on future premises use is the fact that, at present funding for the fourth CDO post will cease in March 2013 and provision to support four neighbourhoods with 3 CDOs will need to be planned. The role of hubs will need to be included in this as it will be an increased pressure for CDOs to manage hubs. The benefits of removing responsibility for premises from CDOs may be an important factor in focussing on driving an increase in appropriate service provision within localities and on developing joint activity.

An additional option to the list below may be to cease to have separate hubs for locality working and focus on utilising existing premises for CDOs to use as connection points in the localities. The CDOs would continue to drive and facilitate joint working work, which could be more difficult without having the offer of a base of operations, which has been an attraction for some partner service providers.

The key negative impact could be for existing service providers who may not find suitable alternatives to operate from and may decide to cease work in the localities.

Another potentially damaging impact could be through removing a support structure from local people if they are not involved at the level they are used to, if alternative accommodation for them to participate from is not available.

Addressing and responding to these potentially negative impacts will be a role for CDOs to lead on and action should commence immediately any change is agreed. The identification of alternative premises or management structures if identified may offset these impacts; rather a new structure may encourage new partners and a different but wider involvement among local people.

A range of alternative premises that could be able to provide hot desk capacity for CDOs are available in both Amington and Stonydelph.

Amington

SCC are retaining use of the Kerria Youth Centre at preferential rate a condition of which is to allow access for TBC staff

Relations with the school are good and space at the school or children's centre may be an option.

Sites in the village area of Amington at Cornerstone and the Band Rooms could be negotiated.

Stonydelph

St. Martin's church has been a strong supporter to date and would provide a central point for a hot desk.

Discussion with the health centre could include an option for hot desk space.

Utilising the school buildings could provide a different option.

Pennymoor Community Centre sits outside the locality border but would enable CDOs to have a local base.

It is clear that each locality will have to be looked at individually with various solutions possible for each neighbourhood. Changes will be more noticeable in Amington and Stonydelph with less visible change in Belgrave and Glascote.

This would be a strong option and links well with the aims of LW but without significant support from partners, especially SCC, who manage the building at present; this will not be a manageable piece of work at this time.

Looking at the number of partners who actually use the hub at present (9) a question raised is: - will a move attract more partners to contribute and develop a more active hub? There are 29 partners working in the area and therefore joint work is happening outside the hub, although much of this has been developed through the hub.

This option therefore becomes an aspiration for joint work that is impacted upon by the separate actions of partners.

If the lack of available funding is an essential element then despite the score, financial implications will dictate that this cannot be achieved without a financial and resource commitment from strategic partners.

There would be a cost of moving equipment, IT and staff to another premise and perhaps for building alterations around office layout, reception and entrance refurbishment. A budget for this would need to be identified or attracted from a range of partners.

Option C - Embed the ARCH at the Youth Centre sharing the costs with a Community Interest Company with a training/skills perspective

Again pros and cons balance closely for this option, the same issues and barriers as Option B apply.

There would be much potential added value in the long-term through the establishment of a CIC that can provide some sustainability around community involvement activity. Unfortunately there is no community group in the locality despite much effort by CDOs, which leads to a position where a significant amount of development and capacity work would have to be undertaken to identify and engage residents and establish a new group.

In the long-term, this option could provide a valuable model, building on better joint work, engagement of the community and a potential sustainable model within Amington that would provide a local legacy.

Present timescales and a lack of commitment to a joint approach do not appear to support this option.

Again if the lack of available funding is an essential element then despite the score, financial implications will dictate that this cannot be achieved without a financial and resource commitment from strategic partners.

Option D - Relocate the ARCH to the annex of the Amington Heath Primary School site

This option gives a quite negative balance of pros and cons and is therefore probably not a frontrunner at this time.

If a decision is taken by SCC to move both youth and children's centre activities to this site, there may be potential for joint work but building capacity would then be an issue.

Recommendation – Oct 2012

With the present information and level of resource and support in place from partners it is recommended that Option A is pursued. The option is manageable within TBC budgets, is a continuation of the present situation and will cause no disruption to activity. Given the low level of engagement and commitment from SCC for co-location it is the option that allows LW to continue but enables us to respond to a change in stance.

The options of B or C are aspirational within present support and commitment available but will be worked towards if the situation changes. A range of discussions and negotiations have taken place with SCC and other partners to explore the possibility but a pragmatic approach is the only one within the control of TBC at this time.

Stonydelph

Option A - Maintain the Hub at its current location

A slight negative balance in the pros and cons. However, as the lack of available funding is an essential element then despite the score, financial implications will dictate that this cannot be achieved by TBC alone.

Issues around this option are similar to Amington in that the level of partner service delivery from the hub is not as high as hoped. Will this change in the near future to make the building more active in supporting service delivery?

Looking at the number of partners who actually use the hub at present (9) the question raised is: - what option will attract more partners to contribute and develop a more active hub? There are 14 partners working in the area and therefore we see that joint work is happening outside the hub, although again much of this has been developed through conversation in the hub.

The key impact remains the lack of funding to sustain the building and CDO at this site, which will negate other efforts. An alternative source of funding will need to be sought for any option in Stonydelph.

Option B - Maintain the ARCH at its current location within a broader based community run building.

A small positive balance of pros and cons but unfortunately, again a lack of identified funds will mean that this option cannot be achieved.

This is a very positive option, providing potential added value in the long-term through the establishment of a CIC that can provide sustainability around community involvement and activity. There is mention in the report of new sources of potential funding being drawn in through a CIC and this will need to be explored further to see what level of potential is achievable.

There are a number of active residents and emerging community groups in the locality, building on work by the CDO. It is clear, from some initial informal discussion, that there is a level of interest among one group, in taking on a building, as part of their future development plans. The sustainability of this group will be key to achieving this option,

If a group can be identified, a significant amount of development and capacity work would have to be undertaken to identify and engage additional residents and establish a strong and sustainable group. CVS and other support structures have agreed to be involved in supporting this option. There is a need to look at the potential group or groups that could be engaged to support development of this option.

appropriate support from infrastructure and business support agencies can be delivered, work will be continued to progress this option.

Without future funding and associated costs for a fourth CDO, a change to the structure of CD support to Locality Working in Stonydelph will be worked up. This will involve planning to provide appropriate levels of support, prioritising tasks and time management in order to move to a situation that provides support to all four localities with three CDOs.

The geographical links that have characterised work to date will not be possible at the present level. However, three CDOs could continue to provide a significant level of service, with options for cover being investigated. Two options are through splitting available hours across four localities or providing particular work areas to each locality.

Recommendation - Feb 2013

The above recommendation have been explored. The two community groups who historically paid an eager interest in managing the premises on craven were invited to formally express an interest in taking up this opportunity. From the two organisations: one did not respond to the offer; and the other had decided not to take up the offer after a number of emails and a meeting.

The recommendations proposed in 2012 had to be re-evaluated based on:

- the community organisations not willing to hold the lease; and
- the current position for funds available for Stonydelph.

Considering the changes in circumstance, the below is a review of the initial options:

Option A - This option remains unfeasible due to the current available funds. The building is also too large to sustain and utilise to capacity.

Option B - These community groups, now offered the opportunity, were not interested / able to manage the building they initially paid an interest in managing.

Option C - This option scored highly on the initial review. The option was not explored in any details as that the Craven road location offered continuity and also the church may be off-putting to some residents.

Option D - Although a viable and promising opportunity, the NHS partnership trust have not engaged with us and responded to any of our enquiries.

The process of elimination indicates that Option C is the only option to proceed with given the current circumstances. The initial review scored it highly as a possible venue, but now requires serious consideration for the base for Locality Working in Stonydelph.