

Property Strategy

(Neighbourhood Centres) – Consultation Proposals

12 May 2016

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Property Strategy

Introduction

The Council is facing an unprecedented financial challenge. The Medium Term Financial Strategy reported in the November 2015 forecast that the Council will have a financial shortfall of £262 million in its revenue budget in 2020/21.

This is a combination of reducing resources as a result of the government's extended programme of austerity at the same time as the Council is facing significant increases in both the cost (for example as a result of inflation and the national living wage) and demand for its services.

The revised position following the financial settlement for 2016/17 is now a budget gap of £200.507m by 2020/21. This revised gap takes into account the impact of the settlement, new financial pressures and the savings decisions taken by the Full Council in 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17 regarding the future pattern of council services.

A key element in the delivery of those services is the property portfolio from which Lancashire's residents can access those services and from which the Council's employees can deliver outreach services into the community.

This report sets out proposals for the future configuration of the Council's property portfolio. The proposals are designed to ensure that all Lancashire's residents can continue to be provided with high quality services. How individual Council services are delivered varies considerably; many are delivered directly to people's homes, others required fixed infrastructure and others involve digital delivery. The property proposals are designed to provide a flexible response to the future patterns of service delivery.

The proposals have been developed around the Neighbourhood Centre model set out in the Council's Property Strategy approved by Cabinet in November 2015. The proposals set out are the result of a review process that has consisted of three components:

- Data analysis
- Dialogue with elected members and partners
- Consideration of how proposals align with service delivery strategies, in particular; Libraries, Children's Centres and the Young People's Service

Whilst the report sets out proposals based upon this review, it is now important that a comprehensive consultation takes place with service users and the wider community before a final set of proposal can be considered by Cabinet at its meeting in September 2016.

An important part of our proposals is the creation of Neighbourhood Centres, which will provide a range of services from multi-purpose premises around the county. This strategy aims to provide the County Council with:

- A smaller and more affordable property portfolio
- A move away from service specific premises to a corporately managed property portfolio offering flexibility of use in order to ensure future efficiency savings can be coordinated and realised
- A network of Neighbourhood Centres which provide community focussed multi-functional buildings tailored to deliver high quality specific services within identified areas

In some circumstances, we will seek to operate a service from the property of another provider/partner as this may be preferable to existing County Council properties in a given neighbourhood.

This report sets out:

- The process carried out in assessing the buildings within scope of the Property Strategy review; and,
- A proposed list of properties which are proposed for retention as Neighbourhood Centres.
- A proposed list of premises that will no longer be required to deliver the Council's future pattern of service delivery.
- How interested groups can express their interest in potentially surplus premises.

It is intended that the proposals set out in this report will form the basis of a 12 week public consultation before final consideration and decision making at Cabinet in September 2016.

Future Opportunities

This review is a first step in delivering a portfolio of premises fit for purpose in accommodating county council services within communities. More detailed consideration will be given to identify longer term provision of Neighbourhood Centres in a small number of areas. This is due to a lack of existing suitable accommodation solutions in the short term that may require the development of new build solutions, in areas such as Burnley, Fleetwood and Preston.

Some buildings have been retained to ensure that there is a service delivery point within a rural or isolated community. As a result, some Neighbourhood Centres may not meet the aspiration of full utilisation and therefore may only require limited opening hours. The Neighbourhood Centre model will continue to evolve and all opportunities to maximise use of retained buildings will be considered.

There are early indications from some partners of a willingness to co-locate some of their services within the Neighbourhood Centre model. These options can be further explored throughout the consultation. Similarly, we will continue to explore use of partner premises.

As public sector organisations develop closer collaboration in the delivery of property focussed programmes such as One Public Estate, and economic development programmes such as City Deal, there will be greater opportunity to identify suitable options and enable better co-location of County Council and partner services.

Similarly, the drive to integrate health and care services and potential opportunities through the development of the Lancashire and South Cumbria Sustainability and Transformation Plan could lead to improved facilities that will accommodate health and care services in the community.

Review Process

In making such a wide reaching change to how our services are configured in buildings across the county, it is important that we take the time to properly consider the available options, impact and opportunities for delivering differently and in ensuring that service users, stakeholders and partners are given opportunity to contribute and consider proposals.

In doing so, we have set out four stages to identifying the right portfolio of properties that will serve as Neighbourhood Centres to ensure that they are established in the right locations. This includes:

Stage One – the identification of a long-list of properties considered suitable for public-facing service delivery. This list of properties, their location and the range of county council services currently delivered from them was set out in the Property Strategy published in November 2015.

Stage Two – property review: the development of a list of preferred properties considered most suited for retention taking into account:

- data analysis
- dialogue with elected members and partners
- consideration of how proposals align with service delivery strategies e.g. Libraries, and the Wellbeing, Prevention and Early Help (WPEH) Strategy

The LCC property data sets have been scored and weighted to give an indication of the benefits each building offers from a property perspective. The methodology is set out at Annex 1.

Stage Three – this report now sets out a full list of preferred properties considered most suitable for retention as Neighbourhood Centres and points of service delivery. This list forms the subject of the proposed public consultation and provides an opportunity for further discussion with partners before reaching a final position.

Stage Four – taking account of the findings from the public consultation, this stage will identify the most appropriate premises in which to develop Neighbourhood Centres that will provide an accessible and flexible base for multi-service delivery within communities. This will be subject to formal decision making by Cabinet to agree a set of properties for retention at this time. By default, this will then identify the range of properties available for alternate use or disposal.

Neighbourhood Centre Model

Neighbourhood Centres will provide a base for the provision of services currently delivered through a range of single function buildings such as: children's centres; libraries; child and parenting support centres; and, adult day centres. They will be the focus of public facing service delivery located in neighbourhoods across Lancashire.

Nationally, public services are beginning to develop such an approach and are able to demonstrate benefits both in terms of more efficient, locally based services and opportunities to use their property holdings to encourage local regeneration and investment.

As locally based multi-functional buildings, Neighbourhood Centres will be developed to a flexible specification and will encompass a range of facilities appropriate to the services to be delivered from them, for example:

- flexible use of space, co-location and sharing of facilities
- meeting rooms available to the community where appropriate
- extended opening hours
- confidential interview/consultation rooms
- accessible network of touch-down provision for staff

In addition, operational services have identified some specific requirements for buildings they deliver from. In many instances this is available within existing accommodation but in some cases it will be necessary to provide specific facilities such as:

- clinical consultation rooms
- facilities for on-site activities to support early childhood services
- access to outdoor space for activities to be able to meet requirements
- non-fixed library book shelving
- library loan network access
- library computer access/Wi-Fi
- digital services
- ceremony rooms where there is a sufficient business case
- sufficient consultation rooms for locality
- secure reception facilities
- capacity to co-locate a range of children's services including both operational and supervision staff
- private offices for clinical consultants

Property Review

The County Council's property portfolio excluding schools is a significant asset comprising over 500 operational sites. From this total holding, 222 have been identified as in scope for this review as they currently deliver public facing services. Where the County Council's interest in a premises is only as a commissioner of services delivered by others (e.g. Children's Centres delivered by schools or external partners) these premises have not been considered as in scope of the property review. These premises have, however, have been considered as potential locations for delivery of appropriate services in respect of the future Wellbeing Prevention and Early Help Service.

A range of information has been considered in determining the list of properties identified as preferred for retention as Neighbourhood Centres and service delivery

points. This includes the range of property data set out below that has been scored to give an indication of the benefits of each LCC property in scope (Annex 1):

Property Data

- accessibility of the building by public transport
- Index of Multiple Deprivation/population density
- finance (e.g. condition, running cost, energy efficiency (DEC) rating)
- legal (e.g. tenure)
- sufficiency (the size of the property)
- suitability

Councillor and Partner Engagement

Findings from the review have been 'sense checked' against local intelligence from communities, councillors and partners to ensure that there is a good understanding of the current role that county council buildings play locally and how the right ones can be retained to deliver a more flexible range of services in neighbourhoods. The information has been gained through:

- engagement with public sector partners to explore opportunities for co-location and sharing of service delivery
- engagement with county councillors on how the Property Strategy has been formulated and identification of where there may be opportunities for working differently with partners and communities in local areas

There will be further opportunity for councillors, partners and communities to input to proposals during the public consultation process.

Operational Service Guidance and Proposals

It is proposed that Neighbourhood Centres will accommodate a range of County Council services. These proposals reflect the requirements of individual services in meeting the community's needs as well as ensuring that the Council complies with its statutory obligations and national guidance, where appropriate.

The proposals set out in Annex 2 identify the lead services that it is proposed will be delivered from each of the proposed Neighbourhood Centres. The model will also provide flexible accommodation for a range of other public facing services within scope of this strategy.

LIBRARY SERVICE

National Guidance

The Council has a duty under the Libraries and Museums Act 1964 to provide a "comprehensive and efficient library service for all persons desiring to make use thereof". The budget consultation on the future of the Library Service has informed the basis of the Council's Library Service offer going forwards. Details of revisions to the proposed County Library Service are set out in Appendix A.

It is proposed that the following pattern of fixed premises provision will effectively support delivery the Library Service offer. The fixed premises provision provides just one part of the Library Service and it is considered that the full extent of the Library Service provision proposed far exceeds a minimum level of sufficiency to meet the needs of the population under the 1964 Act.

Proposal

The review has identified a set of preferred Neighbourhood Centre premises that will provide for:

- 37 fixed library sites
- 7 satellite sites (self-service provision)
- supported by 6 mobile library unit 6 mobile library units (operating 68 routes and 792 stops that will be aligned to the fixed sites)
- home library service (delivering to over 1,000 customers)
- virtual library service, consisting of e-books, e-audiobooks and online reference service
- provision of a schools and prisons library service will also continue across the county

The configuration of premises proposed will result in a service that will provide the following service reach:

- at least 95% of people living in densely populated areas (20 or more people per hectare) will live within 2 miles of a proposed Neighbourhood Centre library or satellite service.
- at least 90% of people living in medium density populated areas (between 1.1 and 19.9 people per hectare) will live within 2.5 miles of a proposed Neighbourhood Centre library or satellite service or 0.25 miles of a mobile library stop.
- at least 70% of people living in sparsely populated areas (1 or fewer people per hectare) will live within 3 miles of a proposed Neighbourhood Centre library or satellite service or 0.25 miles of a mobile library stop.

REGISTRATION SERVICE

National Guidance

The Registration Service supports the Council in fulfilling its duties in the registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages (Special Provisions) Act 1957, and the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009.

- The core purpose of the Registration Service is to provide an efficient and effective registration service in accordance with the Council's legal responsibilities.
- Some Registration Offices will be open Monday to Friday and at weekends when required to deliver ceremonies and some will be part time with different delivery patterns. The delivery patterns will be in line with demand in that locality.

Proposal

Within the scope of this review there are 13 buildings currently providing registration services which includes a number of purpose built facilities. Consideration has been given to re-providing the service within Neighbourhood Centres to consolidate services, and to enable facilities which are currently provided solely for the delivery of registration services to be utilised more widely. The proposed sites for delivery of the Registration Service are:

Current Location		Proposed Location
Accrington Registration Office (Accrington Library)		No change
Burnley Registration Office		No change
Chorley Registration Office		No change
Clitheroe Registration Office (Pimlico Road JDO)		Clitheroe Library
Fleetwood Registration Office (Fleetwood Library)		No change
Lancaster Registrars		Lancaster Mill 14
Morecambe Registration Office (Morecambe Town Hall)		Morecambe Library
Nelson Registration Office (Nelson Library)		No change
Preston	Registrars and Records Offices	No change
	Riverbank Children's Centre	No change
Rawtenstall Registration Office		Haslingden Library
Fylde Registration Office (Lytham Library)		St Anne's Library
West Lancashire Registrars (West Lancashire Borough Council, Ormskirk)		No change
Total	13	13

WELLBEING, PREVENTION AND EARLY HELP SERVICE (WPEH)

Proposals

The Wellbeing, Prevention and Early Help Service (WPEH) will align children's centres, young people's provision, prevention and early help and Lancashire's response to the national Troubled Families programme. The service will operate through a revised budget of £17.2m.

The new service model is designed to ensure the Council meets requirements to ensure effective support for 0-19+ year olds across Lancashire with a particular focus on families in greatest need of support. It will also further align the ongoing re-procurement of public health services, and consider the integration of other services like health visiting and school nursing services, alongside other council services.

The proposed service offer for the WPEH service has been the subject of a separate consultation in February and March 2016. Taking account of this, service specific principles and revised details of the service structure can be found at Appendix B.

The proposal set out at Annex 2 of this report has made provision for the following property requirements in respect of the WPEH service for 0 to 19+ year olds:

- provide sufficient reach for the service across communities of greatest need (Department for Education defined children's centres)
 - over 92% of 0-11 year olds living in the most deprived areas of Lancashire will live within 1.5 miles of a proposed Children's Centre
- flexible, multi-purpose buildings able to accommodate services that will meet the diverse needs of children, young people and families (aged up to 25 years where SEND)
- recognising that significant future provision will be on an outreach basis, to ensure that access to fixed bases will be within reasonable walking distance, consistent with current maximum

Proposals

In consideration of the service principles and feedback from the WPEH Service Phase 1 consultation, it is proposed to deliver the service through 72 premises. There is also likely to be some limited use of other Neighbourhood Centres and partner venues for outreach purposes.

The table below sets out the number of properties which are proposed to accommodate the WPEH service offer with detail the specific properties set out in Annex 2.

WPEH	Whole Service Offer	Split Service Offer
0 - 11 years	17 properties	18 properties
12 - 19+ years	4 properties	10 properties
0 - 19+ years	19 properties	4 properties

The buildings currently delivering WPEH (children's centre) services and those proposed to deliver WPEH (statutory children's centre) core offer services in the future are listed at Appendix C Annex 6.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES (SOCIAL CARE, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND), FOSTERING AND ADOPTION)

Guidance

The service is guided by several pieces of legislation including: the Children Act 1989; the Children and Families Act 2014; Care Planning, Placement and Care Review Regulations 2013; and Statutory Adoption Guidance 2014. The services are also subject to the Ofsted Inspection framework.

Principles

The service is responsible for the assessment and management of risk, to safeguard the welfare and outcomes for children and young people in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements. This is best supported through:

- buildings that are welcoming and accessible for children, young people and their families.
- accommodation that supports a flexible response to fluctuating demand and volumes of work.
- geographic service delivery bases for teams to improve knowledge of community needs and improve timeliness and quality of support.
- where possible co-located with other children's services and agencies.
- adequate facilities to provide direct services to children young people and families.

Proposals

Children's services are currently provided from predominantly office bases due to the large number of Social Workers and support employees that need to be accommodated.

The preference is for these employees to be located wherever possible in Neighbourhood Centres. The size and configuration of the current property portfolio is not currently capable of meeting this aspiration based upon the need to accommodate area teams in the following locations;

- Burnley
- Pendle
- Fleetwood
- Lancaster
- Rossendale
- Chorley/South Ribble
- Preston
- Skelmersdale

At this stage we are proposing that the service operates from the Neighbourhood Centres set out below and in Annex 2.

Proposed Location	
Children's Social Care (Easden Clough)	Burnley
The Zone	
Children's Social Care (The Hawthorn's)	Chorley
Children's Social Care (Sydney Street) and Oak Tree Children's Centre	Fylde
Children's Social Care (Silver Birches)	Hyndburn
Children's Social Care (Sefton Drive)	Lancaster
Children's Social Care (Burnley Road)	Colne
Children's Social Care (Ripon Street)	Preston
Children's Social Care (St Luke's Centre)	
Stoneygate Children's Centre	

Sunshine Children's Centre	
Children's Social Care (Newchurch Road)	Rawtenstall
Skelmersdale Library	West Lancashire
Children's Social Care (The Anchorage Fleetwood) and West View Children's Centre	Wyre

YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM

Guidance

The service model is derived from the legislative duties outlined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and is a partnership arrangement established with the principal aim to prevent offending by children and young people. Direction is provided through the Lancashire Youth Justice Management Board and the service is provided through a multi-disciplinary area based model including staff from statutory partners.

Proposal

The feasibility of accommodating the service for the Preston area within the Bus Station complex is being considered. The service will be collocated with services for young people (WPEH) where possible. Current and proposed locations are set out in the table below:

Current Location	Proposed Location
Lancaster Youth Offending Team (Fraser House)	White Cross Education Centre (Mill 14)
Thornton Youth Offending Team (Marsh Mill)	The Zone in Wyre
Preston Youth Offending Team (Guildhall Street)	Preston Bus Station
The Zone in West Lancashire	No change
Chorley Youth Offending Team (Halliwell Street)	Chorley Library
Accrington Youth Offending Team (Blake Street)	The Zone in Burnley
The Zone in Burnley	No change

ADULT DISABILITY DAY SERVICES

Guidance

The Care Act 2014 is used to determine the statutory elements of the Disability (Adults) services where the Authority has the duty to assess and meet the assessed care and support needs of an individual. There is discretion as to how those needs are met.

Principles

The Adult Disability Day Services offers a range of services to adults with a disability. This is a shared service for people with learning disabilities and people with physical disabilities. For the purpose of this review, 12 Adult Disability Day Services that currently provide day services are in scope.

Proposals

Under previous investment programmes, the Adult Disability Day Services are largely provided in modern, fully equipped accommodation to ensure the needs of adults with a range of needs can be met. Each facility provides support to service users on a borough or wider basis rather than within the local neighbourhood therefore has not been calculated within the indicative number of buildings required for a neighbourhood.

It is proposed to maintain current Adult Disability Day Services provision within existing accommodation, with the exception of Pendleton Brook in Ribble Valley and Hollytrees in Chorley.

- Due to under occupancy and suitability it is proposed that the Pendleton Brook (Ribble Valley) provision be combined with the Hyndburn Disability Day Centre (Enfield).
- Alternative and more suitable provision for the service currently being delivered from Hollytrees Disability Day Service building (Chorley) will be identified and provided.

OLDER PEOPLE'S DAYTIME SUPPORT SERVICE

Guidance

The Care Act 2014 is used to determine the statutory elements of the Older People's services where the Authority has the duty to assess and meet the assessed care and support needs of an individual. There is discretion as to how those needs are met.

The Older People's Service provides daytime support. For the purpose of this review, 12 Older People's Daytime Support Centres that currently provide day services are in scope. It should be noted that where Day Centre provision is on the same site as Residential Care, there is no change to the Residential Service.

Proposals

Due to the nature of the services provided from these buildings, they are largely fit for purpose and well utilised which will result in little change to their use. However the review has identified where there is under-utilised capacity and where there is potential to co-locate services onto single sites, whilst maintaining appropriate and separate service provision within facilities.

It is proposed to;

- establish a Neighbourhood Centre utilising the Milbanke Older People's Day Centre which will also incorporate the Library service for the Kirkham area.
- Subject to a detailed building appraisal to determine the feasibility of combining the Derby Street Daycare Centre (Ormskirk) with Mere Brook Day Centre (Ormskirk) where support for people with enhanced dementia need is provided

WELFARE RIGHTS

Guidance

The Care Act 2014 places a duty to provide an information and advice service however it is not prescriptive in how the duty is delivered. The service offers free, impartial and independent advice and support on a range of welfare benefits from local bases around the County.

Proposal

The service will have a central administrative base in Preston and will be able to utilise the flexible accommodation available across the portfolio of Neighbourhood Centres according to community need.

Expressions Of Interest In Potentially Surplus Premises

As part of our initial consultation on the budget options it is clear there is a desire amongst certain communities and groups to consider how they may take over the responsibility for a surplus property.

This consultation provides a further opportunity for Expressions of Interest (EOIs) to be formally considered. On this occasion interested parties will have information about the proposed configuration of the property portfolio and the council's service proposals. They will also be able to consider the list of potentially surplus properties listed in Annex 3.

If a group is interested in taking over a building, information is available on the County Councils 'have your say' website where they can complete the Expression of Interest form. This will be a 'whole transfer' and so groups will be taking on the full costs of running the building, and no financial support will be available from the Council once the transfer is complete.

Once we have received an Expression of Interest, we will provide an information pack about the asset detailing, information on running costs, covenants or other legal restrictions, and relevant service data.

The Council would want to be assured that the group is a suitable, constituted body able to take on responsibility for the resource and will consider the merits of transferring properties alongside the potential for sale of properties that will realise a capital receipt.

Consultation And Decision Making

Subject to approval by Cabinet on 12 May 2016, a public consultation on the proposals set out in this report will be held over 12 weeks in order to seek public and partner views on the preferred Neighbourhood Centre sites.

The consultation will be hosted on the County Council's ['have your say'](#) website.

Findings will be considered and reflected in the final report to Cabinet in September 2016 where decisions will be taken as to which properties will be retained for development as Neighbourhood Centres.

The consultation document setting out proposals can be found at Appendix D