

Committee: Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee	Date: 22/07/2019
Subject: HRA Community Centres Strategy 2019-24	Public
Report of: Director of Community and Children's Services	For Decision
Report author: Liam Gillespie, Head of Housing Management	

Summary

The Housing Service manages seven community centres, which are based on its housing estates. An internal audit in 2018 recommended some improvements to the way the centres are managed, including the formulation of a strategy for use of the centres.

In response to this, a five-year Community Centres Strategy has been drafted, which sets out some aims and objectives for the next five years for how the centres will be managed. The Strategy focuses on improving our management of the centres and enhancing the benefit they bring to residents, and it ties in with the wider aims outlined in the Corporate Plan.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Approve the adoption of the Community Centres Strategy 2019-24

Main Report

Background

1. The City of London's Housing Service manages seven community centres, which are located on its housing estates and managed by local estates teams (except for Golden Lane, which has a dedicated Centre Manager).
2. In 2018, an internal audit of our community centre activity made several recommendations for improvements to current procedures for managing these facilities. A Community Centres Strategy has been drafted, which addresses some of the remaining audit recommendations (a number have already been addressed separately). It sets out how we intend to improve the management of these centres over the next five years and sets out our aim to increase the benefit they bring to residents and the wider communities around them.

Current Position

3. The audit of June 2018 identified various areas for improvement in the way our community centres are used and managed. The recommendations included the introduction of standard policies and procedures for bookings, better management of long-term agreements with hirers and the formulation of a strategy to maximise revenue streams.
4. Many of these recommendations have already been addressed. Members will be aware, for example, that a Community Centres Policy was approved by Committee in March 2019 and standard documents and processes are being introduced to administer the use and hire of the facilities.

Our Aims and Objectives

5. The strategy sets out three overarching aims, which are broken down into objectives. These are included in an action plan in appended to the strategy.
6. Generally, we aim to improve our management of the centres, increase their benefit to the community and maintain or improve the buildings themselves.
7. The action plan will be reviewed at regular intervals by senior officers in the Housing Service and progress against the objectives will be monitored and updated as actions are completed.

Conclusion

8. The Community Centres Strategy 2019-24 is intended to provide some aims and objectives for our management of these facilities, with a view to addressing several recommendations made in an internal audit in June 2018.
9. The action plan contained in the strategy will assist officers in measuring progress toward three aims, which are improved management, increased community benefit and better-maintained facilities.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Draft Community Centres Strategy, 2019-24

Background Papers

- Community Centres Policy Report, Housing Management and Almshouses Sub-Committee, 26/03/2019

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