



Saxilby with Ingleby Parish Council

Non-confidential

St Andrews Community Centre Long-Term Formal Lease

Report to: Extra-Ordinary Full Council 24-12

Report by: Clerk

Power/duty which decision falls under:

LG (Misc. Prov.) Act 1976, s19 - Power to provide and equip premises

Which council objective(s) it falls under:

- Maintain and improve community facilities and amenities
- Retain and encourage employment and tourism opportunities
- Improve the well-being of residents
- To foster public participation and engagement

Public Sector Equality Duty (*Consider how policies/decisions affect those protected under the Equality Act*)

The community centre is accessible and would maintain current provision.

Consideration on carbon reduction:

This will be taken into account.

Consideration of risk management in relation to the proposal¹

It is impossible to list every risk faced by a local council. Risk, in the general sense, means the likelihood of an event happening, and the severity of the negative consequences. The insurance industry regards risk as representing loss or damage. Risk always involves uncertainty. When protecting a local council effectively, it is important to consider if risk is present in the following areas (SLCC AN241)[Tick]

- ✓Decision making
- ✓Finances
- ✓Property
- ✓Staff
- ✓Events
- ✓Legal
- ✓Inspections
- ✓Written/verbal communication
- ✓Insurance

If the community centre lease is agreed, it will have implications on all the above risks.

Does the report consider any new activity? If 'Yes', has a risk assessment including risk management proposals for consideration been included for consideration and adoption by the council? (*Financial Regulation 17b*)

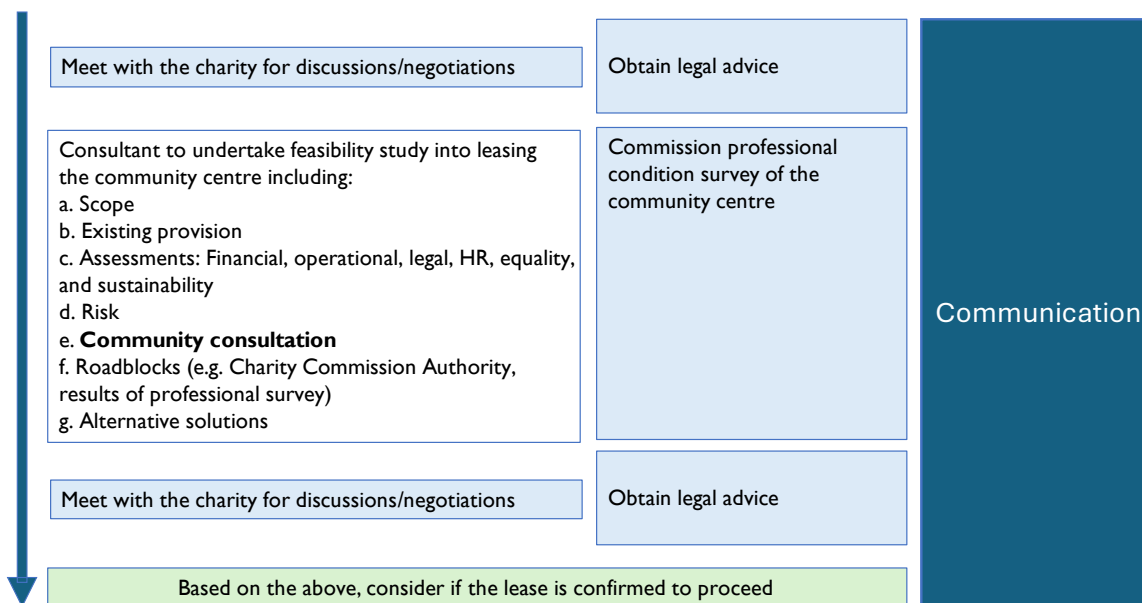
Yes - A formal lease for the building.

¹Risk areas to consider - strategic/operational, likelihood/impact, add to risk register? Any contingency planning needed?

REPORT

Background

At the [March 2024, extra-ordinary full council meeting](#) a process was agreed for council to consider whether to continue the progression of a lease for the St Andrews Community Centre, following receipt of the rental valuation of £18,850pa:



This included an:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Independent feasibility study | Complete. |
| 2. Community consultation | Complete. |
| 3. Condition survey | Complete. |
| 4. Alternative solutions | Complete. |
| 5. Legal advice and negotiations | On-going. |

Upon receipt of the feasibility study, further actions based on the report's recommendations, were agreed at the October 2024 Full Council meeting ([24-10 Ref FC24/218 19.](#)):

- | | |
|---|------------|
| 6. Confirmation of legal status | Completed. |
| 7. Roofing survey by independent professional surveyor | Completed. |
| 8. Structural survey by independent professional surveyor | Completed. |
| 9. Consideration in relation to the library | Completed. |
| 10. Consideration of parish office and costings | Noted. |

Summary of Reports

A summary of the key findings from the reports are shown below:

1. Feasibility study

- a. The feasibility study resulted in two options being recommended:
 - Option 1: Community centre formal lease and maintenance
 - Option 2: Custom-built facilities on the council's Mill Lane site.
- b. The financial and long-term solution proposed was to develop new offices at Mill Lane, to provide more sustainable, modern, and efficient facilities.
- c. However, the report noted the decision would ultimately be political, balancing financial prudence with community benefits, and that the council must consider community benefits and public opinion, before making a final decision.

2. Community consultation

- a. The results (681 valid responses) showed overwhelming support for the council to enter into a long-term lease agreement for the community centre, with 90% of respondents in support and 10% not in support².
- b. The consultation explored the potential impacts on individuals with protected characteristics under equalities legislation. Notable concerns were raised by 24% of respondents regarding the impact on age groups and 17% regarding disabilities, with many emphasising the importance of the community centre for mental and physical well-being – particularly for young people, families, and older residents.
- c. In conclusion, the survey significantly supports the council's pursuit of a lease for the community centre, with the majority of respondents viewing it as vital to community services and wellbeing.

3. Schedule of condition

- a. A photographic schedule of condition was undertaken out on Monday 15 April 2024 at 10.15am, with a 50-page report being supplied to the council.
- b. Alongside the schedule, three recommendations were made in the report:
 - i. Electrical installations should be tested and certified.
 - ii. Gas installations should be serviced.
 - iii. A full independent inspection of the roof should be carried out.

² With a confidence interval of +/-3.3%.

4. Alternative solutions

- a. Alternative solutions have been explored as part of the process. The provision is summarised below:
 - i. **Saxilby business park units**

These modern purpose-built business units are ready to move into and may have lower running costs. However, they are not currently safely accessible on foot or central in the community, therefore this alternative solution has not been short-listed, as the impact on residents and certain population segments within the community, would be too high and would reduce access to services.
 - ii. **Existing commercial provision**

The availability of commercial premises in the community is limited. Current provision would need to be renovated to bring them up to modern office standards and they would not be large enough to house the library or full council meetings. This would result in the loss of the library and may result in difficulty in booking a venue for council meetings due to limited availability elsewhere for evening bookings.
 - iii. **New build Mill Lane**

This preferred alternative option has been cost modelled and providing a purpose-built office would be cost effective and is in a central accessible village location. Extending the build to provide further civic and community facilities, such as space for a library and full council meetings may not be cost effective or achievable for the council.

5. Legal advice and negotiations

- a. Ongoing.

6. Confirmation of legal status

- a. Saxilby Public Recreation Ground Charity owns the community centre. However, the title of the property is registered with Land Registry in the name of Saxilby with Ingleby Parish Council as custodian trustee.

7. & 8. Roofing and structural survey

- a. The structural and roofing survey is summarised below:
 - i. The building is assessed as being well constructed, in average condition, with no evidence of any structural cracking or movement detected to any of the ground or upper floor external elevations during the inspection.
 - ii. The dual-pitched concrete-tiled roof is generally in good condition, but requires repairs and has a limited life span.
 - iii. The roof surface of the building will likely require resurfacing in full within the next 10-15 years. **Projected costs more than £130,000.**
 - iv. The right-hand fire escape structure (function room) shows rust and degradation. Whilst the staircase is repairable, it is recommended that specialist contractors are appointed to assess for repair and if not reasonable, then replacement of the

structure will be necessary. It should be considered for replacement to ensure it is safe for future use and a low liability risk.

- v. The roof over the left-hand fire escape is severely degraded, posing a safety risk and needs replacing. The surface covering and decking material should be replaced.
- vi. Textured ceilings potentially contain asbestos; testing and an asbestos register are recommended [Present.].
- vii. **The report recommends budgeting £170,000 to cover defect repairs, including roofing, fire escapes, and other essential works.**

9. The library hub

- a. Library authorities, in this case Lincolnshire County Council has a duty³ to provide a comprehensive and efficient library service for all people who live, work, or study in their area.
- b. In Saxilby, the parish council currently supports the provision of the library hub, through an annual agreement with the county council. This provision is a council power (“can provide”) rather than a duty (“must provide”).
- c. However, removing or reducing library provision would disproportionately affect older people and people with disabilities. Therefore, it is foreseeable that a similar level of provision would need to be identified to ensure a continued level of service (in-line with the public sector duty) is provided if the council did not enter into a lease. This would not be achieved by mobile provision.

Feedback from Lincolnshire County Council

- d. There are no known alternative locations within Saxilby for the hub to relocate.
- e. Relocating the hub is theoretically possible, though it would come with challenges, including potentially smaller space, fewer resources, and reduced capacity for events or activities. The new location may also have different operating hours and could be less accessible for some users.
- f. The mobile library is not a suitable replacement for the hub’s services. There is no digital access or the full range of services that are currently available at the hub, such as computers and social spaces. The mobile library would be a backup option, but not a mitigation for closing the hub, and its service is infrequent.
- g. There is no evidence to suggest there is a lack of use of the hub. The closure of the hub would impact users, as it provides essential social interaction and a safe space, which the mobile service cannot replicate.
- h. If another organisation is interested in taking over the hub, the county council would be open to discussions.

³ The Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

10. Parish office and costings

- a. The feasibility study identified the need for additional space for the parish offices, to accommodate existing staff and any future growth.
- b. Whether at a new site or within the existing building this need could be met through re-configuration or as part of the criteria for agreeing an alternative site.
- c. As such, this aspect is not central to the lease decision and will be considered further at a later stage.

Discussion and Recommendations

- a. The council's objectives of: fostering public participation and engagement; maintaining and improving community facilities and amenities; retaining and encouraging employment and tourism opportunities; and improving the well-being of residents all apply to this decision.
- b. Considering entering into a long-term formal lease agreement represents a significant financial commitment for the council and its residents, with revenue and capital expenditure being projected to exceed £1.75M for the duration of a contract.
- c. As such, it has been important to undertake a planned and diligent process of evidence gathering, (with the steps being agreed in March 2024) in order to furnish the council with sufficient information to make an informed decision. This report signifies the culmination of that process.
- d. The community consultation provided a clear preference for the council to lease the community centre. This should bear significant weight in informing the decision-making process; as local councils exist to serve their communities and meet local need (within the parameters of what they are permitted to do under law).
- e. It is important to note the provision of a community centre is only one element of the services and facilities the council provides to serve the whole community, and it requires a significant input of financial and human resourcing. As such the council needs to monitor and ensure progress in other projects, services, and facilities, so other areas of the parish are not detrimentally affected by this provision.
- f. As an active council, with residents calling for the provision of services and facilities, this means the council's precept is high within the district and is likely to remain the case. The costs involved with leasing or not leasing the community centre will be a challenge for the authority to meet and will ultimately impact on the level of resident's council tax in the parish over a long-term period.

Recommendation

Based on the evidence supplied in the above referenced reports it is recommended that:

- I. The council enters into a formal long-term lease agreement for the St Andrews Community Centre, subject to successful negotiations with Saxilby Recreation Ground Charity.**