Executive Summary

1.1 This report summarises the outcome of consultation with two community centres, being Wardleworth and Castlemere following the approval of community centre review criteria approved by Cabinet on the 21st November 2016.

1.2 Both centres had common areas of feedback following consultation that are highlighted in Paragraph 7.6 of this report and individual issues bespoke to each community centre highlighted in Paragraph 7.7 for Castlemere and Paragraph 7.8 for Wardleworth.

1.3 Following consultation a proposal was submitted by Wardleworth Community Centre to operate the community centre on a reduced grant of £37.36K Saving £9.34K which is a saving of 20%.

Recommendation

2.1 Review the outcome of the consultation undertaken during Phase 2 of the savings proposals, which was the application of the approved criteria to review the use of community centres approved by Cabinet on the 21 November 2016.

2.2 Agree to reduce grant funding to the two lowest scoring community centres being Wardleworth and Castlemere by 20% being a reduction of £9.34K and £2.62K respectively.

Reason for Recommendation

3.1 In order to contribute to the Council’s savings requirement it has been necessary to examine all areas of non-statutory service provision

3.2 Phase 1 savings proposal (report reference - NH-2017-311) has reported following consultation, a proposed criteria for an impact assessment of each of the grant-funded community centres. The proposed criteria was the subject of
formal consultation during Phase 1 of the savings proposals and approved by Cabinet on 21 November 2016.

3.3 Members have carefully considered the alternative proposal submitted by Wardleworth Community Centre and have agreed that a 20% reduction would be appropriate in the circumstances. In the spirit of fairness, it is considered appropriate to also reduce the grant paid to Castlemere Community Centre by the same 20%.

**Key Points for Consideration**

4.1 There is no statutory duty to fund community centres. However, community centres provide a valuable service to the communities they serve. They should meet the needs of their individual communities and have a significant impact upon the health and wellbeing of individuals and the quality of life of people in the community.

4.2 Currently 16 community centres are in receipt of annual grants from the Council to enable them to deliver community activity. There are two small social centres at Brookside and Cleworth Road that receive very small annual grants and they have not been included in the exercise due to the amounts of money involved being £900 and £5,800 respectfully.

4.3 The review conducted as part of Phase 1 savings proposal (Report reference - NH-2017-311) examined the level of activity and the positive impact that each Centre has on the local community.

4.4 The application of the impact assessment criteria shows the impact each community centre has on the community it serves. Contributory factors included in the criteria are:

- Usage of centre (visitor count (excluding nurseries, private functions and elections) and weekly sessions);
- Number of people living nearby;
- Proximity to other Centres

4.5 Each element is weighted in importance as follows;

- Usage (80%) – Usage consists of footfall (excluding nurseries and private functions) and numbers of high impacts on the community (IT Training, jobs, advice, language and health/wellbeing).
- Location (20%) – Location consists of number of other community centres nearby and number of people living near the centre.

4.6 The application of the impact assessment criteria concluded that the two lowest scoring centres were Wardleworth Community Centre and Castlemere Community Centre.

4.7 The level of saving attached to this proposal was initially £60,000. However, it was stated that saving may increase/reduce depending on the outcome of the review.
5.1 There will not be a full year saving in 2017/18. The Borough of Rochdale Compact dictates that funders “Give a minimum of three months’ notice in writing. When changing or ending a funding relationship or other support, and provide a clear rationale for why the decision has been taken”. Therefore savings will not be achieved until 3rd quarter 2017/18, if the proposals are approved, leading to a one-off budget pressure in 2017/18 of £55k.

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<th>Savings 2018/19 £k</th>
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<td>On-going One off</td>
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<td>Employees</td>
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<td>Other Costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Income lost</td>
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<td><strong>Total savings</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Total savings less implementation costs</strong></td>
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6.1 Both of the community centres affected will have to adjust their expenditure as a consequence of the reductions. However, this is expected to be achievable.

7.1 Proposals were discussed at Community Based Network (CBN) meetings on 15th September and 27th October 2016. CBN agreed that reductions should be based on assessing impact rather than an across the board cut. The specific details of the assessment criteria were not discussed at these meetings.

7.2 Individual meetings around the proposal to remove all the grant were held with Wardleworth centre management on 26th January 2017 and 23rd February 2017.

7.3 Meetings were held with Castlemere Centre management on 1st February 2017 and 22nd February 2017. Minutes were taken and sent to both centres.

7.4 Wardleworth Community Centre held a public meeting on the 18th February 2017.
7.5 Online consultation responses consisted of 319, 89% of which disagreed with the proposal. 59 written responses have been received of which 100% disagreed. The overall majority were in response to Wardleworth. The vast majority of the responses are in line with the comments raised by the centre management.

7.6 Responses consistent with both centres:
- The data used is only 1 quarter and is not validated.
- There are other community resources in close proximity to both centres.
- Both centres claim error in their reported data and have offered fresh data.
- Both centres have described new services to be offered.
- Both centres argue a lack of confidence in the consultation process.
- Both centres argue that the priorities used have not been communicated previously.
- Both centres are critical of the process and claim it is not fair.
- Both centres claim that deprivation locally to them justifies the need for funding.

7.7 Responses specific to Castlemere
- They claim to be the largest community centre in the borough.
- They argue that they had no prior notification of the changes proposed or the priorities within the action plan and funding agreement.
- They argue that the council has 4 years of data and should use at least 12 months data.
- They argue that figures reduce during fasting (Ramadhan) (First Quarter). However, this would apply to other centres equally including Sudden, Spotland and Deeplish.
- They argue that the scoring excludes social, educational and recreational needs of the community.
- They argue that the analysis should take account of the proportion of funding. Some smaller centres receive more money. Due to reduced amount made to Castlemere they argue that this should be seen as value for money.
- They conclude by stating that they understand the challenges facing local government and that local government has no statutory duty to fund CC’s.
- They claim that Castlemere is based in one of the most deprived areas of the borough.
- They make a humble request for funding to continue.
7.8 Responses specific to Wardleworth

- They have produced some amended data based on their signing in sheets. Their argument is that visitor numbers are different to session attendees and that other centres have inflated their numbers.
- They argue that other centres locally do not have a purpose built hall and Wardleworth was a purpose built community centre and is not restricted to gender or ethnicity.
- They argue that the location criteria refers to neighbouring community organisations not community centres and that the historical level of funding provided is relevant to the level of deprivation and is therefore necessary. They also question the accuracy of the distances between the local community organisations claiming that they are over 0.5 miles.
- They challenge the Equality Impact assessment and argue that ethnicity and gender barriers of other centres may impact disproportionately on minority groups as the centre is open to all sections of the community and not affiliated to any ethnic groups.

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<tr>
<th>Background Papers</th>
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<td>8. Full consultation response documents</td>
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