



Portsocken Community Centre

Business plan
21th April 2020

CONTENTS

1.	ABOUT LOCALITY	3
2.	INTRODUCTION	4
3.	METHODS	5
3.1	CLOSE LIAISON WORKING WITH CITY OF LONDON	5
3.2	DESK RESEARCH	5
3.3	INTERVIEWS WITH KEY STAKEHOLDER	5
3.4	RESIDENT RESEARCH.....	6
3.5	BUSINESS PLANNING AND REPORTING	6
4.	VISION FOR THE CENTRE	7
4.1	OVERVIEW	7
4.2	VISION AND BROAD DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR THE CENTRE	7
4.3	FIT WITH CITY OF LONDON STRATEGIES	8
5.	ASSETS, ASPIRATIONS AND NEEDS.....	10
5.1	OVERVIEW	10
5.2	PROFILE OF LOCAL COMMUNITY.....	10
5.3	HIGHLIGHTED NEEDS.....	11
5.4	STRENGTHS/ASSETS.....	11
5.4	RESIDENT ASPIRATIONS FOR THE NEW CENTRE	12
6.	NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTEXT – FITTING WITHIN OTHER LOCAL PROVISION	15
6.1	OVERVIEW	15
6.2	GREEN BOX.....	16
6.2	OTHER COMMUNITY SPACE AND PROVIDERS.....	17
6.3	FURTHER GROUPS/SPACES OF INTEREST	19
6.4	WORKSPACE AND COMMUNITY HALL HIRE RATES	20
7.	AVAILABLE SPACE, POTENTIAL USES	22
7.1	AVAILABLE SPACE	22
7.2	GROUND FLOOR.....	22
7.3	POTENTIAL USES.....	24
8.	MANAGEMENT/GOVERNANCE SCENARIOS	24
8.1	SCENARIOS.....	24
8.2	SCENARIOS IN COMBINATION.....	26
8.3	POTENTIAL THIRD PARTY PROVIDERS	28
9.	FINANCES.....	29
9.1	INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	29
10.	STAFFING, POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS	30
10.1	STAFFING	30
10.3	PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT	32
11.	RECOMMENDATIONS.....	33
	APPENDICES:	36

1. ABOUT LOCALITY

The Locality network is for organisations that believe in the power of local communities to build a fairer society. We have over 750 members across the country all supporting local people in a local area. We work across housing, employment, health and wellbeing, arts and culture, the environment and more.

Behind the scenes, our network works tirelessly to create a fairer society.

We see a need and step in. To fill a need that's not being met. We create spaces at the heart of our communities where everyone belongs and where local people can shape their own future.

We know the place, the people, the needs and we care. Our work is cost effective and responsive. And our solutions work better.

Every week our membership network supports over 400,000 people, helping to transform lives.

That's the power of local community.



11,000

community groups supported by
our members



400,000

people benefit from our members'
services each week



15

different activities delivered on
average by our members

2. INTRODUCTION

In December 2019, the City of London Corporation commissioned Locality to undertake business planning exercise for a new community space currently under construction as part of the Minories development in Aldgate. Once completed, the Minories development will include a refurbished hotel, new office building residential block and a landscaped park. The Portsoken Centre will be at the base of the hotel and will offer approximately 150m² across ground floor and smaller mezzanine and basement levels.

The Portsoken Centre will replace an existing temporary community facility called 'The Green Box' (comprised of shipping containers) located to the south of Whitechapel Road and serving residents living on the Mansell Street Estate. The intention is for the new centre to continue to serve the Mansell Estate but also the nearby Middlesex Estate. Once built, the Centre will become the fourth community centres under the City of London's ownership (alongside Artizan Street Library, Barbican Library and Golden Lane Community Centre).

The work has drawn on community/neighbourhood-based conversations and data to inform ideas about making the best use of the new community space. The aspiration is to ensure it serves the entire community and meets residents' needs and wants, it fits within and adds value to other provision and it has a financial model, which ensures it sustainable. We have also drawn on Locality's wider experience and network of community organisations, many of whom manage centres of this kind, to inform the work and highlight best practice principles.

Invariably, exercises of this kind can only be indicative and based on a series of assumptions. Detailed business plans of this nature rarely fully align with the real-life experience. Therefore, it should not be dogmatically adhered or seen as an operating manual. Instead, it should be used to help formulate an initial basis for goals and approaches, within which a period of experimentation and iteration can be deployed based on user interactions, experience and data about actual demand. This period could last up to 18 months.

This report presents some different scenarios for the management/governance of the centre, highlighting the potential pros and cons of each. Within this, Locality has a particular interest in seeing communities gaining more power in managing assets and delivering services, so we would like there to be, at least, a long-term aspiration for the role of residents in stewarding the new space to grow over time. We have found that the most successful community spaces are rooted locally and are collaborative efforts, where many people in the community are involved.

Note: at the end of this assignment an awareness of the longer term implications of the Covid-19 pandemic on this and the wider sector was coming into view. Community organisations in Locality's network are already looking at creative approaches to running community provision and activities during lockdown and it looks likely that these will be needed and relevant for the medium (18 months term).

3. METHODS

Locality approach to the assignment included the following methods:

- Close collaborative working with City of London
- Desk top research
- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Resident research
- Business planning and reporting

3.1 Close liaison working with City of London

We carried out a detailed inception meeting with COL Corporation to finalise the design of the assignment and used two further project meetings to ensure that the deliverables were in line with City of London's expectation for the work.

3.2 Desk research

We used extensive desk research to support the work including:

- Producing a comprehensive Local Insight report (combining over 1000 datasets) to gain an understanding of the profile, needs and other potential issues on the two nearby estates that the new Centre will serve (See Appendix B).
- Mapping of other community provision, nearby organisations and services and the local rates of space hire.
- An understanding of how the new centre fits within the context of City of London strategies, objectives and plans and to identify opportunities to align these to the new Centre.
- To draw on best practice for developing thriving community spaces – including nearby centres, from Locality's network and beyond – highlighting the different ways to achieve success based on asset/organisation types and preferred approaches.

3.3 Interviews with key stakeholder

In addition to desk research, we carried out face-to-face and telephone interviews with key 'stakeholders' combining people with a prominent role in the community, with those delivering key services as well as other providers running successful community spaces. This was helpful in:

- Building a deeper understanding of the community (its needs, issues, aspirations and wants) and to help identify prospective tenants (e.g. COL Corporation service managers, Healthwatch).
- Exploring the potential for third parties to help provide early stewardship for the new space.
- Reviewing further existing good practice in managing community spaces in this context.

In total, 18 individual phone calls/meetings were conducted with the following:

- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| • AgeUK | • Osmani Trust |
| • Artizan Library / Green Box | • Neighbourhood Watch member |
| • Brady Arts Centre | • Sandys Row Synagogue |
| • St Botolphs | • Studio Partington |
| • City of London Engagement Officers (x 2) | • Sir John Cass Centre |
| • Fusion Lifestyle | • Toynbee Hall |
| • Golden Lanes Community Centre | • Youth Commissioner |
| • Guinness Estate Manager | • Kahaila Cafe |
| | • Brady Centre |

We also conducted a meeting of Portsoken ward City of London Members (with 3 or the 4 Councillors in attendance) on 27th February 2020, supplemented by a telephone interview with the one additional Member.

3.4 Resident research

Early in the assignment, we recognised the need for there to be additional resident engagement to support the business planning. While Studio Partington had made strong effort to hold resident sessions and to conduct a resident survey the numbers participating in these was low, and our initial conversations showed that there was low awareness amongst residents (and in some cases stakeholders) about the new Centre. With agreement from the City of London, we therefore built into the assignment some additional resident engagement work. This comprised the following:

- 2 drop in sessions with residents at the Green Box (24-25 February 2020). Though advertised in the resident newsletter and posters only a few residents were in attendance.
- Drop ins at the following activities/meetings;
 - Mansell Street Women's Group
 - Table Tennis
 - Mansell Estate Resident Association

3.5 Business planning and reporting

Having accrued the aforementioned primary and secondary research, we then produced this detailed business plans/options appraisal for the future management and use of the new community space.

4. VISION FOR THE CENTRE

4.1 Overview

Community centre can either provide services to their communities by hosting or incubating other organisations, (e.g. the local authority, charities, training providers, Job Centres, youth services, sports and leisure clubs, etc.) or they can deliver services themselves, (e.g. contracting with providers of employment schemes to run a job club, or contracting with the health service to provide a fitness class). Some combine both roles. As a result, there are numerous potential customers for community centres.

The prime ones are:

- Local Authorities, local Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs), organisations and charities, which will rent offices, hire rooms regularly, hold special events, and hire for service delivery.
- Local groups seeking regular room hire such as support groups, choirs, local groups offering leisure activities including bridge, dance, music, lunch clubs and many more.
- Individuals and organisations seeking to hire spaces for special events, birthdays, marriages and wakes, etc.

Well-run and well used community centres can produce many benefits, for the customer, the organisations running them and the wider community, for instance they can:

- Build stronger communities by meeting specific needs
- Provide better and more connected services
- Transform unused buildings
- Benefit the local economy
- Support long-term stable organisations.

4.2 Vision and Broad Design Principles For The Centre

Vision

The vision is to establish a thriving and financially sustainable community centre serving and driven by people living and working in the community.

Design principles

Related to this, we have identified the following design principles for the development of the new centre:

- **Financially sustainable** – while the private owners are giving to the City at a peppercorn rent, it should generate enough income to pay for the expenditure needed to run the centre achieved. This may not be achievable in the first 1-2 years, but the business plan should show a plausible increase in income over time in order to deliver this principle.
- **Community reach** – it should be accessible for all sections of the community, not just in principle but in actuality. Therefore, there should be an initial emphasis on getting as many people from the community to access the space in the first year and to be responsive to meeting a variety of interests, needs and wants

from different sections of the community. Much of this also relate to the 'look and feel' of the space, which needs to be adaptable, so it feels like an inclusive community space.

- **Social value** – the centre should deliver a wide variety of tangible and measurable social value – from improving resident health and wellbeing, supporting people into business and work and building community cohesion.
- **Community accountability** – that residents are involved/making decisions relating to new centre (and this role grows over time)
- **Adding value** – that the new centre adds value to other provision in the neighbourhood – creating synergies and catalysing links/benefits
- **Associated principles** – environmental sustainability / equalities and diversity / safeguarding etc

4.3 Fit with City of London strategies

Unlike many local authorities, the City of London has retained clear aims in supporting long-term community development across its neighbourhoods backed up by resources, commissioning and staff on the ground. Priorities across departments include a thriving and flourishing community, health and wellbeing, digital inclusion and empowering residents to reach their potential. Whilst recognising the challenge of inclusion, the City of London also recognises that culture is also understood as important (e.g. for placemaking) investing significant funding to advance this area. The table below sets out the various touchpoints between City of London strategies and the operation of the new community centre.

Strategy, plan or policy	Detail (highlighting what is relevant to the new community centre)
Corporate Plan 2018-2023	<p>Three main aims (1) to contribute to a flourishing society (2) support a thriving economy and (3) shape outstanding environments.</p> <p>Most relevant (of the 12 outcomes):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need. • People have equal opportunities to enrich their lives and reach their full potential. • People enjoy good health and wellbeing. • We inspire enterprise, excellence, creativity and collaboration. • We are digitally and physically well-connected and responsive. <p>Most relevant of the cited activities under these outcomes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote equality and inclusion in health through outreach to our working, learning and residential communities and better service design and delivery. • Raise awareness of factors affecting mental and physical health. • Provide advice and signposting to activities and services. • Provide inclusive access to facilities for physical activity and recreation. • Promote effective progression through fulfilling education and employment. • Bring individuals and communities together to share experiences and promote wellbeing, mutual respect and tolerance. • Support access to suitable community facilities, workspaces and visitor accommodation. • Stated as the fourth biggest funder of culture in the country.
Housing Strategy 2019-2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality homes that meet the needs of our residents and communities; • Well-managed estates that people are happy and proud to live in; • Thriving and connected communities where people feel at home and flourish; • New homes to meet the needs of Londoners, our communities and economy. • Aiming to implement a '<i>health in all policies</i>' approach • Will continue to put culture at the heart of placemaking, and ensure an offer for residents who feel alienated from formal cultural venues. • Have a representative Housing User Board for scrutiny and to give comments on proposed developments

Resident Communication and Engagement Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four key principles: (1) Commitment to working together; (2) Sustainable community engagement; (3) Supporting Social Wellbeing; and (4) Communicating effectively with our residents • Co-produce Estate Plans with residents • Initiatives in progress: Community Connectors; Neighbour Networks; and Time Credits (e.g. can be spent in St Pauls, Lords Cricket Ground, Tower of London)
Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS) Business Plan 2017-2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambitions are to support communities so they: feel safe and have good health; are able to achieve their potential; and are able to exercise choice and feedback on the services they use. • They have an integrated commissioning board with LB Hackney pooling health and social care budgets and running a number of services, including Libraries, Public health, Property services, Housing and neighbourhood services, Adult social care, children and family services and Education (i.e. academy development, adult skills and learning and apprenticeships) • Youth services have been recommissioned to deliver a specific 'potential' strand offering information, advice and guidance to young people • Aim to offer community programmes and activities with partners in libraries and community facilities, and support place shaping
Community Centres Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspiration for the (7 COL) community centres to contribute to City of London's Corporate Plan, most importantly Social inclusion, Resident engagement (community cohesion), and Residents health and wellbeing • Aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ employ creative measures to increase facilities use and boost income ◦ change from an 'informal' culture around booking/use of spaces to professional/efficient management ◦ support residents to deliver activities and events at the centres ◦ improve procedures; including aligning pricing/venue hire charges • Provides audit advice on community centres, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Good online presence necessary - potential for online booking system ◦ Dedicated staff members or effective management organisations are crucial ◦ Resource to promote centre locally will boost potential ◦ Sufficient storage for different activity groups to store equipment could be useful ◦ Handing over a centre or part of a centre through a lease, tenancy or licence may be effective (gives example of Lammas Green) • Highlights there are a variety of procedures for local decision making and some are more effective than others • Notes it may be necessary to increase staff in bigger centres in order to be open longer and increase range of activities • Proposes creation of community centre management procedures, pricing schedule and rationale, procedures for revenue collection • Gives rationale for setting charges for hire in the appendix, based on; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Market rates ◦ Location ◦ Condition of centre and facilities available
Community development initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of resident-led community development initiatives are proposed in the above strategies: 6 funded community engagement officers and 1 manager across the area, working collaboratively; Community Builders; Neighbour Networks; Housing User Board; and Time Credits.

5. ASSETS, ASPIRATIONS AND NEEDS

5.1 Overview

In this section of the report, we set out our understanding of the community that the new Portsoken Community Centre will serve, including its demographic profile, key issues/areas of need and its strengths and assets (see Appendix B for a detailed Local Insight report on the ward). We also highlight what residents have told us and others about what they would like to see delivered from the new centre.

5.2 Profile of local community

Currently a high proportion of the Portsoken Ward population is aged 20-29 (30.35%) although numbers of over 65's are expected to increase dramatically up to 2036. Young people aged 15-19 only make up 10.7% of the population (est. 185 persons) so are a relatively small group in comparison to the London average. The ward has a diverse population, with many religions represented although the largest is Muslim (27.7%).

The neighbourhood is characterised with a degree of inequality, combining more affluent city workers with those on universal credit, which is perhaps best illustrated by the difference between the average household income (£79,700) and the median household income (£23,733). The ward ranks relatively highly on some measures of deprivation (Income Domain and Barriers to Housing and Services Domain). There is also an unusually high instance of lone person households (35.8% - compared 17.9% for England).

Further key statistics about the area:

- There are 1730 people living in Portsoken Ward
- The largest age category is 20-24 (16%), followed by 25-29 (14%)
- Teenagers (aged 15-19) only make up 10.7% of the population
- There are less people 65+ than the rest of England (10.9% compared to 18.2%) but this is comparable to the rest of London
- 80.3% of pensioners live in one person households, compared to 59.6% in the rest of England
- The number of people aged 60 to 74 is expected to rise by a half in the square mile by 2036, and those who are over 75 by 70%.¹
- Two thirds of the housing in the East of the City of London is socially rented¹ (66.8% compared to 17.7%)
- There is a marginally high turnover of residents (14% of people had moved address within the last 12 months, compared to 12.3% in the rest of England)
- Less people have no car than the rest of England (76% compared to 26%)
- The number of people physically active (apart from gardening) is high (81%, compared to 65% in London and 64% in England)
- 48.6% non-white compared to an average of 14.6% in the rest of England
 - Majority Bangladeshi (21.9%)
 - 58% of residents are born in the UK, and 73% have a British Passport
 - In 18% of households no members have English as the main language
 - In 67% of households all members have English as the main language

Considerations given the above

¹ Healthy Homes; Vibrant Communities. Our Housing Strategy for 2019-2023 (City of London)

- Provision of activities should reflect the demographic profile and recognition of how this profile is expected to change – with higher number of retirees/older people
- A range of methods needed to engage a wide variety of people, including those living alone
- There should be strong recognition of the diversity of the local population in terms of ethnicity and religion and the centre can provide an opportunity to bring people together through different cultural/religious festivals.
- The income inequality in the community is both a challenge and an opportunity – with scope for supporting cross-subsidy.

5.3 Highlighted needs

In terms of key issues and needs, available data and our interviews highlight the following:

- Unemployment exists on the estate but is declining (it was previously a more pertinent issue, but current averages are reported lower than London averages in all demographics).
- While there are high rates of people in employment, household income is low for many residents (83.2% of residents are living in the most deprived 20% of areas of England according to the 'income' domain of ID 2019).
- Barriers to housing and services is also an issue for many resident but this is also consistent with it being a prominent issue across London compared to the rest of the country (83.2% are living in the most deprived 20% of areas of England according to the 'barriers to housing and services' domain of ID 2019).
- A quarter of children live in poverty (compared to 17% in the rest of England) and 34.3% of them live in lone parent households (compared to 27.2% in the rest of England)
- Overcrowding is an issue with 44.3% of housing classed as overcrowded (compared to 9.7% in the rest of England)
- All types of crime are higher than in the rest of England (443.9 per 1000 population compared to 106.0)
- Air quality is lower than in the rest of England

Considerations given the above

- Consideration of support to help boost household income, whilst recognising that a significant proportion of this could be in-work poverty.
- Support to activities that may help alleviate the stress caused by overcrowding.
- Through the space, increase accessible and visible green spaces for people to enjoy and mitigate the effects of pollution/poor air quality.
- Affordable child-based provision to support to parents and their children (e.g. after school and during holidays)

5.4 Strengths/assets

In terms of key strengths and assets, available data and our interviews highlight the following:

- There is a strong group of residents who participate and run/attend activities regularly, and others attend seasonal events such as summer fun days (e.g. Mansell St Women's group).
- Sense of community on both estates is quite strong and people like living in the area (including its City of London historical identity (Social Life data shows strong social cohesion and satisfaction on the local area, that "People from different

backgrounds get on well together in the local area” and that “People who are satisfied with local area as a place to live” – see Local Insight report)

- Good community and service provision locally (including Green Box and Artizan Library)
- Commitment and support from City of London

Considerations given the above

- There is scope to build from the existing range of community activities and events already taking place in the area and build on the positive connections that are in evidence.
- Draw on the City of London identity that some residents feel a connection to.

5.4 Resident aspirations for the new centre

5.4.1 Studio Partington consultation

Studio Partington carried out resident consultation to support the design, specification and scoping for the new space. In total, they delivered four community consultation events. Unfortunately, the events were poorly attended, so the findings, which are set out below, should be caveated with the understanding that they carry suggestions of only a small number of residents. They highlight some mixed findings on topics such as youth provision² the need for a community kitchen.

Area of consideration	Consultation feedback
Relationship with other community centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth would be enticed by modern facilities with more activities available • Centres should complement each other rather than compete • Note: Current residents' view is that the community centre will be exclusively for them rather than shared with neighbouring communities. • Potential for 'mega events' hosted by ACE between the neighbouring centres Identity • “Green Box” should remain as the local identity • Try to instil some character and uniqueness of the centre
Quality of space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Homely’ environment • Welcoming and informal space
Features in the centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate audio-visual facilities (incl. built-in speakers, AV equipment, sufficient power outlets, WIFI etc). System MUST be simple and user-friendly to operate. • Ample power outlets • Adequate and dimmable lighting • Drinking fountains • Notice boards and ample storage for user groups • Adequate air conditioning and ventilation • Movable walls for flexibility of spaces
Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Computer area/study zone • Area with projectors, gaming stations, comfortable seating • Workshop/ ‘maker spaces’ • Digital media room • Meeting rooms for smaller clubs • Small gym space (mobile equipment) • Large multi-purpose space for table tennis/pool tables/table football • Smaller rooms for confidential meetings/service provision • Unisex super-loo bathroom facilities • Unisex baby-change facilities • Community run tea and coffee point/kitchen (large scale catering kitchen not required) • ‘Hot-desking’ area • Rehearsal spaces (for drama/music) • Potential for BBQs on the terrace

² some noting youth groups are currently not well attended but others stating there had previously been a successful youth group at the Green Box, but there weren't enough supervisors so things went missing and got damaged and it was stopped

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability for pop-up cooking classes • Creche space or facilities for children
Other considerations (for future work stages)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • External secure cycle storage • Accessibility • Security and access control • Security of the external terrace • Statutory compliance (inc. Part B Building Regulations)
Opportunities identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short walking distance to Whitechapel Road and Aldgate Tube Station • Design will have accessible access, inc lift • May have view out onto terrace

5.4.2 Additional Locality engagement (Feb/Mar 2020)

With agreement from the City of London, we sought to undertake additional resident engagement work, comprising drop in sessions with residents at the Green Box as well as participation (drop ins) at community activities/meetings (e.g. Mansell Street Women's Group, Table Tennis and Mansell Estate Resident Association).

The insights from this additional engagement with residents are summarised below:

- The Green Box and Iveagh Room are both well used, and residents' main concern for the new centre was maintaining a continuity of the current offer.
- Some saw the Green Box as difficult to access in terms of getting access to key-holders and having a space accessible throughout the day/evening was seen, by residents, as important.
- Some residents (noting the hotel location) anticipated that there would be a perception challenge in making the new space feel like it belongs to the community.
- Many residents, cited that community projects start but fall away due to lack of interest and for the new centre that means there will be a challenge of communicating activities and other community-based opportunities to residents – particularly those not already connected or involved.
- However, residents also saw potential for the new centre in offering more opportunities to reach sections of the community (not currently catered for), to fill provision gaps such as the lack of hyperlocal, affordable physical activity, and to bring together different parts of the community in new ways (e.g. an opportunity to put on activities which will also attract 20-35 year olds, some of whom may be able to pay for activities, with others benefitting from employment/enterprise and training opportunities).
- Residents feel that there are a large number of community organisations in the local area, who they think would be willing to collaborate to support the new centre. Creating a complimentary offer and joining up in promotion may support the new centres success.
- Good links with City of London councillors present opportunities to build corporate partnerships for fundraising opportunities or a good network of corporate renters to cross-subsidise community activities.

Considerations given the above

- Consideration of community preferences of their focus would be useful to garner popular support and contribute to success.
- The likelihood of a broad offer to people living and working in the area – combining different charge rates and demanding versatility / flexibility within the space.
- The look and feel of the space will be important to ensure residents (and other users) feel it is a space for them.
- Related to the above, there will be an initial need to encourage wide community use and experience of the space (e.g. through events), to build a strong connection between the space and the wider community.

- Importance of offering continuity of the Green Box community offer and ensure that its users are successfully transferred to the new space.
- Offer a better co-ordination between the space and other community providers – to provide residents with a clear understanding of the overall picture for local provision.

6. NEIGHBOURHOOD CONTEXT – FITTING WITHIN OTHER LOCAL PROVISION

6.1 Overview

The area (Aldgate) has a relatively varied and cohesive local community sector. Organisations within it have an aspiration to better co-ordinate for complementary offerings and to share information and best practice. The area is in close proximity to major financial businesses as well as HQ locations for businesses in other sectors, which as well as providing employment, enterprise and training routes for residents also offers Corporate philanthropy opportunities and commercial users. The area also has a strong cultural offer, which has the potential to provide opportunities for young people. There are also many faith organisations in the area, with the potential for the new community space to provide an opportunity for inter-faith activities.

In the table below organisations have been categorised according to their potential relationship to the space. Following that is further details of the offering of each organisation and a longer description of the potential relationship.

Potential relationship to Portsoken Community Centre	Organisations/groups
Potential to share back office functions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Golden Lanes • Artizan Library • Iveagh Court
Potential for joint programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cass Centre • Brady Arts Centre • East London Mosque • St Botolphs • Kahalia Cafe
Potential space users <i>(In addition to groups which currently use the 'Green box')</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult learning services; could take space as an anchor organisation (i.e. with a daily presence) • XLP; could take space as an anchor organisation • Chess Club (likely weekly) • Fusion lifestyle; to put on sporting activities (likely weekly) • Dragon Cafe; could bring mental health provision (likely monthly) • AgeUK; would develop a new group in the space (monthly) • Mansell Street Womens' group; could use the space for cooking, or to run larger events. (ad hoc use)
Organisations who could partner and support enhanced provision/offers for residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barbican Centre • ISTA Community • WeWork
Organisations who could support in advertising the new space/activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cass Centre • Synagogues • Interfaith Forum • Barbican Library • Shoe Lane Library
Organisations who could take over running community building, at least initially to carry out community building work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Osmani Trust (mainly working with BAME) • Attlee Centre (mainly working with youth and SEN people) • Fusion Lifestyle (manage leisure centres and sports activities) • Toynbee Hall (mainly focus on financial advice and over 50's provision) <p><i>If a cafe is desired in the space the following two could be considered</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kahaila Café (work with homeless people and ex-offenders) • Mansell Street Women's Group (interest in selling snacks e.g. curry/rice)

6.2 Green Box

The Green Box is the most significant of the current community providers as it is the space, which the new centre will eventually replace. The ambition to ensure that the activities and services currently being provided at the Green Box can be transferred to and possibly (with the added space) be expanded in the new Centre. The Green Box, which is managed as an Annex to the Artizan Library, has a variety of different users and uses:

- The ground floor used by: the Muslim Women's Group, Table Tennis and Silver Table Tennis, Narcotics Anonymous, Martial Arts, Sewing Club, Under 10's club, Girl's Club, Chess Club and Youth Group.
- The first floor is approximately 33 sqm and tends to be used by the New Bengali Women's Club, Mindfulness sessions, Hopscotch and also by Aldgate Community Events as an administration centre. The first floor is shared with a health centre that is currently operated in partnership with London Borough of Tower Hamlets. It is understood that this will not be incorporated within the new centre.

The table below sets out in greater detail the various different activities and service provision at the Green Box:

Green Box activity	Timings in the week (e.g. every Tues 6-9pm)	How many people	Space considerations for group (e.g. requires privacy, storage needed etc)
Resident private parties	10 times a year	40 max at capacity	Birthday parties – need for tables and chairs – scope to do more in the new centre but storage, Late time limit for local residents, Kitchen / dishwashing, Guidance on decoration / customisation, Noticeboard in all rooms
Estate cultural celebrations	15 times a year	30-40 per event	NYE, Diwali parties, Bengali parties, By the estate for the estate, Need for tables and chairs / kitchen
Resident led table tennis	Monday evenings	4 people	2 tables, Water coolers, Showers - Historical bookings
Member (councillor) surgery	Once a month – 1 st Tues of month	1-2 Cllrs plus handful of residents	Privacy required
Narcotics Anonymous	Weekly (new group) 2 x groups (one in Artizan)	15 people attending	Privacy – safe space (proper privacy), Safe not clinical, Access to a kitchen / drinks making, Response to homelessness, City workers, Less about residents
City of London Adult Education sewing club	Weekly on Thursday afternoon	4-6	Going on for a while, Need storage
Corporate Pilates	Weekly	15 people	Run by PLP architecture – pay top rate, Need storage
Resident led gardening group	Once a month	2-4	Work outside – balcony pots etc
City commissioned youth service provision	Once a week Thurs evening	3-4	Safeguarding – water coolers, accessible toilets, require a lot space, table and chairs (did have soft furnishings) – use table tennis, pool, TV, projector
City commissioned Fusion Lifestyle table tennis	Fridays		Health and wellbeing service – use table tennis tables
Resident led girls group under 10s and over 10s (for residents only)	Fridays	6 girls	Tables, chairs and kitchens – storage for craft
City of London Recycling Services - Resident Give and Take day	2 a year	Around 30	Tables and chairs – doors remain open to all residents – well attended. Spaces have to be public
City commissioned Healthwatch office space	In 4 days per week Weds-Fri	1.4 people in total	Need private space for 121s with clients and meeting room access. Staff are flexible to hot desk
Charity Art Sense office space	Weds	2 workers	Share space with Otijo – art therapy – lockable cupboards
Charity Oitijjo.org office space	Weds	2 workers	Share space with Art Sense – craft / Bangla creativity - lockable cupboards, Sometime hold events
St Botolph's without Aldgate temporary Sunday school premises	Weekly	10 children and 2 adults	1 year space need – need storage – suitable storage / kitchen

Aldgate Community Engagement	Monday and Tuesday	2	
Aldgate Community Engagement community events	4 times a year / 10 craft sessions	6-7 per time	Lot of storage
City Connections (Age UK) coffee mornings	Monthly – last Thurs of months	2-3 people	Running for years

6.2 Other Community space and providers

The table below sets out details of other community providers and spaces in the neighbourhood including considerations about the potential relationship to the new community centre.

Community space/provider	Dist mis	Summary of offer	Potential relationship to the new space
Green Box	0.1	As above table	Will not exist but is a forerunner to the new space in terms of provision and community activities
Kahaila Cafe	0.1	A local charity who run several cafes near by, the initiators wanted to create an inclusive environment for people to express and explore Christian faith. Additionally rent the space for private events, art exhibitions, music nights and corporate events. Provide education and training to ex-offenders. Provide training and support into work for homeless people	Potential for joint programming. Candidate to run a cafe in the space, if such facilities are desired.
Artizan Community Centre and Library	0.2	Library (inc DVDs), IT training area to rent (12 workstations); noted as not up to date enough for some renters. Main hall (45-50 people) to rent, Dance studio to rent, Reading groups, Stay and play for under 5's, Various exercise classes, including different types of yoga, tango/salsa and corporate pilates, Life drawing	Potential to collaborate and create a joint offering for residents, particularly given proximity. There is also potential to share back office functions, as long as this doesn't detract from the community building work needed in the new space (i.e. from overworked staff).
Iveagh Court Community Room	0.2	An accessible space for residents to use, run by The Guinness Partnership. Space suited to maximum ~60 people, Minimal kitchen facilities. Noted by residents as reasonably easy to get access, and easier than the current Green Box management set up. Current uses include Mansell Street Women's Group and Residents Association meetings. Previously used by the Chess Club.	Suited to remain as a space for residents to use for small gatherings and meetings. It may be appropriate to link key holders with the new space to present as more of a joint offering, and ensure residents can access both through the same point of contact.
The Cass Child and Family centre	0.2	Based in Sir John Cass Foundation Primary School. Offer various stay and play, arts and health based provision for under 5's. Also offer some Adult Learning sessions relevant to parents. Previously hosted some Toynbee services before their new building was built. Distribute a semi-regular newsletter to parents under 5. City of London are the providers/commissioners.	Potential to collaborate in programming for parents or under 5's, and to advertise events to their parents. Appetite for multi-agency working, sharing of best practice and not duplicating provisioning.
London ISTA community	0.3	An International Arts Organisation who have 250 member schools in 100 different countries, and offer arts and theatre education.	May be useful to engage with, to support young people from the centre to access arts education and networks, although Brady Arts centre is another local and more community focused option for this.
Toynbee Hall	0.3	Historic community organisation in the area, run on-going debt and money advice services, main other focus is wellbeing for over 50's but do run other projects, subject to funding. Free debt and money advice, Wellbeing centre; free social health and fitness activities for over 50s, Current youth activism project, History and drama workshops, Schools outreach, Currently developing a new public space 'Mallon Gardens' for community use	Potential to support the growth of the new space through coordinating community building activities, and for joint programming.
Attlee Centre	0.4	Have an adventure playground, and now also run a community centre, Play for 5 to 14 years; up to 16 years, Generic youth sessions for 13 to 19 years olds; up to 25 years for those with additional needs, Girls and women only sessions for cultural reasons, Volunteering opps for those 16 or older. <u>Rooms for rent</u> Sports Hall (up to 150 people), Training room, MUGA, Astroturf outdoor pitch, Kitchen (suitable for cooking classes) and Art room	Successfully run the community centre, cross-subsidizing through room rentals. A candidate for running the new centre, although unlikely they need more space. Potential for them to see the new centre as competition to their room rental income, although the offer is slightly different. Use of the IT-suite or maker space for some of their young people could be the basis for initiating collaborative working and dialogue to prevent rifts due to competition.

St Botolphs Church	0.5	Have a high end hall hired out for dinners and functions Also have a Tennis and Netball Court for hire (£45 per hour) Have a new community hall, and are building a new catering standard kitchen Linked to a number of Livery Companies	There is potential for the space to be included if there is a complimentary programming initiative (i.e. for the summer season), the new kitchen is intended for rental by the community, so knowledge about its existence and how to access it needs to be disseminated. Possible for connections to be made through livery companies who might support community events.
East London Mosque and Community Hall	0.6	The largest mosque in the local area; there are two others less than 1 mile away (B.B.C Community Centre and Mosque, Brick Lane Mosque) but they don't openly advertise a community offer. Imams advice, Free Counselling (for women only), Pro-bono legal advice, Primary, secondary school and nursery, Supplementary education for 5-17, A family friendly restaurant, Gym, Shops, Solicitors, Several charitable foundations, Wedding hire	With consideration that 27% of the population are muslim, it may be interesting to engage with the East London Mosque in the creation of specific initiatives, such as arts provision for youth or health and wellbeing.
Brady Arts and Community Centre	0.7	Community Arts space with a long history, linked to Tower Hamlets Council. Receive some funding and also manage arts event in Victoria Park. Already run one satellite building which is not open all the time. Theatre space with sprung floor, Cafe with gallery for small exhibitions, Meeting rooms for hire, Art room with screen printing facilities, Arts courses and workshops are free to young people from across the borough (inc; dance, drama, singing, music technology, film and fashion)	Potential partner for joint programming initiatives, or to link young people to arts activities.
Osmani Trust	0.8	Providing a variety of community projects and cross-subsidizing work through room rental. Majority Bangladeshi run, actually in Tower Hamlets boundary. Asha gang remediation, Girls project, Education and employment provision, Mentoring, Youth club and Holiday project, Health and fitness for over 50's	Successfully run their community initiative, including paying rent for their building and cross-subsidizing through room rentals. A candidate for running the new centre. Potential for them to see the new centre as competition to their room rental income, although the offer is slightly different. Joint programming or the creation of community offers may be possible.
Barbican centre	1.1	A well established Arts Venue nationally and internationally: Offer opportunities to youth and emerging artists (inc poetry, theatre, curators, music and careers), Engage with schools, Drum club, Opening doors LGBTQ+ club (monthly), Creative Citizens programme; professional development opportunities for artists and arts organisations (in Walthamstow currently), Wedding and venue hire; garden parties, conferences etc... average price £79pp, Programme free events (Beyond Barbican); Walthamstow Garden Party is only one listed	Barbican have the 'Beyond Barbican' initiative, aiming to program free events. It may be that partnership with the Barbican could bring access to high quality arts and education to local people. However, it must be done in a way doesn't leave people feeling alienated.
Barbican Library	1.1	Library inc DVDs, Free computers w/ internet access, Rhymetime & storytime; under 5s, Reading support for children, Craft and conversation group, Comic forum (reading club), English Conversation group	Currently stay and play seems to alternate between Barbican Childrens library, Artizan library and Shoe Lane Library. Any activities in the new space for young parents or under 5's could benefit from aligning with this schedule and advertising at these sessions. Additionally, joint programming or advertising of other community offers could be beneficial.
Ralph Perrin Club	1.3	A social club for people over 60 who are City residents or who have previously worked for the City Corporation. The club meets in its own club room in the Golden Lane Estate, and members can participate in a variety of activities (i.e. bingo, knitting, reading groups and outings). Community food growing project for Golden Lane Estate – 'The Golden Lane Baggers' (monthly sessions with an annual fee of £20)	They seem to be quite an independent entity and are critically further from the new community centre. However, any activities for older aged people could be advertised to them. Scope for deeper collaboration is unknown.
Golden Lanes Community Centre	1.4	Held up as a good example of making cross-subsidizing work. Hosts Adult Learning Services, Seasonal events, Arts workshops, Meditation classes, Yoga, Classes, Hall hire for functions and children's parties	Distance between Golden Lanes and the new community centre is relatively large in walking terms, so opportunities for joint programming are minimal. However, scope to share back office functions.
Shoe Lane Library	1.6	Library inc DVDs, Free Wi-Fi, computers, & internet, Reading groups, Stay and play for under 5s, Dragon cafe (free creative workshops for mental health), Seasonal events	Currently appears to participate in the rotational programming of under 5's activities with Artizan Library and Barbican Children's Library. May be open to joint programming, but further away so scope limited.

6.3 Further groups/spaces of interest

In addition to the above community providers and spaces, we also identified a number of other organisations that may provide links or partnerships to benefit the new centre.

AgeUK

A national organisation supporting older people and franchised to local areas. They have been commissioned by City of London to run carers groups, coffee mornings, a befriending service and provide support and signposting. They are keen to be connected to the new space to direct people to relevant services and events there and there may be scope for them to develop a new group in the centre.

Adult Learning (COL)

City of London service providing Adult Learning opportunities across the city, and currently occupy space in Golden Lanes Community Centre. They may have interested in renting/using some of the space at the new centre.

Barbican Art Society

They have a dedicated presence in the Barbican Centre. There may be scope for them to become involved in the new centre particularly on joint programming around the arts.

Chess Club

The Chess Club runs sessions twice a week, previously in the Iveagh Rooms but now in Kahaila Cafe where they pick up new members on a regular basis (from advertising and serendipitously at the cafe).

Dragon Cafe in the city

The café is focused on supporting mental health and wellbeing. They provide weekly sessions with varied workshops and activities at Shoe Lane Library.

Friends of City Gardens

The group run volunteering sessions at a number of green spaces across the city of London. However, it is unclear if they would be interested in space outside the new centre. It was noted in a residents liaison meeting that the estate gardening club did not want to make use of and plant up the lower area of the new centre.

Fusion lifestyle

A large national charity who run the gym and leisure centre at Golden Lanes. They are normally contracted through procurement. They run programmes particularly for over 50's, interested in extending provision and always looking for space to put on more community activities. They already have a working relationship with City of London and AgeUK. They have cited that they have struggled engaging young people in their provision, but interested in making further efforts to do this as well as also targeting 25-35 year olds.

Synagogues

There are a number of synagogues, which are less than 1 mile away, including Sandys Row Synagogue, Bevis Marks Synagogue and East Central Synagogue. A representative from East Central Synagogue was contacted, the understanding gained was that the Jewish Community is quite small at the moment and dominated by elderly patrons. Ensuring any place serving food has kosher suitable options would encourage them to participate.

Tower Hamlets Interfaith Forum

Meet bi-monthly to share information between the different faith communities, including raising community issues. Have speakers to different sessions related to topical issues. Also run public events related to national initiatives, such as interfaith week or mental health and wellbeing.

WeWork; 0.6 miles away

International company, renting office and co-working space. They run business support and entrepreneurship events and health and wellbeing workshops (including yoga, massage etc). They run a 'creator' awards annually with categories for non-profits, performing arts or business ventures. They may be a suitable partner to support young people with brokering training or employment opportunities.

XLP

XLP provide mentoring and support for young people, including through education, sports and arts. May be a candidate for taking space with the new centre and providing youth services.

Relevant grant making bodies

- Livery Company Charitable Donations – for example, those listed below are linked to St Botolphs (there are many others)
 - http://www.bowyers.com/charity_history.php
 - <https://www.coopers-hall.co.uk/charity2/our-work2>
 - <https://fanmakers.com/charities/charity-in-the-community/>
 - <https://leathersellers.co.uk/charitablefund/>
- City of London grants
- City Bridge Trust
- London Community Foundation
- The Aldgate Partnership – Business Improvement District (membership includes landowners, commercial occupiers, and developers), with potential funding for community activities.

6.4 Workspace and community hall hire rates

Market rates and opportunities in the local area

Community facilities nearby have 35%-100% occupancy with weekday evenings and Saturdays the most popular. There is additional potential in memberships or rental of the marker space, providing these spaces are adequately equipped to market standards and good marketing used to attract the clientele.

There are also an unusually high number of charitable bodies nearby, including livery companies, providing scope for income for social initiatives delivered in the area.

Community rental rates

A comparator of community space hire rates is given below:

Community Space	Rates
The Green Box	£20/ £10/ £0 General use/ Local providers, charities or residents /Event put on by residents open to all residents

Artizan Library	£35 for multifunctional hall (50% discount for local groups and charities > free for residents) £18 for meeting rooms
Golden Lanes Community Centre	£45/£25/£10 for the hall £30/£15/£0 per hour for downstairs space COL Adult learning Services; £28,000 per year for permanent space
Brady Arts and Community Centre	£53/£42 for Main Hall £35/£21 for Hide Hall £18/£13 for Meeting Room £45/£32 for the studio

Commercial office rental

Commercial office rental in the area – as the budget end is £450-£650pm for 70/80 Sq Ft (£5400 - £7800 per annum). £55 per sq ft (£13200 per annum for 50 sq ft). There is a lot of competition in the supply of renting meeting rooms - Artizan noted that their space is used more for exercise classes and team building days, although they also highlighted the need for an up-to-date IT suite, with internet access to meet a local demand that they have not been able to satisfy. Although Studio Partington's proposed design for the Portsoken Community Centre does not include specific, dedicated office space for hire - the meeting room could be used to fulfil this – and with 20 SQM (215 SQFT), it gives a potential income of £16200.00 - £23400.00 per annum using these comparable rates.

Maker space memberships

Maker space memberships are growing in popularity and in East London, the rates range from £15-£25 per month. To be viable, a makers space would need enough equipment to attract clients (i.e. 3D printer).

7. AVAILABLE SPACE, POTENTIAL USES

7.1 Available space

The Studio Partington design of the new Portsoken Community Centre is set out below in the 2 diagrams focusing on the community-dedicated space on the Ground Floor and Mezzanine levels. It is based on offering:

- 150m² of space in comparison to 88m² offered by the Green Box.
- A flexible **main community space** for a variety of uses – it can be divided into 2 spaces for smaller activities or groups (e.g. the divider could be used to offer a crèche for an activity taking place in the adjoining room).
- 1-2-1 **consultation rooms** offering privacy.
- **Larger rooms/spaces** for residential clubs and health and wellbeing activities.
- A **kitchen** facility.
- **Toilets** – male and female but that could be reduced to one unisex toilet to free up further space.
- **Hot desking space** on the Ground Floor.
- A Mezzanine space suitable for smaller subdivision of space for **community or residents groups** (e.g. 1-2-1 consultation rooms or spaces that may be hired - each with their own storage space (but with **collapsible walls offering larger meeting spaces**).
- A further **managed workspace area** on the Mezzanine level (which Studio Partington suggested as a 'Maker Lab' / 'Digital Media' space)
- Two available basement areas that will be available for use by the community centre – for a good supply of **storage space** and potentially an **accessible shower room /WC**.

7.2 Ground Floor

The main Ground Floor Space is 50 sqm total and breaks down into 24 sqm for Community Space 1 and 26 sqm for Community Space 2. There is a 10 sqm kitchen on the ground floor should anyone require a space for catering for events - the kitchen is equipped with a basic kitchenette set.

Ground Floor

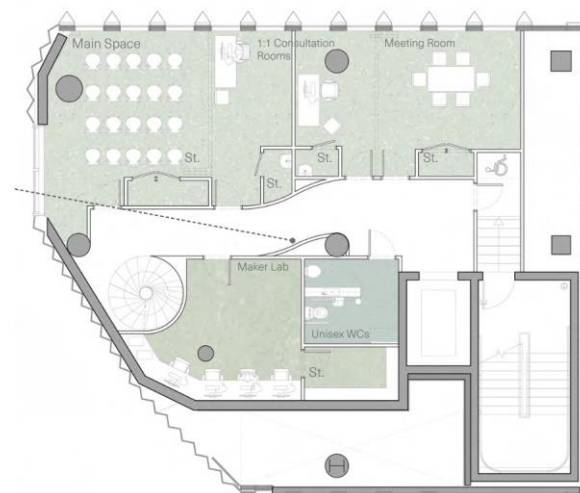


7.3

Mezzanine

On the Mezzanine Floor, the Event Space is 30 sqm and the Meeting Room is 20 sqm. There are two 1:1 Consultation Rooms both are 13 sqm. The Digital Lab/Workshop envisioned as a space where external organisers can come in and give classes on creating media (such as music/videos, 3d printing, coding, etc) and is 19 sqm.

Mezzanine



7.3 Potential Uses

The potential uses of the space can be summarised under the following headings:

- **Anchor organisation space** – organisations (preferably third sector and delivering services to the community) who need weekly office space and meeting/consultation rooms and whom will contribute to income through rent (possibilities include City of London via Centre manager and/or engagement team; HealthWatch; City of London – Adult Education; City Connection; Dementia Care; CAB; Toynbee Hall)
- **Residents meetings** – space for community groups and associations to hold meetings
- Residents activities (culture,, leisure, arts, health etc) – activities run by residents for residents.
- **(City) Worker activities** (e.g. health/fitness/wellbeing) – commercial activities aimed at people working in the area – e.g. mornings, lunchtimes and after work but also relating to team exercises.
- **Advice, support and help groups** – service and charitable providers offering help to disadvantaged and vulnerable residents.
- **Maker and managed workspace** – for new entrepreneurs and small businesses without premises.
- **Public / charity / commercial meeting space** – support meetings for City of London, charities and businesses (as overspill when their own facilities are full).
- **Resident and cultural events** – to coincide with religious festivals and other key calendar dates.

8. MANAGEMENT/GOVERNANCE SCENARIOS

8.1 Scenarios

We use this section to set out some management/governance scenarios for running the new Centre, assessing the considerations, advantages/disadvantages of each.

Scenario 1	Third party management - Toynbee Hall used as an example (see Appendix C for Toynbee Hall's proposal)
Summary	This approach involves City of London commissioning a third party to take responsibility for managing and building up both community use and community ownership of the new centre. It would include a period of community development work to build up broad community use of the new centre, working to ensure it is used by all sections of the local population. The third party would also look to build up of local accountability / community role.
Pros	Responsibility passed to an experienced and locally based third party organisation Centre in 'community hands' and the potential for some strong community development work would be enhanced through this route Strong fit/sync with local provision Potential leverage of external funds
Cons	Less City of London control of activities and potential co-ordination of its corporate goals at one of its sites

Other considerations	Candidates for this role (which would be delivered through a SLA / contract with COL) would ideally have at least some of the following attributes: (1) Have a good pre-existing connection to local community (e.g. a local community organisation) and/or whose role is supported by local residents. (2) Have excellent experience in successfully managing community spaces – in terms of building community-wide provision and efficiently managing finances. (3) Can bring service, provision and community activities that are wanted/needed by local residents.
-----------------------------	---

Scenario 2	Managed by COL as stand alone Centre
Summary	This model follows the approach used to run Golden Lanes Community Centre (GLCC), with the City of London's engagement team responsible for employing a centre manager and running the centre, ensuring a broad range of community-focused activities but also ensuring it generates enough income to cover running costs. As with GLCC, the community's role would be secured through a Residents' Advisory Board.
Pros	Option with the greatest familiarity to City of London as would entail following the path/approach of GLCC – and draw on its lessons/experience Would ensure that the centre would be closely aligned to City of London corporate objectives.
Cons	Residents may question whether the centre belongs to the community and if they have influence over what happens there. Long-term it may be less agile to meeting needs, wants, opportunities in the area than other options.
Other considerations	Business modelling will be different to GLCC, without the possibility of drawing on residents' the service charge. May work in combination with scenarios 3 and 4, developed after an initial period of delivering this option.

Scenario 3	Managed by COL and federated with other City of London centres
Summary	This approach would see City of London looking to federate the management of the new centre with an existing centre. Sharing back office, systems and management functions across two sites. Potential candidates for this include Artizan Library and Golden Lanes Community Centre. The community's role would be secured through a Residents' Advisory Board.
Pros	Synergies (in terms of systems, skills, knowledge and experience) as well as economies of scale savings across the two sites. Running complementary offers across the two sites. Helps also with marketing for both (more) commercial and community hire.
Cons	Potential to lose distinctiveness of centre to immediate community (e.g. makes it more City of London driven) Challenge in Resident Advisory group in having a meaningful influence on operations

Other considerations	Lots of best practice available on federated/networks of community centres being efficiently run ³ . Special Purpose Vehicles are also sometimes used by authorities as a way of managing multiple community centre sites ⁴
-----------------------------	--

Scenario 4	Establish new community structure to manage
Summary	To develop a community organisation to run the new Centre. Even the most ambitious timetable for this option would require City of London to manage the centre for an interim period (of minimum 2 years) while looking to put in place a new community-led legal entity, whose role will be 'tapered up' to take on the responsibility for managing the centre
Pros	The scenario offering most in terms of community accountability. It also, if successful in its first few years, provides the most sustainable option for achieving the desired vision for the centre. Community-led centres are more agile to the needs/wants of the community and build capacity and attract resources for the community. A community organisation had the potential to leverage in external funding.
Cons	Requires high level of investment in the developing individuals from the community and building a viable community structure. Comes with the potential risk that it will not succeed so we need good contingency planning.
Other considerations	This can be developed alongside the third party option (Scenario 1), with this organisation given the role of developing a new community structure. The Locality network has many examples of independent community organisations successfully running thriving community centres to benefit their residents (which this structure could be part of to draw on peer experiences)

8.2 Scenarios in combination

Some of the above scenarios can also work in combination with each other – as the table below illustrates (NB – rows represented the first stage followed by the columns):

<i>Initial stage (below rows) – then working in combination with (right columns)</i>	Third party management	Managed by COL	Managed by COL and federated	New community structure
Third party management		N/A	N/A	Third party organization given responsibility for nurturing and developing new community structure as part of their contract
Managed by COL	N/A		Centre managed as a stand alone	COL undertake the role of

³ <https://www.octopuscommunities.org.uk/>

⁴ <https://www.powertochange.org.uk/what-is-community-business/stories/leeds-community-spaces/>

			initially to help it build its own identity and then federated later to save costs	nurturing and developing new community structure
Managed by COL and federated	N/A	N/A		Centre federated initially to save costs and share expertise but work towards a new community structure
New community structure	New community structure initially with third party support and fall back	New community structure initially with COL support and fall back	New community structure initially with COL/federated support and fall back	

8.3 Potential third party providers

The table below sets out some potential candidates to play the role as third party management provider for the new centre.

Name	Details	Link	Distance from Portsoken	Why they might fir the work
Toynbee Hall	Long-standing community organisation in Spitalfields providing a range of community spaces and services	https://www.toynbeehall.org.uk/	0.3m	Closest to the new centre with pre-existing relationships and provision to residents
St Luke's Community Centre	Community centre with multiple services, café, community garden and rooms for hire in Islington but right next to the City of London	www.slpt.org.uk	1.6m	Successful and financially self sufficient cross-subsidy model (good links to funders and City firms)
Bromley By Bow Centre	Internationally renowned centre – which has created a new model for supporting healthy, vibrant communities – combining health and community services	https://www.bbhc.org.uk/	3m	Would bring innovation and long-term commitment
Hilda St East	Has been serving community in Tower Hamlets (close to the City of London) for well over a century, running its own community space and a range of services	http://sthildas.org.uk/	1m	Long standing experience
Oxford House	Long standing community organisation in Bethnal Green – strong cultural offer	https://www.oxfordhouse.org.uk/	1.3m	Long standing experience
Popla HARCA	Housing Association working in Tower Hamlets but running centres such as Spotlight	https://www.poplarharc.co.uk/community-centres	2.6m	Experience of quickly building up a range of uses at new centres
Atlee Centre	Multi-purpose community centre in Tower Hamlets very close to the new centre	https://attleecentre.org/	0.4m	Long standing experience and proximity
Manor House Development Trust	Relatively new community organisation in Hackney, which has rapidly and successfully mobilised the use of a community space	http://www.mhdt.org.uk/	4.6m	Has developed a successful model, which they are scaling in other new community spaces in Ealing and Newham
Poplar Bangladeshi Community Project	In existence for 13 years supporting the education and social welfare of children, (recreational facilities, training, running after school activities) and Lunch Club for elderly people.	http://www.pbcp.org.uk/	3.2m	Would help to ensure new centre can engage the large local Bangladeshi population

9. FINANCES

9.1 Income and expenditure

The table below presents an income and expenditure model relevant to the aforementioned different scenarios (with more detailed spreadsheets included as appendices).

	Year 1 20/21	Year 2 21/22	Year 3 22/23	Year 4 23/24	Year 5 24/25
Expenditure		3% inflationary increase	3% inflationary increase	3% inflationary increase	3% inflationary increase
Electricity & Gas	£14,000.00	£14,420.00	£15,141.00	£15,898.05	£16,692.95
Water	£3,000.00	£3,090.00	£3,244.50	£3,406.73	£3,577.06
Insurance	£6,000.00	£6,180.00	£6,489.00	£6,813.45	£7,154.12
Business Rates (80% reduction)	£4,800.00	£4,944.00	£5,191.20	£5,450.76	£5,723.30
Building Maintenance - repairs	£6,000.00	£6,180.00	£6,489.00	£6,813.45	£7,154.12
Purchase & maintenance of furniture	£2,000.00	£2,060.00	£2,163.00	£2,271.15	£2,384.71
Fees and services (e.g. licenses)	£1,000.00	£1,030.00	£1,081.50	£1,135.58	£1,192.35
Phone & IT maintenance costs	£4,000.00	£2,500.00	£2,625.00	£2,756.25	£2,894.06
Cleaning Services	£4,000.00	£4,120.00	£4,326.00	£4,542.30	£4,769.42
Cleaning Materials	£1,500.00	£1,545.00	£1,622.25	£1,703.36	£1,788.53
Assistant Centre Manager x 2 at 0.7FTE (£27,000)	£21,900.00	£22,557.00	£23,684.85	£24,869.09	£26,112.55
Assistant Centre Manager oncosts (15%)	£3,285.00	£3,383.55	£3,552.73	£3,730.36	£3,916.88
Centre Manager Salary at 1 x FTE (£32,000)	£32,000.00	£32,960.00	£34,608.00	£36,338.40	£38,155.32
Centre Manager oncosts (at 15%)	£4,800.00	£4,944.00	£5,191.20	£5,450.76	£5,723.30
Accountancy services	£1,000.00	£1,030.00	£1,081.50	£1,135.58	£1,192.35
Total Expenditure	£109,285.00	£110,943.55	£116,490.73	£122,315.26	£128,431.03
Total Expenditure MINUS staffing	£47,300.00	£47,099.00	£49,453.95	£51,926.65	£54,522.98
Income					
Ground Floor Main Hall	£33,667.20	£39,715.20	£39,715.20	£40,320.00	£40,320.00
Event space	£37,497.60	£41,227.20	£41,227.20	£41,227.20	£62,596.80
Meeting room	£21,369.60	£21,369.60	£33,264.00	£33,264.00	£49,795.20
Digital lab workshop	£25,300.80	£25,300.80	£28,324.80	£28,324.80	£29,836.80
1-2-1 consultation rooms	£3,225.60	£3,628.80	£3,628.80	£3,628.80	£3,628.80
Total Income	£117,835.20	£127,612.80	£142,531.20	£143,136.00	£182,548.80
Annual Profit/ Loss (including staffing)	£8,550.20	£16,669.25	£26,040.47	£20,820.74	£54,117.77

10. STAFFING, POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

This section sets out some of the practical and logistical parts of the operations including staffing, policies, procedures and performance management.

10.1 Staffing

If the opening hours of the centre are Mon - Thurs 9am - 10pm/ Friday & Sat 9 -10pm/ Sun 10am - 6pm, an equivalent of 2.4 FTE staff members will be needed to have someone there at all times. It is also necessary to consider how the centre will operate in terms of covering sickness, annual leave, and the fact that opening hours extend into evenings and weekends (and therefore staff will need to be willing to work flexible hours).

Thought will need to be given to the line management of the Centre Manager. In other organisations, a designated member of the trustee board takes responsibility for this and arranges regular supervisions (from every 2 weeks to monthly) but for Golden Lanes Community Centre the role falls to the Head of the Resident Engagement team at the City of London.

The managing organisations will need to consider what pension arrangements it will make for staff. Currently 15% of salary costs have been included in the financial modelling to cover national insurance and pension contributions.

Suggested responsibilities of staff members are outlined below:

Centre Manager – main responsibilities

General:

- Overall responsibility for the Centre – hours of work include weekdays / evenings and weekends
- Marketing and promotion of Centre space for hire and events
- Ensuring health and safety and other statutory compliance are met
- Liaising with other users / tenants of the Centre
- Delivering the business plan for the Centre

Operational:

- Opening and closing the Centre
- Managing part time staff and volunteer rotas
- Taking bookings / hires of space
- Managing finances (booking / hire income and Centre costs) including staff wages and volunteer expenses
- Developing and managing maintenance schedules

Assistance Centre Managers – main responsibilities

General:

- Management of the Centre during weekdays / evenings and weekends
- Providing holiday cover for the Centre Manager
- Supporting marketing and promotion of the Centre

Operational:

- Opening and closing the Centre
- Liaising and working with volunteers
- Taking bookings / hires of space
- Ensuring the Centre is run safely and professionally for visitors, users and hirers

10.2 Policies and Procedures

Another essential area of consideration to ensure smooth operation of the Portsoken Community Centre is the development of Policies and Procedures. Whichever organisation runs the new centre, they will need to develop a number of policies as part of their operations. NCVO have a useful online guide to the policies needed⁵.

The core policies identified are:

- A health and safety policy if you employ five or more people. An organisation of any size must conduct a health and safety risk assessment.
- Safeguarding policy for children and young people and/or vulnerable adults (if applicable)
- Privacy Policy including Data Protection and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)⁵
- Equality & Diversity Policy with particular regard to anti-discrimination and harassment of employees and volunteers as well as service users
- Risk management incl. assessment and mitigation
- Finance – including a financial procedures manual and a reserves policy
- Board basics – a Trustee Code of Conduct, Conflict of interest policy and Trustee Expenses policy (if the option of a new community structure is pursued).
- A room hire agreement and policy⁶.

Managing Room Bookings

Consideration will also need to be given to which system is used to manage room bookings. Many organisations simply note bookings in Microsoft Office (including Artizan Street) or use free software such as Google calendar. A key consideration here is how the organisation would like to manage room bookings for example - is there a preference for individuals to be able to book online or will bookings also be made through a member of staff).

Financial Management

The managing organisation will also need to consider whether it would like to use cloud based finance software to manage its organisational finances. Products such as Xero⁷ create useful dashboards which enable both staff and trustees to accurately track spending. Accounts will also be subject to independent examination, a simpler form of scrutiny than an audit which provides trustees, funders, beneficiaries, stakeholders and the public with an assurance that the accounts of the charity have been reviewed by an independent person. All charities with an income of more than £25,000 that opt not to have an audit must have to have an examination” (Charity Commission – link). Typically, organisations with an income of over £1M must have an audit.

IT and Internet

Wi-Fi will be installed as part of the refurbishment of the centre however thought will need to be given to the phone system the organisation would like to have in the centre

⁵ https://knowhownonprofit.org/organisation/operations/policies-and-procedures/copy_of_policies#

⁶ Locality can provide examples from other members in their network if helpful.

(landline/ mobile) and the IT equipment which will need to be purchased for centre staff. Some costs have been included in the financial modelling for the centre.

Marketing and communications

Good marketing and communications will be essential to support both community/ resident engagement and the promotion of the centre to external users. At a minimum, we recommend development of a clear website with good information on room available for hire and contact information for individuals interested in accessing activities or giving their time to support the centre. Some centres also set up donation functions. Maintaining a good mailing list is also advisable.

10.3 Performance Management

A performance framework for a community centre

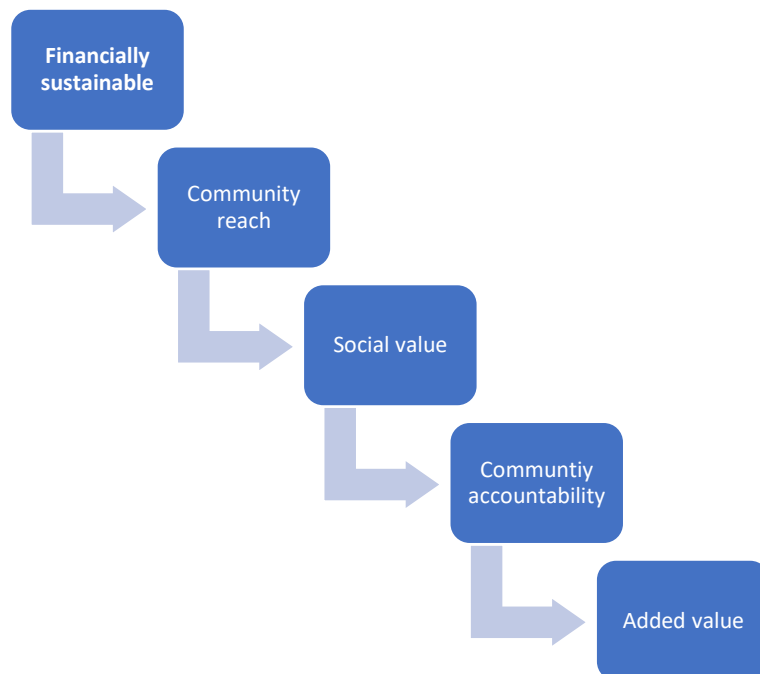
Criteria	Proactivity measures	Measured by
<i>Strong links with the local community. Members of the community are able to influence its operation and decision-making processes.</i>	Is there a steering group or similar with broad local representation?	Steering group terms of reference. Notes of meetings.
<i>Embracing diversity, working to improve community cohesion and reduce inequalities.</i>	Is there a proactive programme to bring communities together?	Diversity monitoring. Documentation of Positive programme. Local & visitor feedback
<i>An animating presence</i>	Visitors and enquirers get prompt and helpful Responses. New visitors and activities are encouraged and initiated.	Local and visitor feedback
<i>Demonstrating good governance through open and accountable processes, with adequate monitoring, evaluation and financial management systems</i>	Establishment and improvement of relevant systems. Building a local evidence base.	Accessible user figures, transparent income and expenditure information
<i>Capable of sustainably, legally, and safely managing an asset and delivering services from it.</i>	Suitable health and safety, licencing and customer care measures.	Physical evidence on site, spot checks on health & safety. Evidence of an income generation approach
<i>Capable of demonstrating the social, economic, and environmental benefits delivered through the centre and that these link to the council's own desired outcome for the borough as expressed in the Community Plan or clearly demonstrated local need.</i>	Activities that support at least one of: empowering residents and building resilience, promoting healthier lives; increasing employment; or responding to population growth. Plus activities meeting local need.	Activities board/ diary. Local and visitor feedback Evidence of meeting local need Evidence of an income generation approach.
<i>Willing to offer space and support to smaller local groups</i>	Incentives for smaller groups	Activities board/ diary. Local and visitor feedback
<i>Demonstrate how the organisation contributes to City of London Corporate objectives</i>	The Centre contributes to one or more of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting co-production and sustainability • Creating a step change in volunteering • Bringing together businesses and the voluntary and community sector • Maximising the value from resources 	Evidence from other headings on community involvement, collaboration Volunteering records Agreements for business involvement Occupancy rate
<i>Demonstrates a culture of learning, improvement and collaboration</i>	Neighbourhood level partnerships and collaboration. Peer learning with other centres	Notes and attendance records from learning and partnership events

11. RECOMMENDATIONS

Drawing on a range of research, experience and knowledge, Locality present the following recommendations that we believe will help City of London with facilitating a successful operation at the new Portsoken Community Centre:

Vision and design principles

1. The vision for the new Centre: *to establish a thriving and financially sustainable community centre serving and driven by people living and working in the community.*
2. Within this, the design principles should focus on the following areas:



Based on understanding of community and context

3. Provision of activities should reflect the demographic profile and recognition of how this profile is expected to change – with higher number of retirees/older people
4. A range of methods needed to engage a wide variety of people, including those living alone
5. There should be strong recognition of the diversity of the local population in terms of ethnicity and religion and the centre can provide an opportunity to bring people together through different cultural/religious festivals.
6. The income inequality in the community is both a challenge and an opportunity – with scope for supporting cross-subsidy.
7. Consideration of support to help boost household income, whilst recognising that a significant proportion of this could be in-work poverty.
8. Support to activities that may help alleviate the stress caused by overcrowding.
9. Through the space, increase accessible and visible green spaces for people to enjoy and mitigate the effects of pollution/poor air quality.

10. Affordable child-based provision to support to parents and their children (e.g. after school and during holidays)
11. There is scope to build from the existing range of community activities and events already taking place in the area and build on the positive connections that are in evidence.
12. Draw on the City of London identity that some residents feel a connection to.
13. Consideration of community preferences of their focus would be useful to garner popular support and contribute to success.
14. The likelihood of a broad offer to people living and working in the area – combining different charge rates and demanding versatility / flexibility within the space.
15. The look and feel of the space will be important to ensure residents (and other users) feel it is a space for them.
16. Related to the above, there will be an initial need to encourage wide community use and experience of the space (e.g. through events), to build a strong connection between the space and the wider community.
17. Importance of offering continuity of the Green Box community offer and ensure that its users are successfully transferred to the new space.
18. Offer a better co-ordination between the space and other community providers – to provide residents with a clear understanding of the overall picture for local provision.

The offer to residents and workers should consist of:

19. Continuation of Green Box activities
20. Inter-faith activities to bring different sections of the community together
21. Training and employment routes into the City
22. Importance of joining up and communicating plethora of community activities available
23. Link to Foundations and Liveries for grants and on-going support (more possible through third party and/or community vehicle management routes)
24. ***Anchor organisation space*** – organisations (preferably third sector and delivering services to the community) who need weekly office space and meeting/consultation rooms and whom will contribute to income through rent (possibilities include City of London via Centre manager and/or engagement team; HealthWatch; City of London – Adult Education; City Connection; Dementia Care; CAB; Toynbee Hall)
25. ***Residents meetings*** – space for community groups and associations to hold meetings
26. ***Residents activities*** (culture, leisure, arts, health etc) – activities run by residents for residents.
27. ***(City) Worker activities*** (e.g. health/fitness/wellbeing) – commercial activities aimed at people working in the area – e.g. mornings, lunchtimes and after work but also relating to team exercises.
28. ***Advice, support and help groups*** – service and charitable providers offering help to disadvantaged and vulnerable residents.
29. ***Maker and managed workspace*** – for new entrepreneurs and small businesses without premises.
30. ***Public / charity / commercial meeting space*** – support meetings for City of London, charities and businesses (as overspill when their own facilities are full).
31. ***Resident and cultural events*** – to coincide with religious festivals and other key

calendar dates.

Recommended management of the centre

32. It is recommended that City of London pursue a combination of Options 1 and 4 – that is procuring a third party to develop and manage the centre, while also nurturing and facilitating the community to build up their stewardship through an independent vehicle
33. The procurement of the third party should seek to select a community-focused organisation experience in developing community spaces and preferably with existing links to the community.
34. Procurement should also focus on how the third party intends to build up provision during the period affected by Covid-19 (e.g. blending online and face-to-face community activities and delivering with social distancing)
35. Cost modelling shows strong potential for the centre to generate enough income to cover costs, however, the third party would need support investment in its role. This would be around £90k for the first year diminishing over time as income builds.
36. The management of the centre should be guided by strong policies, procedures and performance management.

APPENDICES:

- APPENDIX A – Case study examples
- APPENDIX B – Local Insight report for Portsoken Centre
- APPENDIX C – Toynbee Hall approach – third party option
- APPENDIX D – Income and Expenditure detailed modelling

APPENDIX A – CASE STUDY EXAMPLES

CASE STUDY EXAMPLES: St. Lukes – involvement of corporates/business

St Luke's Community Centre is based on Central Street in the south of Islington and first opened its doors in 1982. It runs a whole range of events and activities and is open seven day per week.

A key part of delivery of their services is the involvement of business partners and their staff. St Luke's works with twenty-four corporate partners in many different areas. The businesses vary from large multi-national firms to small local businesses. During 2018, St Luke's calculated that, if they were to engage staff to do the work their corporate volunteers do, it would cost in excess of £60,000 per year.

Corporate partners make donations which effectively pay for two members of staff, equivalent to almost five percent of the centre's turnover. Corporate volunteers help out with a vast range of activities at the Centre. They work with older members on helping them to make more use of mobile phones, tablets, pcs and ipads. They provide one-to-one support to local unemployed residents searching for work through weekly Job Club and business start-up support through the Firm Futures initiative. They take part in cookery classes for children and families and supervise the cooking which takes place regularly. As importantly, they enjoy the benefits of the classes also when they can sit with the families and taste the delicious dishes which have been put together.

Case study – transferring the management of a Centre to a third party

Management of one of the centres, the 'A12' or Bow Community Centre, has been transferred for an initial six-month period to Poplar Harca. Locality spoke to them approximately 2 months into the arrangement.

Poplar Harca already manage several of their own community spaces including the Spotlight youth centres and an innovative arts-based centre, Poplar Union. The plans for the Bow Centre include a Café which could generate sales on a commercial basis from the commuter crowd and then under a cross subsidy model, have a distinct offer, focussed on the local community, during the day. Similarly, there could be an early morning pre work yoga class offered on a commercial basis, with mid-morning classes free to local community members.



Poplar Harca vision for the Bow Centre



Poplar Harca vision: Cafe at the Bow Centre

The intention is to offer 65% of activities free at point of use (Poplar Harca will fund external groups to provide activities) balanced by commercial hire at other times. Poplar Harca are being paid a fee to manage the centre, with income going to the Council which could offset the payment. Poplar Harca expect that the income generated will not cover the costs of running the centre. For this reason, they feel that community organisations will need to have a 'reason to be there'. In other words, they can deliver part of their mission by being in the centre.

Poplar Harca have done outreach such as a programme of community events and a meeting of the tenant's association. They are keen to establish a local steering group for the Centre. They will monitor visits and the impact of activity – although are conscious of how/ whether data would be used. They may prefer a 'spot check' type occasional survey to check for example the diversity of the visitor base.

Leeds Community Spaces - multiple asset transfer to a special purpose vehicle

The Leeds Community Spaces Consortium came about as a result of a Leeds City Council consultation on 10 community centres in their portfolio. After investigation the Consortium found that the centres did not meet their strategic requirements but approached the City Council to discuss the possibility of multiple asset transfers of other community buildings. In response the City Council opened up its portfolio of 40 community buildings for consideration. As a result of business planning, financial modelling and SPV options being investigated, the original number was then narrowed down to 8 community buildings for impending multiple asset transfer to the Consortium (SPV).

The Consortium developed criteria to select assets based on their potential to offer a balance of social impact and financial security. To help refine the long list further they

used local intelligence and consultations. This involved multiple visits, discussions and meetings which was time consuming but essential.

The Consortium estimates saving for the council c£720k over the first five years after taking into account costs of premises, including insurance, health and safety, utilities and overheads such as cleaning costs, phone, ICT and events. The partners benefited from several strands of support including a grant from Power to Change which funded a full-time coordinator.

The Consortium/ SPV is now named Leeds Community Spaces and opened for business with two spaces in November 2018.

<https://twitter.com/LeedsCS/status/1058003832662302720>

<https://www.powertochange.org.uk/what-is-community-business/stories/leeds-community-spaces/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Leedscommunityspaces/>

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE - Octopus Communities – a federated / peer learning and network

The Octopus Community has been cited elsewhere in this report as an example of a network that links independent community Centres (or Centres) together.

There are fourteen members of the Octopus network. Their structure allows for connectivity between the multi-purpose community centres, allowing mutual investment of time, skills and expertise. Each centre retains a unique relationship with its community.

As well as peer to peer learning, Octopus describes its role as to “inspire, challenge and innovate using a collaborative approach to community development”.

Members say that, through the network:

- 85% of them have increased their potential to secure funding.

- 57% of them have diversified their services and increased the number of people using them.

- 85% of them are more able to strategically address local issues.

There is a small coordinating team whose role includes securing funding for the network to deliver themed projects such as health and wellbeing and urban growing. The core team have brought in c. £1.5m of external funding over the last seven years.

The Council provided some development funding at the start and over recent years have provided modest core funding in partial recognition of the contribution that the network makes to the Borough. This income is supplement through a management fee on external fundraising.

The Coordinator is keen to stress that the model has distinctiveness and cannot be directly replicated elsewhere. For example, she came from an enterprise background and she emphasises how an enterprising spirit has been an important feature of the network.

Octopus has been established for over 20 years having developed out of the withdrawal of Council funding from the community centres. It has 'ridden on the wave' of the various funding and regeneration programmes that have come and gone since then. An example is of using European Social Funding to train local people in the skills required to run Community Centres. There are still funding pots available to provide this kind of capacity building and training and there are many other aspects of Octopus's work that could be useful in the Tower Hamlets context.

<https://www.octopuscommunities.org.uk/>