Clay Farm Centre

Advisory Group

(Terms of Reference)
1. Introduction

1.1 The Clay Farm Centre (CFC) is part of the new developments on the Southern Fringe in Cambridge. This centre is a prestigious new building comprising of community facilities, library and café on two floors with medical centre on the second floor and residential properties above. The centre overlooks Hobsons Square. The centre serves the residents on the new developments as well as residents in the existing Trumpington Village and the wider area.

1.2 The Centre is a joint venture between the City and County Councils, which is managed via a Partnering Agreement. The community facility/library and café service will be managed on behalf of the partnership by the City Council, who employ the staff team and provide all services at the centre on behalf of both the authorities. The partnering agreement between the City and County Council’s includes a clause to part fund any operational revenue shortfall up to £200,000 (up to £120,000 by the City and up to £80,000 from the County on a 60/40 ratio).

1.3 Both Councils are keen to ensure that the centre reflects the needs of local people and involves the community in the development and direction of the centre programme. In order to achieve this, an Advisory Group was established. The Advisory Group provides advice and local knowledge in order to ensure that the centre is effective in understanding and meeting the needs and aspirations of the local community. There will be a maximum number of core members, comprising:

- 2 City Council elected representatives
- 1 County Council elected representative
- Up to 8 local people and/or representatives from local organisations, to reflect a cross section of the community in the catchment area of the centre. These members will be nominated by their own organisations or individuals can put themselves forward. The applications will be considered and confirmed by the elected representatives in consultation with the Centre Manager.
- The Centre Manager or their representative is an associate but not a core member of the group. His/her role is to advise and support meetings.
- The Group may from time to time invite people to attend meetings who are not core members.

1.4 The Medical Centre and Bedfordshire Pilgrims’ Housing Association (BPHA), as tenants of the building, will also be eligible to send representatives to the group. The Centre Manager will also meet with the Medical Centre and Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association separately to discuss any landlord/tenant issues and maintenance/building and cleaning issues.
1.5 As part of the Partnering Agreement between the City and County Councils, there will be quarterly review meetings. The Advisory Group can make recommendations via the Centre Manager, who will report these to the partnership review meetings.

1.6 The Centre Manager and/or the Advisory Group may also organise or consult with the public or user forums to hear the views of the wider community, which will feed into the Advisory Group.

2. The purpose of the Advisory Group

2.1 The Advisory Group will support and make recommendations to the Centre Manager and/or Partnership review meetings, on the following:

- advising on how the centre can best meet local needs and contribute to improving outcomes for individuals and the local community
- providing a view of the impact of the centre and the services it offers from their perspective through local intelligence and data
- providing advice, assistance and support to centre staff
- working with the Centre Manager to identify priorities through effective consultation
- considering and making recommendations on centre plans
- evaluating the quality, effectiveness and value for money of the services the Centre provides.
- supporting local partnership working, referring to other local services as appropriate
- advising on effective communication
- helping to match the Councils' priorities to local priorities and needs
- and perform the role of a critical friend

In doing so the Advisory Group will be aware of the business plan for the centre and the financial context the Centre is operating within.

2.2 Frequency of meetings

It is recommended that the Group meets quarterly. The Group may choose to meet more frequently, however the centre manager (or his/her representative) will commit to attending four times per year.

2.3 Attendance at meetings

It is recommended that the viable quorum for any group meeting is a minimum of 50% of the membership of the Group, plus 2 out of the 3 elected Councillor Representatives (this does not include sub groups or working groups). This is so
that any recommendations arising are representative of a majority of members. Anyone not attending or sending their apologies for more than 2 meetings shall be taken to have resigned from the Group.

2.4 Decisions of the Advisory Group
The Council does not establish advisory groups as distinct legal bodies. The Advisory Group has no actual powers. It does not have responsibility for any aspect of day to day operations or management of the centre.

2.5 Conflict resolution
If any dispute or differences arise between members about how the group operates the Group will collectively take all reasonable steps within the powers available to its members to resolve it. Where a matter cannot be resolved the next step would be for it to be raised with the Head of Community Services who shall liaise with his/her counterpart at the County Council to arrive at a resolution in discussion with the elected representatives on the Advisory Group.

Members are asked to recognise that partners bring different contributions and need to allow for differences of opinion, and try to agree a resolution that is in the best interests of the Centre.

2.6 Policy and procedures
There is a requirement for all Group members to adhere to the relevant City Council policies and procedures. An overview will be provided for all new members of the group.

2.7 Accountability
Individual Group members representing partner organisations remain accountable to those organisations. The Group does not have legal powers or duties. Where there may be a conflict of interest a Group member should declare this.

2.8 Membership review
As the Group has an advisory role only and no management role, there is not a requirement for an Annual General Meeting; it is proposed that the Group will be reviewed bi-annually in order to provide the opportunity to refresh membership. The review does not mean that Group members have to change every 2 years as members can continue in appointment if agreed by the elected representatives. Any individual vacancies on the advisory group will be advertised and anyone wishing to apply should complete the attached membership application form for consideration by the elected Cllr reps and the centre manager. All successful and unsuccessful applicants will be notified in writing. Anyone wishing to stand down from the Group needs to advise the Centre Manager in writing. Organisations represented on the group will be expected to nominate a new representative as they require.
3. Roles of the group

3.1 Chair

- It is proposed that the Group be chaired by one of the elected councillor representative members of the Advisory Group on an annual basis (and rotated annually amongst the 3 Councillors). The key role of the Chair is to ensure that advisory group meetings are run effectively, focusing on the agenda and priorities, making the best use of time available and ensuring that all members have an equal opportunity to participate in discussion and recommendations. There will also be a vice chair who will be an elected councillor from a different local authority to the Chair of the group. They will:

  • agree a protocol for meetings and ensure this is followed by all members
  • forward plan the agenda for advisory board meetings with the centre manager
  • have a casting vote if an issue arises on which the group is unable to reach a recommendation
  • establish and foster an effective working relationship with the Centre Manager to support the planning and delivery of the advisory group meetings and other projects as appropriate
  • support the manager with issues of conflict and complaint, using the centre’s policies and procedures
  • Encourage the rest of the advisory group to be pro-active in working with the Centre and to access training offered by the local authority or other bodies.

3.2 Local representatives will:

- represent the views of local people and communities

- provide a positive contribution to the development of the centre

- be the ‘voice’ of local people and ensure that the centre is firmly rooted in and accountable to the community served

3.3 Centre Manager role

The Centre Manager will:

- use the information and advice provided by the board to inform the way they lead, develop, implement and monitor the work of the centre

- present quarterly reports to the group and discuss these at group meetings.

- provide template documents and agenda items for board meetings

- identify other teams within the local authority that would be able to support the advisory group as and when required
• inform the group of the wider picture of the CFC service, within both a city and countywide perspective as appropriate.

• feedback views and recommendations to the Partnership review meetings

• take notes of actions from the Advisory Group meetings and circulate to all members of the group along with agendas for meetings.
Clay Farm Centre Advisory Board

Membership Application Form

We are looking for members of the community, and representatives from local groups and organisations to be part of an advisory group for the Clay Farm Centre.

I would like to be considered to be a member of Clay Farm Centre Advisory Group

Full name

Address

Organisation (if appropriate)

Telephone Number/s

E-mail address
Reason for applying

Skills, Knowledge and experience
Please tell us what skills, knowledge and experience you have that you can bring to the Advisory Board

Signature .......................................................... Date ..............

Please return to:
Alison Woods
Centre Manager