Community Use of Council Owned Buildings

A draft report by the Performance and Finance Select Committee Task Group

For consideration at Performance and Finance Select Committee on 25th March 2009

Councillor Dunn – Chair
Councillor H B Patel
Councillor Bessong
Councillor Ahmed
Councillor Butt
Councillor Mendoza
Councillor Pagnamenta
Councillor Van Kalwala

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Chair's Foreword

Voluntary and community organisations in Brent play a key role in delivering services, advice and guidance that may not otherwise be available to our residents. There are a limited number of council assets leased by voluntary and community organisations and many of the arrangements are historical. Over time this has resulted in differing leasing arrangements for these organisations and limited formal linkages to community outputs. This led to questions about consistency and ensuring equality and good value-for-money in the use of council-owned assets.

The focus of the task group was a strategic one and did not focus on any particular leases, groups or issues but rather the overall range of leasing arrangements presently in place and the mechanisms which support effective governance of these arrangements. In undertaking this review, my colleagues and I wanted to ensure that we considered:

- The ways in which contractual and leasing arrangements for current buildings could be standardised;
- Good practice from other councils on how they manage their properties with the third sector; and
- Links to Brent's response to the Quirk review.

My colleagues and I would like to thank Councillor Colwill, the Chair of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum, for providing the task group with the opportunity to engage with Forum members. We very much appreciate the contribution of all of those who attended the Forum meetings and would like to say a special thank you to those leaseholders that responded to our questionnaire. We also listened to the views of council officers and gathered information and learning from other local authorities.

I would like to thank those people who met with the task group during the course of the review, all those who sent information to the task group and fellow task group members who have been generous with their constructive contributions. It would also be remiss of me not to highlight the contributions from on of our key witnesses Richard Barrett, Head of Property and Asset Management and support to the task group from Jo Mercer from Policy and Regeneration who collated data and undertook much of the drafting to bring the exercise to a productive conclusion.

I believe that the task group's work and recommendations set out a framework for effective use of our buildings through a consistent policy for leases with the voluntary and community sector. It has also provided information to feed into the council's response to Quirk. We have also highlighted the importance of further engagement with voluntary and community organisations in taking this work forward. I hope that this task group will have a real impact on service provision for the benefit of all Brent residents.

Councillor Anthony Dunn
Chair, Task Group

Recommendations

1. Consider the framework for effective community use of council owned buildings

 a) The following policy areas should be considered together in future when addressing community use of council owned buildings - asset management leasing policy, voluntary sector strategy development and projects such as the voluntary sector resource centre project. In addition we should also be cognisant of Government policy in this area.

2. Co-ordinate the council's approach

a) Establish clear responsibility for leading on this area of work at CMT level
b) Establish a coordinated way of managing community use of council owned buildings and monitoring the related community outputs

3. Develop a consistent leasing policy

a) Development of a community portfolio which sets out the assets covered by the policy

- Designate the present group of assets looked at by the task group as a 'Community portfolio'

- Provide a clear explanation of any other assets which would be subject to the policy not presently in the newly termed 'community portfolio' to ensure fairness and consistency in the leasing of assets to the voluntary and community sector

b) The recommendations put forward from a number of previous audits into community buildings should be taken on as principles underpinning the future leasing policy:

- Council should consider moving all peppercorn arrangements onto market rental (as and when feasible)

- Rent abatement or payment of a grant should be used where financial assistance is required

- Groups' activities and outputs should be monitored before and throughout the lease period to ensure these match the Council's key objectives and agreed outputs

- In particular, where rent abatement is given or a grant is paid, the lessee should enter into an agreement with the Council providing that rent

abatement or payment of the grant will be withdrawn if certain specified outputs are not met

- Responsibility within the council for this needs to be clarified at Corporate Management Team level

c) Development of a consistent approach to asset transfer

- The council presently transfers assets in practical terms through the provision of 25 and 99 year leases.
- Thought should be given to application of the principles of long leases for any other assets after the outcome of the one council task group on asset management is known.
- Primarily this should be a short term lease under 7 years.
- Longer term leases (from 10years – 125 years) only in specific circumstances and where a group has met a stringent test of capacity and alignment with key Council objectives such as Local Area Agreement targets. This is in line with Quirk proposals for the need to assess capacity and capability

d) Development of a leasing policy drawing on best practice elsewhere

- The contractual and leasing arrangements should be standardised for the community portfolio

- The policy approach agreed for the 16 Youth and Community Centres in 2003 should be extended and added to so that:

  ➢ Generally leases would be granted for 7 years or less

  ➢ These should be contracted out of L&T Act 1954 Part II,

  ➢ These should include an annual tenant break clause and possibly a landlord break clause

  ➢ These should include internal repairing and insurance clauses because the tenant will then take responsibility for the day to day management and maintenance of the building and will be the entity occupying the building on a daily basis

  ➢ These should have a restricted user clause and alienation clause to prevent, over time the property not being used for the original intention or by the original occupier without prior Council approval

- Long leases (i.e. for more than 7 years), should exceptionally be available, where this meets community outputs critical to council and the community organisation need a long lease to obtain funding or where this links to capital funding possibilities or there is some other strong justification for this (confirmation of funding would be required before agreement). In addition the legal requirements set out at section 8 would need to be met alongside a test of capability and capacity to ensure the effective use of the asset in the future. The example highlighted as best practice at section 7.34 should be noted here.

- Long lease break clauses should be considered as the norm to safeguard the long term value of Council assets and also to insure against future failure of the organisation to continue to operate effectively or fail to meet Council objectives.

- Shared use of premises should be encouraged where appropriate, to ensure effective and efficient use of council assets to the benefit of Brent residents.

e) The policy approach once agreed should be taken forward as one part of the Voluntary Sector Strategy

4. Take account of the duty to involve

a) The development of a consistent policy should include clear engagement with the voluntary and community sector in line with the duty to involve.

b) The voluntary and community sector views were sought in relation to the draft recommendations, the views of the voluntary and community sector should be sought again in relation to these final recommendations

c) The task request from Brava that advice on requirements of a leaseholder is provided to one of their meetings on a regular basis in future should be met

d) Provide greater clarity around what assets are available and link to any future plans for a database of other assets organisations can lease, set up in London.

e) The task group also highlights the links to the development of the voluntary sector strategy here.

f) All occupation of Council's "Community Portfolio" be put onto an appropriate formal occupational arrangement. That no new occupation be allowed unless a proper lease is signed and furthermore that all current informal arrangements are resolved within 18 months of adoption of these recommendations by Executive

g) Consideration should be given to the provision of practical property and facilities management advice to support the voluntary and community sector

5. **Strengthen governance of the 'community portfolio' developed in line with any aspects developed within the voluntary sector strategy**

   a) Ensure community outcomes are linked to any provision of below market rent leases within the 'community portfolio'
   b) Clarify responsibility and process for monitoring of the community outcomes
   c) Ensure linkage to the community strategy priorities for all community outputs in line with the process which is being developed for the voluntary sector strategy
   d) Ensure appropriate consideration of equality and diversity to ensure the fairness of this process
   e) Ensure clear advice and guidance on the monitoring process is provided in one place for voluntary and community sector organisations

6. **Continue to development the Voluntary Sector Resource Centre Project**

   a) Continue to support the voluntary resource centre projects and others like it in the longer term as an effective way of empowering the voluntary and community sector
   b) Identify if there are any other projects which provide similar benefits to community and voluntary sector organisations

7. **Feed into the response to the Quirk Review**

   a) Feed learning from the task group into Brent's response to the Quirk review in particular the focus on projects like the voluntary sector resource centre, and the recommendations about Brent's leasing policy.

1. **Introduction**

A strong and vibrant third sector is an essential part of the local community in providing services tailored to local needs. The sector often provides specialised services to 'hard to reach' communities.

The council has a varied approach to letting council owned buildings to the third sector. Many contractual agreements between the council and local organisations were made years ago and may not reflect current council objectives or take into account changes in the local community. These arrangements included transferring some freeholds and setting up long and short leasehold arrangements. For some there is no formal contract in place. The intention in a number of cases has been to link the rent payable with the use of the property. This has meant that in certain circumstances the rent can be waived because the group concerned is deemed to be producing 'community outputs.' The council now needs to reconsider arrangements for voluntary and community sector use of council buildings to ensure that outputs contribute to the social regeneration of the local area and that arrangements are fair to all sections of the community. Public buildings need to be used to their full potential and all sections of the local community need to be considered.

Brent Council together with Brent Association for Voluntary Action (BrAVA) is looking at the possibility of a voluntary sector resource centre which would be run and managed by the voluntary sector. The project is in the very early stages. It would bring together a range of voluntary sector organisations and although the council may not ultimately be involved in the management of the property, it will have a role in ensuring that the organisations that occupy it operate for the benefit of the wider community.

This is an area which has been identified by both officers and members as in need of improvement in Brent.

This scrutiny task group looks at how the council can develop a clear approach to managing buildings that are leased for use by the community and voluntary sector. Fairness for all parts of the community is at the heart of this. It should be noted that the review does not imply an increase in availability of assets, but focuses on the use of present assets. The recommendations help to inform the wider council policy and strategy on asset management and the third sector. The findings also feed into Brent's response to the Quirk review. The scope set out that the task group would cover:

- ➢ Contractual and leasing arrangements for current buildings and consider how they could be standardised
- ➢ Good practice from other councils on how they manage their properties with the third sector.
- ➢ Links to Brent's response to the Quirk review.

➢ Reference to Empowerment White Paper.

It was thought that the review could achieve the following:

➢ Develop a framework for how we make most effective use of our community buildings.
➢ Feed into the Brent Council response to the Quirk Review.
➢ Formulate a policy for recommendation to the Executive setting out how leases to community organisations should be dealt with.

2. Membership

Councillor Dunn – Chair
Councillor H B Patel
Councillor Bessong
Councillor Ahmed
Councillor Butt
Councillor Mendoza
Councillor Pagnamenta
Councillor Van Kalwala

3. Methodology

In order to complete the work identified in the scope, the task group:

a) Undertook the task group work mainly through the Performance and Finance Select Committee
b) Reviewed the national and local position, in particular taking account of the work of the *Making Assets Work: The Quirk Review of Community Management and Ownership of Public Assets* (2007).
c) Investigated Brent's current lease granting process, identifying the issues and problems.
d) Undertook questionnaire research across a number of other London boroughs in order to find out how their leasing and contractual arrangements work. The questions focussed on what the councils' current leasing policies are, their responses to the Quirk report, what feedback they have had from the voluntary and community sector, and how they take into account equalities and diversity in their leasing policy.
e) Explored the views of the voluntary and community sector in relation to Brent's leasing policies by sending out questionnaires to groups in the voluntary sector to hear their views. The questions focussed around how satisfied the groups are with the support they receive from the council, how aware they are about the processes involved in obtaining and renewing leases, and whether there is anything within Brent's policies that they feel could be improved upon. It also attended the Brent Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum, to gain further feedback from voluntary and community groups about Brent's current leasing policies.

f) Evidence was received from council officers who work in the Property and Asset Management department and the Voluntary Sector Grants Unit

4. Local Context

4.1 Current Leasing Policy

There is no overall blanket policy that applies to the council assets presently leased to voluntary and community sector organisations. There was a policy, relating to 16 Youth and Community Centres owned by the council, presented and passed at a Special Meeting of the Executive on the 18th August 2003. The policy that was agreed for these assets is as follows:

- ➤ When a concessionary rent is agreed the Lead Tenant will enter into a Collateral Grant Agreement (CGA) with the council, setting out the required outputs that will be needed from that organisation in order for them to receive the rental subsidy.
- ➤ If a 7 year lease is granted then it shall be subject to a mutual break clause after 3 years at their, or the council's discretion.
- ➤ When a 7 year lease is granted, in practice the actual lease granted will be 7 years less 3 days. Anything over 7 years would constitute a disposal which would mean that such lease agreements could not be agreed and sanctioned on the best terms reasonably obtainable under Delegated Authority.
- ➤ Any other terms not set out in the report for each centre can be agreed by the Manager of Corporate Property Services under delegation.
- ➤ Wherever possible, all leases are to be excluded from the security of tenure provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954.

This approach has not met with universal approval over time and has led to a certain amount of friction, on occasions, with the third sector and indeed has been challenged by members in support of individual organisations.

The council is generally required to grant leases at a market rent, but most community organisations cannot afford to pay market rents hence the introduction of the CGA regime for some leases more recently. A CGA is granted to subsidise the market rent that the council deems appropriate for the property taking into account the proposed use and other factors. In return the council sets out the required outcomes that will be needed from that organisation in order for them to receive the CGA i.e. rental subsidy. In theory these outcomes are monitored and assessed as to whether the organisation should continue to receive rent abatement.

4.2 Current Position of Third Sector Occupied property

Currently, properties are occupied in a range of leasing arrangements, some with 7 year leases, and some with longer leases. There are also some which are occupied without any formal agreement. Further details can be found in Appendix B.

4.3 Previous reviews

At Brent, a previous task group by Overview and Scrutiny on voluntary sector grants recommended that the allocation of grants are better linked to the Corporate Strategy, and this was implemented. There is presently no direct link or clear ownership of the linkage between grant support allocation and leasing arrangements to the voluntary and community sector.

4.4 Community Strategy and Corporate strategy

The management of assets underpins a wide range of corporate strategy objectives and in some cases community outcomes of organisations leasing property from the council directly meets corporate objectives.

5. National Context

5.1 Quirk review

Community use of public buildings has recently moved up the national agenda. The Quirk Review considers the benefits to councils of transferring assets to local communities. It looks at how councils can realise the benefits of transferring the ownership of assets to a community organisation without risking wider public interests and concerns.

The review argues that transferring community assets to the community can help to unleash the potential of the asset. It can help to engender greater involvement of the community in running the organisation. It also enables them to access funding streams which are not available to councils such as lottery funding. However this needs to be balanced with the finite availability of Council premises and should be looked at from a wider regeneration perspective rather than a property driven agenda.

5.2 Development Trusts Association, 'Advancing Assets for Communities – Demonstrating Community Asset Transfer: Year One'

After the Quirk report, the Advancing Assets for Communities demonstration programme was set up. This was intended to demonstrate the feasibility of community asset transfer. Twenty demonstration areas, each with an assigned Case Manager, were selected in boroughs that had the highest potential and motivation for asset transfer, and support was made available to the local

authority and community partners involved. These packages of support included consultancy, independent professional advice, and capacity building workshops. An Assets Core Team (ACT) was also established to provide assistance to Case Managers.

One year on, the outcomes of Advancing Assets are as follows:

➢ Improved partnerships between local authorities and the community sector, including better communication and flexibility. For example, in the London Borough of Lambeth, a local community group made a formal presentation to Council representatives to bid for community ownership of the Clapham Library. The council is currently reviewing the potential for this sale, and it has shown the importance of adopting flexible strategies in seeking to work with community groups as they re-channel the energy of activism into viable social entrepreneurship.

➢ Dissemination of messages and tools to overcome the barriers to asset transfer that the Quirk report identified, including the development of best practice case studies, a risk management toolkit, and the provision of learning opportunities. For example, 'Advancing Assets for North Tyneside' provided a seminar for the local authority to help it develop its draft asset transfer strategy, which was then due to be adopted in September 2008.

➢ A partnership approach has been developed, whereby community asset transfer projects are advanced and confidence in the feasibility of asset transfer is built, including improved capacity amongst community groups for asset ownership, and financial viability assessments for them. This has resulted in four local authority participants successfully applying to the OTS-funded Community Assets Programme (securing in-principle awards for £3.7m investment in asset transfer projects); five assets have been transferred to community organisations with the programme's support, fourteen pending transfer within the next six to twelve months; and innovation in asset transfer is being explored, around the development of public-private-third sector partnerships as well as using compulsory purchase as a mechanism to effect community asset transfer.

➢ Forest Heath provides what is set to be a national flagship for asset transfer. The council agreed to sell a 1.64ha site comprising playing fields, an old community centre, and retail unit to Keystone Development Trust below market value, so that the Trust could develop a Community Land Trust (CLT) including 80 to 100 affordable homes, a new community centre, and two new retail units. It will be delivered in partnership with a housing association, and demonstrates what can be done when an entrepreneurial community organisation works with a local authority that shows a positive and mature attitude towards community asset transfer.

Advancing Assets also in its first year has contributed to the growing body of knowledge on asset transfer. Key findings include lessons like the importance of communicating via appropriate messages capable of being understood by diverse audiences; that options are available to local authorities looking to transfer assets, for example gifts/endowments/disposals below market value/asset protection from the open market/leases; and how important it is for the local authority to have ownership of the asset transfer agenda.

A number of essential ingredients for successful asset transfer have been identified, including trust between the local authority and the community sector; support for legal and professional fees to help develop projects; officers often need to be champions of asset transfer and work in partnership with third parties; risk appreciation on the part of the voluntary sector; and transfers need to be genuinely rooted in local ambition and aspirations rather than in plans for individual assets.

Some of the main persistent obstacles have also been identified, as well as their potential solutions. These include:

➢ Politics – there can be a lack of success when there are no champions of asset transfer within the council, or tensions between the local authority and communities when it is discussed. Possible solutions include championing the agenda to raise the level of debate at local level, and also engaging independent and impartial third parties to assist them in producing transparent options appraisals.
➢ Safeguarding use of assets by the community – local authorities are concerned about how they can ensure widespread ownership of an asset and prevent it from being ultimately controlled by a small group of individuals who are unrepresentative of the general community. Possible solutions to this are ensuring respecting of diversity and inclusivity.
➢ State of repair – buildings are sometimes old and dilapidated, therefore assets must be rendered viable in order to empower communities effectively.
➢ Community capacity – local authorities often comment that the community sector lacks capacity to take responsibility for management of assets, hence the authority needs to support capacity building and respect the potential for growth of community organisations.

The 2008-9 programme is underway, with a further 30 local authorities selected as demonstration areas. It is intended that the programme will devote greater energy to engaging elected Members in recognition of their importance to this agenda and the limited impact on them so far. It will continue to develop guidance and encourage asset transfer, in the hope of making community asset transfer easier, more effective and widespread.

5.3 DCLG, 'Managing Risks in Asset Transfer – A Guide'

This recent publication from the Department of Communities and Local Government has been published to assist authorities to manage and minimise risks inherent in the transfer of land and assets to the community sector. It identifies common risks in asset transfer, as well as ways of managing them. The risks identified include:

➢ Community group lacks robust accountability and governance structures, which risks the 'capture' of assets by unrepresentative groups.

➢ Community empowerment objectives (the main objective of asset transfer) proposed by community organisations are vague, weak or not aligned to those of the local authority, for example if the organisation does not have buy-in from the local community for the proposed uses.

➢ The receiving organisation does not have the capacity or skills to manage the asset, which can lead to wasted time and money, or that little use is made of the asset.

➢ The local authority lacks the capacity to support the asset transfer adequately, which can deprive local people of important services/facilities and can mean that the local authority loses face among the community.

➢ Community organisation does not have the funds to purchase and/or refurbish the asset, which can result in the failure of the project, or that the building/asset does not achieve Disability Discrimination Act compliance.

➢ Community organisation cannot afford to maintain the asset on an ongoing basis, which can result in the collapse of the organisation and the decline in the long-term health and value of the asset.

➢ Lack of knowledge of the asset (especially when considering an historic building), for example under-estimating costs which can result in lack of funds. This risk may result in the building being structurally unsound and projects can be jeopardised.

➢ State aid rules prevent public financial support for a project (if the project is above the financial ceiling currently set at Euro 200,000).

➢ Asset is not used in the public interest, is taken over by an unrepresentative/unaccountable minority, or that access to the asset is not inclusive. This holds the risk of funds being misappropriated, the under-utilisation of the asset, restricted access to the asset (which can cause the other groups to want their own asset), and competition for control of the asset amongst community groups.

➢ Fragmented ownership of assets precludes a strategic approach – which carries risk because negotiation with multiple owners is required and the local authority has less direct responsibility to local people for their access to, and use of, public space.

➢ Confusion in roles between the local authority and the community organisation, which can result in the emergence of unexpected liabilities or a breakdown in partnerships.

➢ Limited potential for enterprise development based on the asset in the area, which may result in the asset not generating enough revenue to be financially sustainable, and a policy shift from grant-aid programmes to contacts and competitive tendering may threaten the asset's viability.

➢ Reliance by the receiving organisation on a small number of volunteers, which may result in overburden on individuals or not enough individuals to keep it running.

➢ Use of the asset would not fit with the wider strategic aims of the local authority, which can impair the implementation of the sustainable community strategy.

6. Other policy context

6.1 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2003), *Communities Plan Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future.*

This acknowledged that sustainability is only possible where local communities play a leading role in determining their own future development.

6.2 Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005), *Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter.*

This sought to promote citizen involvement in public services and proposed a series of options for local action, with cautious support given to 'Neighbourhood ownership' and specific mention of asset ownership by Development Trusts.

6.3 Department of Communities and Local Government (2008), *Communities in Control: real people, real power.*

The paper sets out a clear commitment to making representational democracy work better, and the importance of participatory engagement in giving more control and influence to more people. This community empowerment agenda is identified by Quirk as the main objective of asset transfer.

7. Key Findings

7.1 Why change is needed

Evidence collected by the task group from council officers and the voluntary and community sector suggested general agreement that there needs to be a consistent policy and governance arrangements for some community use of council owned assets. We heard from officers who have identified a number of reasons why changes need to be made. These include:

a) The relationship between the council and the voluntary sector is frequently strained
b) The historical nature of the present arrangements leaves a lack of consistency in both arrangements offered to different voluntary and community sector organisations and community outputs received
c) Because there are limited properties available and scare resources to support organisations further, we need to make sure these resources are used to deliver services people in Brent need through projects which relate to the councils corporate priorities
d) Audit recommendations following audit of some of the present leasing arrangements
e) There is a need to ensure a set process for addressing equality as different approaches have been taken over the years

Issues identified from our questionnaire of voluntary and community sector organisations on the list of community assets and the Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum were similar and included:

a) A need for greater clarity around what assets are available
b) A need for further clarity about what is required of leaseholders
c) Support is needed in addressing day to day running requirements – i.e. better deals for electricity
d) Communications and information sharing between the council and the sector should be improved.
e) A clear contact point for questions about this rather than numerous different departments
f) There is a need to encourage more partnership working between voluntary and community sector organisations
g) Monitoring needs to be effective but not onerous

7.2 Co-ordinating the council's approach

The task group found that presently the asset management and monitoring of community outcomes is undertaken in different ways across the council, with only some of the main community and voluntary sector assets being coordinated centrally. At the beginning of the scrutiny review of this issue, the task group

found there was need for further clarity about which assets are on the list of council owned assets used by the community. As a result the task group were of the opinion that the list of assets provided to the committee at the beginning of the task group is designated the 'community portfolio' and work is undertaken to ascertain whether any other assets need to be added to this portfolio. This will ensure fairness and consistency in the leasing of assets to the voluntary and community sector.

A clear lead on this area of work at CMT level would support the move to a more consistent approach in the future.

7.3 Responses to the Quirk review

The task group considered the different responses to Quirk and heard from officers that Brent is currently already undertaking asset transfer in practice, as leases are intermittently granted for 25 or 99 years. It also found that Brent's response to the Quirk report is that the qualitative, one-off examples provided in the report do not provide concrete evidence of the suitability of asset transfer. Therefore Brent is undertaking actions to institute guidelines as to where asset transfer will be considered. The presumption is against asset transfer at this stage, until after this has been completed.

Most councils who replied to the questionnaire sent out as part of the task group, have responded positively to the Quirk report and are currently in the processes of assessing their response to the Quirk report, and some have even commissioned consultants to review their current practices and the way it works with the voluntary sector in relation to property and leasing arrangements. Some councils raised the issue of the requirements of Comprehensive Area Assessment from 2009 with its new emphasis on engagement with the voluntary sector. Some councils stated that they would like to take part in asset transfer, but that the property portfolio that they have are not suitable for it, and some are intending to use Big Lottery Fund grant awards to enable asset transfer.

The West London Network (WLN) of voluntary and community organisations (2008), of which BrAVA is a member, carried out some research which found that within the third sector there are concerns that the Quirk report will be used as an excuse for boroughs to divest themselves of poorly maintained facilities and to pass the responsibility to community groups who may be unable to improve them.

7.31 Voluntary Resource Centre Project

The task group also heard from officers about the Voluntary Resource Centre Project and the role this model could have in the response to Quirk. Brent Council, together with Brent Association for Voluntary Action (BRAVA) is looking at the possibility of a voluntary sector resource centre which would be run and

managed by the voluntary sector. It would bring together a range of voluntary sector organisations and although the council may not be ultimately involved in the management of the property, it will have a role in ensuring that the organisations that occupy it operate for the benefit of the wider community.

7.32 Feedback - Voluntary Resource Centre Consultation Event

The task group also heard about the consultation in relation to the Voluntary Sector Resource Centre Project undertaken in January 2008. Approximately 100 people made up of representatives of BrAVA and other local voluntary sector groups, local authority staff and partner organisations in the not for profit sector, attended a consultation event about voluntary sector resource centres. They were addressed by Gareth Daniel, Mike Bibby, Ann O'Neill (Brent Mencap), Danny Maher (Cricklewood Homeless Concern), Knox Daniel (Ealing Community Resource Centre), and Laura Salmon (Canalside House, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea).

The idea of a voluntary resource centre located in the Wembley regeneration area was put forward. At this stage it was explained that the council was looking to facilitate the provision of the building itself and offer advice and expertise, but that the running of the project and the fit out of the building would be the responsibility of the voluntary sector.

Attendees were asked to record their issues, concerns or suggestions under a series of headings, and the following is a brief account of what they wrote:

➢ Location – a number of attendees said that they would want the council to seize the opportunity of building the centre in the Wembley regeneration unit, and then seek a second facility in the south of the borough at a later date.

➢ Affordability – raised concerns about whether rent would need to be paid and how much (and whether it can be subsidised), as well as future affordability and development.

➢ Steering group – fifteen group representatives put themselves forward for membership of the steering group, and attendees wrote that things to consider would be the group's powers, status, and terms of reference.

➢ Functions – attendees were asked to consider what the centre's functions will be and the resources/support available there. Attendees wrote that disability access should be considered, opening hours all day and all evening, hot desking facilities, plenty of space for training space and meeting rooms, confidential interview rooms, and a community library and cafe.

➢ Tenants – some attendees stated that there should be a mixture of leases to ensure flexibility.

7.33 Best practice examples

In response to the questionnaire sent out to other London boroughs, several councils highlighted that they have voluntary resource centres: Harrow (The Lodge), Hillingdon (Key House), Kensington and Chelsea (Canalside House), and Ealing (Ealing Community Resource Centre). A similar model is being considered by another council, where there would be two to three sites that are suitable for flexible usage across many organisations, for both tenancies and to provide the base for groups' outreach work. The WLN research acknowledged concerns in the voluntary and community sector about sharing premises but stated that the third sector needs to make the very best use of scarce resources and in the future will need to be prepared to work co-operatively, and this may mean rethinking their reluctance to share. The WLN report highlighted the many benefits arising from the sharing of community premises and there are lots of ways in which premises can be shared, some of which have been going on for many years.

7.34 Ensuring a robust assessment process for asset transfer

In the research undertaken by the task group one particular council's policy was noted as a positive approach to transfer of council assets to Third Sector organisations that ensures a robust process for the council to assess a group bidding for asset transfer. For this council, 'transfer' is considered to relate to leasehold arrangements at less than best consideration. The council considers transfer of short/medium term leases and long leases; it will not transfer the freehold of its assets, as this could reduce the council's control in the long-term over the benefits achieved through it assets and would require a more complex assessment and justification process. Any asset permanently transferred to a third sector organisation would also need to be removed from the council's balance sheet, thus reducing the council's financial strength.

The council views its policy on community asset disposal as part of a long-term programme of support to, and partnership with, the third sector. It seeks to implement the policy *proactively* to encourage appropriate groups to take on an asset, linked to its ongoing programmes of support to the third sector. It takes a strategic approach to asset transfer through regular reviews of the asset transfer potential of its assets, and the establishment of priorities linked, for example, to priority neighbourhoods, the exit-strategies from regeneration programmes, or the potential of particular high-profile cases etc.

Groups eligible for asset transfer must be able to demonstrate good governance and an appropriate legal structure, and may be area-based, based around particular social groups, or have some other 'community of interest.' The council has a rigorous assessment template for assessing whether or not to undertake community asset transfer. It assesses:

- ➢ The organisation's proposals and recommendations – asking questions around what the organisation wants to use the asset for, whether it has the capacity to take on the asset, etc.
- ➢ Current asset use and circumstances – questions around the current use and condition of the asset, whether the council has any plans for the asset, and whether there is any other organisation affected by potential transfer of ownership.
- ➢ Organisational health check – whether the organisation has a constitution, registered charity status, an Equal Opportunities policy, insurance, an annual report, audited annual accounts, supporting statements available from two referees, and the necessary expertise to take on the asset. It also looks at the organisation's management, governance, and length of existence.
- ➢ The expected benefits of transferring the asset – this section asks questions around whether transferring the asset would bring specific benefits that meet council priorities, specifically areas such as community empowerment, area wide benefits, promotion of a sustainable community and voluntary sector, economic development and social enterprise, improvements to local services, and value for money.
- ➢ Risks – this section asks what the key risks are involved in the transfer – for example, the potential to disadvantage particular individuals/communities of interest, the potential for negative impact on community cohesion/services, potential for the asset to become a financial liability for the recipient, capacity of the recipient to deliver promised services/outcomes, capture of asset by an unrepresentative/extremist minority, the potential for ongoing council liability, or conflict with other funders and loss of potential revenue to the Council if the premises had been leased on the open market.

7.35 Conclusions

The scope of the task group was to feed into the council's response to Quirk. The task group received evidence of the present approach from officers. The council presently transfers assets in practical terms through the provision of 25 and 99 year leases and is working to ensure a partnership approach through the voluntary sector resource centre project. The task group recognised the limit of the scope of the task group but was of the opinion that further thought should be given to the policy approach for other long leases after the outcome of the one council task group on asset management is known. The task group went on to focus on the leasing policy for the assets in the list first provided to the task group.

7.4 Establishing a leasing policy

7.41 Best practice research

We undertook research of other council's policy and approach to leasing council owned buildings to the voluntary and community sector.

7.42 Best practice leasing policy

Most of the councils who responded are charging market rent and then invite third sector groups to apply for a grant or offer rent abatement. This could be for anything up to 100% of the rent. Some councils outlined that these arrangements would cease if the conditions of the Service Contract were no longer met.

7.43 Linking leasing to Corporate Strategy objectives

Most councils who responded have tried to link their leasing policies to their Corporate Strategy objectives, however in some cases this has not been possible because the occupancy of community buildings is historical and therefore less directly linked to more recent Corporate Strategy objectives. At a particular council, there is certain criteria that needs to be met before a group is allocated premises, which includes that the group must assist in the delivery of the Community Strategy and LAA priorities and targets; demonstrate the capacity to deliver services (e.g. management resources, sound financial management, local residents on the Management Board, etc); demonstrate how users and residents are involved in the design and delivery of its services; have a capacity for innovation and demonstrate creative service design; and demonstrate a commitment to the Value for Money agenda and identifying and delivering efficiencies. Another council assesses third sector groups' bids for properties through similar criteria, including conditions such as that youth organisations must demonstrate the involvement of young people in their decision making, and that the council will have access to all activities for monitoring purposes.

7.44 Specific clauses inserted into leases

One example of a specific clause that has been included in leases to ensure their smooth operation is a break clause, inserted in case the tenant does not receive their grant. A council who responded gave an example of a one-off innovative clause that they inserted into an individual leasing arrangement, whereby a voluntary organisation moved into a newer private property, which the council invested in renovating to make it useable. The council inserted a clause in the lease contract with the new landlord which stated that if this voluntary organisation left the property within the first fifteen years of the lease, the council would have nomination rights whereby they could name the

organisation that would become the new tenant. This ensured that the council would get suitable return on its investment.

Additional clauses could be inserted into the leases in order to ensure smooth operation of the contractual arrangement. Possible clauses include:

➢ Break clause – a mutual break clause to be instituted at any time by either party if there is non compliance with any terms of the lease or the CGA, or in case the tenant does not receive their grant.
➢ No telecoms equipment or masts to be erected on any part of the building – this is partly due to the possibility of negative medical effects, and partly due to the resources it would require to ascertain and ensure that the council obtains the income that it is entitled to from such equipment.
➢ Graffiti clearance – the community group should take responsibility for clearing graffiti as this would give them a vested interest in preventing such vandalism.
➢ Disturbing the neighbours – a clause to regulate this, especially if the building is rented out in the evenings to generate extra revenue.
➢ Opening and closing times – in case the need arises for the council to enforce such times due to, for example, noise nuisance or traffic problems.
➢ Those community centres with kitchen facilities should be required to obtain an annual certificate of cleanliness from the council's Environmental Health Department – particularly if the buildings are opened up to additional activities such as luncheon clubs to generate extra revenue.
➢ Repairing clauses – the tenant could be required to pay for damage caused by vandalism, as again this would give them vested interest in catching the culprits, and for external repairs that arise due to the tenant's non compliance with their internal repairing obligations.
➢ Fire alarms – there could be a clause inserted stating that the tenant is responsible for the installation, servicing and repairs to fire alarm systems.

7.45 Support and advice for voluntary groups on managing properties commercially

The responding councils generally provide support and advice on how to manage properties commercially on an informal basis. One council offers free training to community groups on managing a community centre. External to the councils, there are some support and advice services available. For example one London borough has an independent charity which provides information, support and networking opportunities to voluntary and community groups, including property advice. The charity is independent of the authority but is grant funded by it. Some councils provide funding for umbrella organisations which provide capacity building advice for the voluntary groups which they support.

7.46Equalities and Diversity

On the whole, the responding councils take into account equalities and diversity through undertaking equalities impact assessments. Usually decisions are made when properties become available. It is apparent that often leasing arrangements for third sector groups are historical, and therefore can only be reviewed once the lease has come to an end. The equalities impact assessments typically cover diversity and access specifically disability, gender, and ethnicity, and necessary judgment calls are made when a voluntary group representing a specific ethnic group applies for property in order to take into account the potential disadvantage to groups or residents who are, or may feel, excluded by the letting. One council stated that it evaluates all groups or new groups being set up, who are seeking premises, checking their constitution and membership. Another council uses a specific criterion for the allocation of property to community groups, one of which includes that the group must deliver 'added value' benefits, including securing additional funding which ultimately benefits local residents, provide volunteering and employment opportunities, and/or which have a unique understanding of a particular community or user group. For another council, one of the criteria used in assessing bids by third sector groups for property is that access/membership is not restricted for any reason other than those associated with safety of the law or in order to comply with Licences. Recognition is given to single sex/religious/cultural/ethnic groups provided that their aims and objectives are consistent with the council policies.

Brent does not have any formal approach to this issue other than to follow legislative requirements in regard to equality of treatment. In practice the opportunity to make available council space to the third sector is very rare and similar to the above experience decisions are taken as and when property becomes available but generally all property is already leased out on terms which date back for some years. Where Community Centres let out space to other parties including other 3rd sector organisations it would appear there is no conditions imposed by the Council to ensure these lettings are in accordance with our corporate or community strategies.

The recommendation of the task group is to consider the consistent process for addressing equalities through either the leases and or the monitoring in future in line with the councils work towards achieving level 4 of the Equality Standard.

7.47Conclusions on a leasing policy

Given the present inconsistencies and the best practice learning from other councils the task group were of the opinion that there should be a consistent leasing policy developed. This should provide fluidity where possible to make

the best use of the limited assets available. There should be space for both long and shorter term leases and all should be according to a standardised approach to ensure fairness for voluntary and community organisations. In particular:

- The contractual and leasing arrangements should be standardised for the community portfolio

- The policy approach agreed for the 16 Youth and Community Centres in 2003 should be extended and added to so that:

- Generally leases would be granted for 7 years or less

- These should be contracted out of L&T Act 1954 Part II,

- These should include an annual tenant break clause and possibly a landlord break clause

- These should include internal repairing and insurance clauses because the tenant will then take responsibility for the day to day management and maintenance of the building and will be the entity occupying the building on a daily basis

- These should have a restricted user clause and alienation clause to prevent, over time the property not being used for the original intention or by the original occupier without prior Council approval

- Long leases (i.e. for more than 7 years), should exceptionally be available, where this meets community outcomes critical to council and the community organisation need a long lease to obtain funding or where this links to capital funding possibilities or there is some other strong justification for this (confirmation of funding would be required before agreement). In addition the legal requirements set out at section 8 would need to be met alongside a test of capability and capacity to ensure the effective use of the asset in the future. The example highlighted as best practice at section 7.34 should be noted here.

- Long lease break clauses should be considered as the norm to safeguard the long term value of Council assets and also to insure against future failure of the organisation to continue to operate effectively or fail to meet Council objectives.

- Shared use of premises should be encouraged where appropriate, to ensure effective and efficient use of council assets to the benefit of Brent residents.

7.5 Engaging and involving the voluntary and community sector

7.51 Feedback from the voluntary sector about leasing arrangements

Overall, there has been limited feedback from the voluntary sector to other councils on their leasing policies. The report by the West London Network gives a clear sense that the voluntary sector would value having one point of contact for their leasing and property enquiries.

7.52 West London Network Research

The West London Network (WLN) of voluntary and community organisations commissioned a report entitled: 'Towards a Premises Strategy for the Voluntary and Community Sector' (2008). The report made a number of recommendations in response to the views of the voluntary and community sector:

➢ Creation of a premises database – the report recommends that the WLN takes the lead in developing an on-line resource across West London, where groups can register their premises availability, needs, desire to share etc.
➢ Encouraging sharing of premises by voluntary and community organisations
➢ Considering sub-regional based training on owning, leasing and managing premises
➢ Building local authority relationships to ensure councils clearly highlight the lead officers in these matters and consider how to get best use of existing and potential council owned premises
➢ Developing external partnerships - exploratory discussions with other partners about developing voluntary sector shared premises in West London

7.53 Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum

A presentation to the Voluntary Sector Liaison Forum on 25th November 2008 re-emphasised the nature of the relationship with the voluntary sector as being primarily one of a landlord and tenant. The questions tended to centre on individual circumstances. However main themes from the session included:

➢ A need for greater clarity around what assets are available
➢ A need for further clarity about what is required of leaseholders
➢ Support is needed in addressing day to day running requirements – i.e. better deals for electricity
➢ Communications and information sharing between the council and the sector should be improved.
➢ A clear contact point for questions about this rather than numerous different departments
➢ There is a need to encourage more partnership working between voluntary and community sector organisations
➢ Monitoring needs to be effective but not onerous

There was also interest in the proposed voluntary sector resource centre project and availability of space within one particular community centre within the discussions. The task group received a request from Brava that advice on requirements of a leaseholder is provided to one of their meetings on a regular basis in future.

7.54 Feedback from the recent questionnaire survey

A small number of questionnaires were returned from approximately 40 community organisations contacted with a request to participate. In general the comments were specific to their situation and did not address the more strategic scope of this review. As an example the suggestions and comments raised were as follows:

➢ A request to pay monthly by direct debit
➢ A request for regular removal of graffiti from adjoining buildings
➢ A request for low cost insurance – especially building and public liabilities etc.
➢ A request that the council find a supplier of gas and electricity through the Council's bulk buying system
➢ A request for "help with maintenance", although it is not clear whether the request is for advice or for the Council to take over maintenance responsibility.

This feedback probably indicates that the organisations are more concerned with day to day issues and that assistance from the Council is required in order to address longer term matters.

7.55 Conclusions on engagement and empowerment

The task group was keen to emphasise the importance of getting through he day to day difficulties of leasing a property and the support which is required here. The task group recommend development and provision of advice for the voluntary and community sector on these issues highlighted as pertinent to organisations at the voluntary sector liaison forum. The task group suggest that this can partly be met through meeting the request from Brava that advice on requirements of a leaseholder is provided to one of their meetings on a regular basis in future.

The task group recognised the importance for voluntary and community sector organisations to work together to make the best use of assets available. The task group recognised a role for the council to support this aim to provide greater clarity around what assets are available and recommends links to any future plans for a database of other assets organisations can lease, set up in London.

The scope of the task group also identified a need to make reference to the empowerment white paper. The Bill which relates to this white paper is entitled: 'Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill'. The task group note the inclusion of a duty to involve in this bill and recommend that the development of the recommended policy approach set out in this report should include involvement of the voluntary and community sector further. The links to the development of the voluntary sector strategy should also be highlighted again here.

7.6 Strengthening governance arrangements

7.61 Leases based on community outcomes

A recommended option for Brent to consider is having a leasing policy whereby the tenant's lease is based on the community outcome or benefit that they provide. In Brent some of the organisations who receive leases for council owned assets also receive grants from the voluntary sector grants pot. Others do not. Therefore leases would need to be provided at market rent with rent abatement or linked to a grant to cover some or all of the rent as appropriate. Where leases link directly to the voluntary sector grant system, the community outcomes would be monitored as part of that process and leases would come to an end when a grant is no longer provided or where the organisation is deemed to be no longer providing community benefits agreed as part of the grant. Where leases were provided on a rent abatement basis not through the grants process, monitoring would need to be put in place.

Brent have worked on measuring community outcomes for the voluntary sector grants and will also consider this further in the development of the voluntary sector strategy.

When developing a monitoring process for community outcomes for leases, the voluntary sector grants approach should be taken into account. Following a task group into voluntary sector grants, the funding criteria for the Brent Main Programme Grant was changed to focus on corporate strategy themes, broadly categorised as

- Crime
- Services to Young People
- Regeneration
- Sustainability

An example is attached in Appendix B. It was agreed by the Executive that future funding should be linked to one of these initiatives or themes each year, starting in 2009. These themes reflect Brent Council priorities, together with our overall Wellbeing and Placeshaping responsibilities and powers.

One best practice example elsewhere has a 'traffic light system' to decide how much 'community benefit' a group brings. They have six measures for which they allocate red, amber or green:

➢ Membership level – this measure looks at how many members the group has, and how representative they are of the community.

➢ Occupancy – this calculates the monthly percentage occupancy of the building, considering that the premises can be let morning/afternoon/evening, and allowing for buildings with more than one room.

➢ Range of activities – this considers to what extent activities in the premises contribute to the council's strategic plan.

➢ Level of use – this looks at how many people get use of the building's activities, whilst taking into account that some activities are more 'space hungry' than others. The level of use is therefore assessed in relation to the maximum number of activities, which may be limited by the size of the room, the type of activity, or set by the hirer.

➢ Sustainability – an assessment of the group's financial health in terms of annual income, state of reserves, hiring fees and repairs to premises.

➢ Organisations with social clubs or operating bars – an assessment of the pricing structure of drinks, membership numbers and the annual amount raised for community association. This ensures that they are not selling alcohol cheaper and therefore using the subsidy for that rather than to subsidise the community activities.

7.62 Recommendations from audits

Over the years, a number of audits have been undertaken into community buildings, and the following general recommendations have been put forward:

The practice of letting of properties at a peppercorn should be reviewed by the council. This could be part of a wider review of estate management. Leasing community space, at a peppercorn, to organisations with no conditions attached to the methods used by those organisations for further charging for use or disbursement of income derived from use, leaves the council vulnerable to claims that it is indirectly supporting inappropriate practices or groups. The council should consider, where possible, moving all existing peppercorn agreements onto market rental. Where the council wishes to allow free use of premises, this should be done via grant aid with the usual processes followed and conditions attached, including full rights of access to the organisation's documentation for the council's S151 officer and others as appropriate. Effectively this would be cost neutral as the grant aid or rent abatement would be offset directly against the rent. This would also give members and officers an opportunity to consider groups' continued occupation on a more frequent basis but would require the grant decision

making cycle to be linked to tenancy periods. Some monitoring of the groups activities and outputs should be put in place to ensure that best use is being made of this community space. Responsibility within the council for this is unclear and this needs to be resolved at Corporate Management Team Level.

8. Legal Implications

The Council has the power under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 to grant leases of any of its properties. However, where it grants a lease for 7 years or more it must obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable, unless consent is obtained from the Secretary of State to let at an undervalue. The Secretary of State has issued a General Consent allowing disposals at an undervalue of up to £2 million where the Council considers that this will promote the economic, social or environmental well being of its area or part of its area. Regard must be had to the Community Strategy (where relevant). If the Executive wished to grant a lease for more than 7 years at below market rent, it would need to be satisfied that the General Consent applied in the particular case, or else seek specific consent from the Secretary of State.

9. Conclusion

Evidence collected by the task group from council officers and the voluntary and community sector suggested general agreement that there needs to be a consistent policy and governance arrangements for some community use of council owned assets. We heard from officers, present leaseholders and voluntary and community organisations all of whom had identified a number of reasons why changes need to be made.

The task group considered how the present **c**ontractual and leasing arrangements for the agreed list of buildings could be standardised, drawing on best practice from other councils on how council owned properties are leased to the third sector. It has in this report recommended the development of a policy framework: a consistent approach to asset transfer through the provision of long leases and creation of more fluidity with more frequent use of shorter leases, provision of a system to ensure clear community outcomes for leases where rent abatement is offered and a process for monitoring of these outcomes. In addition the task group has highlighted the linkages of this aspect with the development of the voluntary sector strategy These recommendations will enable the council to ensure a fair, consistent and effective approach to the use of council buildings by the voluntary and community sector.

The task group has also provided recommendations which can feed into the Brent response to the Quirk Review by setting out an approach to leasing and by highlighting the support which can be provided to the voluntary and community

sector through the voluntary sector resource centre project and other similar projects.

Finally the task group has highlighted the importance of further involvement of the voluntary and community sector in taking forward the strategic approach recommended in this report.

10. Background papers

Task group reports 1 to 3 provided to the committee as part of the task groups work this year

11. References

The task group referred to a number of reports in the course of its work. Key documents included:

Brent's Corporate Strategy (2006-2010) – Brent Council

Regeneration Strategy for Brent (2001-2021)

Brent's Regeneration Action Plan (2007-2009)

Brent's Overview and Scrutiny (2007), *Voluntary Sector Funding: A Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group*

Brent Council, Special Meeting of the Executive, Monday 18 August 2003, *LIST OF DECISIONS*

Councils for Voluntary Service (CVS) in London (2007) *Developing Voluntary Sector Resource Centres in London A report mapping the development of Voluntary Sector Resource Centres (VSRCs)*

Department of Communities and Local Government (2007), *Making Assets Work: the Quirk Review of community management and ownership of public assets*

Department of Communities and Local Government (2008), *Communities in Control: real people, real power*.

Department of Communities and Local Government (2008) *Building on strong foundations, A Framework for Local Authority Asset Management*

Development Trusts Association (2008), *Advancing Assets for Communities – Demonstrating Community Asset Transfer: Year One*

Department of Communities and Local Government (2008)*, 'Managing Risks in Asset Transfer – A Guide'*

Local Government Act (1972)

Landlord and Tenant Act (1954)

Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill (2009)

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2003), *Communities Plan Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future*.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2005), *Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter*.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and Improvement and Development Agency (2005/06), *Asset Management Beacon Theme Guide*

The West London Network (2008), *Towards a Premises Strategy for the Voluntary and Community Sector*

The Terrier (Spring 2008), *Model Lease for Community Centres: Basildon District Council*

Telephone and internet research was also conducted with a number of organisations including:

Basingstoke District Council
Basildon District Council
City of Westminster
Durham County Council
Hertfordshire Council (beacon winner 2006)
London Borough of Hillingdon
London Borough of Harrow
London Borough of Hounslow
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
London borough of Camden
Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea
Sheffield City Council

Appendix A: Extract from the Voluntary Sector Grants Funding Criteria

This criteria is included to show the focus on community outcomes in the main programme grant and highlight the learning which can be gained from this approach when considering the recommendation that community outcomes be linked to leases

London Borough of Brent Main Programme Grant 2009/12

EXTRACT FROM FUNDING CRITERIA DECEMBER 2008

'The Council has recently agreed that the first theme for its three year funding programme commencing on 1st April 2009 to 31 March 2012 will be **Children and Young People**. This is clearly linked to the Council's corporate priorities and aims to meet specific local needs.

Areas to be funded:
- housing support for young people (0-19yrs)
- accommodation support for young people leaving Local Authority Care
- providing support for safe and secure neighbourhoods
- dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour at neighbourhood level
- services that support young people affected by crime
- reduce re-offending through targeted intervention
- support young people affected by or involved in domestic violence
- sexual health awareness programmes to enable young people to make healthier life choices
- services that provide practical support for teenage parents in the borough
- drug prevention activities
- support for young people affected by substance misuse
- sports and/or Recreational Activities for young disabled people
- developing talent for 2012 Olympics
- support for young people seeking to remain in education, employment or training
- IT skills for parents linked to safe use of the internet for their children
- Focused parenting support

Voluntary Sector Team
December 2008'

Appendix B: The 'Community Portfolio' considered by task group (attached)

Please note the task group considered the strategic approach to community use of council owned assets and did not discuss the particulars of any present leasing arrangement.