

Report of:	Executive Member for Regeneration Executive Member for Finance and Governance Director of Regeneration and Culture Director of Finance
Submitted to:	Executive
Date:	7 March 2023
Title:	Developing a New Nunthorpe Community Facility
Report for:	Decision
Status:	Public
Strategic priority:	Physical environment
Key decision:	Yes
Why:	Decision(s) will incur expenditure or savings above £150,000
Urgent:	No
Why:	Not Applicable

Executive summary

The report seeks to outline the Council's aim to deliver a new Community Centre in Nunthorpe and seeks approval for the recommended location of land off Stokesley Road following public consultation and a detailed option appraisal process.

The report requires an Executive approval as the decisions would lead to expenditure that would exceed £150,000.

Other options have been scoped by officers and are outlined within the report. It is believed that the recommendation presented within the report supports the requirements of both the local community and meets the aims and objectives of the Council.

Purpose

1. To seek approval of the recommendations to locate a new community centre on land within Nunthorpe ward.

Background and relevant information

2. There has been a long standing requirement for new community space to be developed within the Nunthorpe area. The need for such space has been communicated by residents, community groups and local elected members for some time.
3. In 2020, Middlesbrough Council, in conjunction with community representatives developed a series of commitments that were intended to ensure that the local community were engaged in the area's future and would ultimately lead to the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. Again, the need for a new community facility was clearly communicated as a priority for the local community.
4. As part of this work, a number of proposals came forward to develop new community space, in different parts of Nunthorpe. One proposal identified a site owned by the Council adjacent to the new GP Surgery off Stokesley Road, and the other identified an opportunity to build on the existing Nunthorpe and Marton Playing Fields Association facilities off Guisborough Road.
5. Also in 2020 a significant allocation of Town's Fund resources was added to the existing Council funds to ultimately provide a budget of £966,000 to deliver a new community centre at Nunthorpe.
6. A process to look at specific proposals for each site was undertaken by the Council and other external stakeholders in 2021, but no formal conclusion was reached.
7. A report was subsequently approved by Executive in September 2022, which identified the need for community consultation, and a focus on identifying the most appropriate location for the facility. The report stated that the Council would manage the design and build of the new facility, but a process would also need to be undertaken to appoint an organisation to run it. As there is no revenue budget available from the Council to support the running of the centre, the selected organisation would need to demonstrate a viable, sustainable business plan.
8. As a result, a consultation on the location options was conducted between December 2022 and January 2023 for a period of 6 weeks. The consultation asked members of the public to provide positive and negative feedback for both options and asked which location people would prefer.
9. A total of 369 individuals responded to the consultation, with 60% identifying a preference for the land adjacent to the GP surgery. A summary of the consultation is outlined within the below table.

Table 1 – Outcome of Public Consultation

	<u>Nunthorpe & Marton Playing Field</u>	<u>Land Adjacent to GP Surgery</u>
Positive Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 136 people see an extension to a building, rather than a green field development as a positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 134 people feel the use of new land and the building of a purpose-built facility as a positive

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 people feel that the links to the existing facilities will be positive • 60 people believe this site to be accessible and in a good location • 4 people believe this location will have a positive effect on traffic • 19 people see the close proximity to housing as a positive • 18 people feel this location will provide the best parking facilities • 32 provided other general positive comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 97 believe this location will provide the best parking facilities and not add to other parking pressures • 89 people believe the site to be accessible and in a good location • 45 people felt that this location provides a positive separation from the existing facilities • 42 people see the close proximity of the new Medical Facility as a positive • 39 people believe this location will reduce traffic congestion • 12 people see the close proximity to new housing in Nunthorpe as a positive • 62 provided other general positive comments
Negative Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60 people see the expansion of an existing building as a negative • 44 people feel the links to existing facilities as being a negative • 36 people believe this is not the best location / accessibility issues • 72 people believe this location will add to local traffic issues • 2 people feel the location should be linked to the Medical Centre • 5 people believe the site's proximity to housing is a negative • 128 believe this location will cause issues with parking and add to the existing pressures • 67 provided other general negative comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 151 people believe this is not the best location / accessibility issues • 52 people believe this location will add to local traffic issues • 31 people believe the community facility should not be built on green space • 17 people believe this option will cost more and be unsustainable • 16 people believe this location causes issues with proximity to housing • 12 people believe parking in this location will be an issue • 11 people believe this option will not link well with existing facilities • 10 people believe an extension to an existing building is a better solution • 26 provided other general negative comments.
Preferred Location	Out of 350 respondents who chose to answer this question, 40% of people preferred this location.	Out of 350 respondents who chose to answer this question, 60% of people preferred this location.

10. Following the completion of the consultation, officers undertook an option appraisal which aimed to objectively consider the two locations based on several key factors that would affect whether the location would be suitable for a new facility. The outcomes of the consultation were also fed into the process to ensure the public view had a direct influence on the outcome.

11. A summary of the option appraisal is outlined within the below table.

Table 2 – Summary of Option Appraisal

Assessment Criteria	NMPFA	LA to GP Surgery	Total Potential Points
Title Report - Ownership, Permission and Covenant	250	500	500
Future Development Opportunity Considerations	50	25	50
Service Connections	100	50	100
Consequential Improvement Requirements	75	100	100

Flexibility of Construction Space	25	50	50
Environmental Desktop Site Assessment	150	200	250
Consultation			
Preferred Location	40	60	300
Statutory Considerations			
Highways Department Potential Considerations	40	50	60
Planning Department Potential Considerations	30	30	60
TOTAL SCORE	760	1065	1470

12. As with the community consultation, the option appraisal also identified the land adjacent to the GP surgery as the optimum location. The detailed information on the optional appraisal can be found within Appendix I.

13. It is therefore proposed that the preferred location for the community centre be identified as the land adjacent to the new GP Surgery, as shown on the plan in Appendix II. The estimated site requirement is around 0.7 acres.

Identifying an Appropriate Operator

14. Subject to the approval of this report, there would be an agreed site and an agreed budget in place for the development of the new community centre. Although some minor preparatory work could commence (to consider the nature of the facility and potential outline design ideas) no significant expenditure would be incurred until there is certainty that an appropriate organisation is able to operate the facility without subsidy from the Council (as no such subsidy is available). A budget of £20,000 is requested for release to facilitate sufficient design consideration to inform the process to identify an operating organisation.

15. A process would therefore be necessary to invite interested parties to put forward their plans and requirements, and a competitive process put in place to identify the most appropriate way forward. If this process were able to identify an appropriate operator that didn't require subsidy, then the project would be able to move into the formal design stage. If no such operator were to be identified, then alternative options (both in terms of location and operation) would need to be explored.

16. The conclusion of this process would be brought forward for consideration by Executive prior, to triggering any significant expenditure on the project.

Community Gardens

17. One factor that would need to be considered in taking forward the project is the proposal for a community garden in Nunthorpe. The site proposed for the community garden is currently on an adjacent site to the proposed location of the community centre off Stokesley Road. As a result, the implementation of the community garden, and the implementation of the community centre plans would need to be cognisant of each other.

18. The funding of £6,000 for the community garden has also been provided through the Town's Fund, but the implementation of it has been held up until the outcome of the community centre process was known. As a result, the recommendation to locate the new community centre on land off Stokesley Road is also accompanied by a recommendation to progress the community garden on an adjacent site in the same area.
19. The community garden would occupy a 0.5 acre plot on land owned by the Council, alongside the potential community centre site. The exact plot dimensions and location would be determined to fit around the community centre proposals but would remain in long term Council ownership regardless.
20. The work to implement the garden would be undertaken by a partnership between the Council, local community groups and volunteers, with the ongoing maintenance managed locally. The garden would comprise a number of raised beds, and appropriate paving to enable local people to engage in healthy growing and gardening activities. The proposals would also provide tools, compost and a shelter to enable the community to maintain the gardens on a long-term basis.
21. Aside from the allocation of the land, and initial works, there would be no further input or financial requirement from the Council.

What decision(s) are being recommended?

22. The option appraisal has identified the location adjacent to the GP Surgery as the preferred site for a new community facility in Nunthorpe. This also allows for the location of the community garden to be confirmed. It is therefore recommended that the Executive approves:
 - a. the identification of land adjacent to the new GP Surgery at Nunthorpe as the preferred site for a new community centre;
 - b. the commencement of a process to identify an appropriate organisation to operate the new community centre, prior to any major expenditure being incurred;
 - c. the release of up to £20,000 from the budget to enable early stage design consideration to inform the identification of an appropriate organisation; and,
 - d. the allocation 0.5 acres of land owned by the Council off Stokesley Road for designation as a community garden.

Rationale for the recommended decision(s)

23. The Council has undertaken an option appraisal process to identify the most appropriate location for a new community facility in Nunthorpe, including a public consultation. The option appraisal identified the location adjacent to the new GP Surgery as the preferred site for the new facility for the following reasons:
 - a. the proposed land is owned and controlled by the Council;
 - b. the proposal looks to develop a stand-alone new build solution and as a consequence will not require a proportion of the budget to be spent on required energy efficiency improvements to an existing building;
 - c. the area suggested for the new facility would provide some flexibility to adjust plans should any issues occur during construction;

- d. no significant environmental issues are present on the site that would require mitigation;
- e. the outcome of the appraisal meets that of the preferred location from the community consultation; and,
- f. provides no immediate Highways and/or Planning concerns.

24. The conclusion reached about the community centre also allows the location of the proposed community garden for Nunthorpe to be confirmed.

Other potential decision(s) and why these have not been recommended

25. There are two alternative options for Executive to consider. These are:

- a. to proceed with the second location as outlined within the option appraisal; and,
- b. not to develop a community facility in Nunthorpe.

26. It is believed that both these options would not meet the identified needs for the community and/or would be a reputational risk to the Council.

Impact(s) of the recommended decision(s)

Legal

27. The process to identify an organisation to operate the centre will be undertaken in line with the appropriate Council policy. Any subsequent construction would also follow the local authority's standard procurement processes and a competitive process will be followed to ensure value for money is obtained for design and build.

28. Land adjacent to the Medical Centre falls within the freehold title CE189247, of which the Council is the registered proprietor. If the project progresses to construction, then the Council would be required to avoid causing any obstruction to the rights granted within the transfer of land for the GP Surgery dated 5th August 2021.

Strategic priorities and risks

29. This links to the following key strategic priorities as outlined in the revised Strategic Plan:

- a. People – Working with communities and other public services in Middlesbrough to improve the lives of local people;
- b. Place – Securing improvements in Middlesbrough's housing, infrastructure and attractiveness, improving the town's reputation, creating opportunities for local people and improving our finances; and,

30. The specific milestone linked to this priority is to commence work on Nunthorpe community centre – June 2023.

Human Rights, Equality and Data Protection

31. A Level 1 (Initial Screening) Impact Assessment (IA) accompanies this report at Appendix III, and has found there to be no impact at stage one

Financial

32. The Towns Fund has identified £750,000 for the development of the community facility, which, with additional Section 106 funding, results in an overall budget of £866,000. In addition, the Council has identified a further £100,000 reflective of the increasing costs of materials since this project was initially agreed. The additional £100,000 is a fixed sum which is provided from the Council's own resources and would need adding to the Investment Strategy. The project must therefore remain within the stated allocated resources.
33. Any subsequent construction phase would be subject to an appropriate competitive tender process and the process to appoint an organisation to run the new facility will ensure not further ongoing revenue costs will fall to the Council.
34. In addition to the above funds allocated for the Community Facility, £6,000 of the wider ward initiative Town Fund Project was awarded for the creation of a Community Garden in Nunthorpe.
35. The land identified adjacent to the GP Surgery has the potential to accommodate a variety of uses, including housing. The value attached to the land if sold for housing is around £600,000 per acre (so a value of £420,000 for the community centre site, and £300,000 for the community garden site). If the Council were to develop the land for these purposes and retain the long term ownership, the land would be valued at around £300,000 per acre (so a value of £210,000 for the community centre site, and £150,000 for the community garden site). This value adjustment would need to be factored into the Council's balance sheet but would be justified on the basis of securing valuable social and community benefits. As the Council would retain the ownership of the land, the option to revert to alternative uses in the future would be retained.
36. At present the stated ambitions for housing on the Nunthorpe Grange site (of which this is part) can comfortably be accommodated on the remaining land. There are also expectations within the Local Plan around the provision of facilities and open space that would be located *somewhere* within the development. There is therefore no direct opportunity cost to locating the community centre and community garden in their proposed locations.

Actions to be taken to implement the recommended decision(s)

Action	Responsible Officer	Deadline
Undertake initial concept design	Peter Brewer / Nigel Carr	April 2023
Agree exact boundaries of community centre and community garden	Peter Brewer / Nigel Carr	May 2023
Procure a facility management organisation	Peter Brewer	July 2023

Appendices

1	Option Appraisal
2	Plan showing location adjacent to the GP Surgery

3	Impact Assessment
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Background papers

Body	Report title	Date
Executive	Proposal to Progress the Development of Nunthorpe Community Centre	6 th September 2022