**Background Paper – Needs Assessment – Community facilities
(including libraries, community centres, youth centres, arts and culture)**

Last updated: 16 July 2013

SUMMARY OF NEEDS:

- Improvements/rebuild Whitton Library
- Co-locating community libraries with other public services, with a particular focus on the co-location of Kew Library and Ham Library
- Integrated library in Richmond (bringing together Richmond Lending Library and the library services at the Old Town Hall)
- Encourage provision of flexible, multi-purpose centres where there can be co-location and dual use of similar facilities and activities for community use.
- Dedicated youth facility in Whitton and Heathfield, possibly within a multi-use community facility.
- Ham and Petersham Youth Centre – ideally re-provision of the facility within this locality or further modernisation/upgrading.
- Heatham House Youth Centre – investment in terms of DDA compliance subject to financial viability and conservation restrictions. Further investment improving the existing facilities or re-provision of the facility within this locality.
- Hampton Youth Project – internal modernisation of the facility including extension of the facility through building a mezzanine floor.

1.   Policy Background

1.1   National

Key policies guidance within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), relevant to community facilities are:

- One of the core planning principles is to take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs (para 17).

- In drawing up Local Plans, LPAs should allocate a range of suitable sites to meet the scale and type of retail, leisure, commercial, office, tourism, cultural, community and residential development needed in town centres (para 23).

- To deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs, planning policies and decisions should amongst other things plan positively for the provision and use of shared space, community facilities (such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship) and other local services to enhance the sustainability of communities and residential environments; and guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet its day-to-day needs (para 70).

- Local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for the area in the Local Plan. This should include amongst other things strategic policies to deliver the provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities (para 156).

1.2   Regional

London Plan:

- Policy 3.1 Ensuring equal life chances for all: Development proposals should protect and enhance facilities and services that meet the needs of particular groups and communities. Proposals involving loss of these facilities without adequate justification or provision for replacement should be resisted.

- Policy 3.16 Protection and enhancement of social infrastructure: Development proposals which provide high quality social infrastructure will be supported in light of local and strategic needs assessments.

- Policy 3.18 Education facilities: This policy encourages development proposals to maximise the extended or multiple use of educational facilities for community or recreational use.

- Policy 4.6 Support for and enhancement of arts, culture, sport and entertainment provision: The Mayor will, and boroughs and other stakeholders should, support the continued success of London's diverse range of arts, cultural, professional sporting and entertainment enterprises and the cultural, social and economic benefits that they offer to its residents, workers and visitors. In addition, in preparing LDFs, boroughs should designate and develop cultural quarters to accommodate new arts, cultural and leisure activities, enabling them to contribute more effectively to regeneration.

- Policy 7.1 Building London's neighbourhoods and communities: In their neighbourhoods, people should have a good quality environment in an active and supportive local community with the best possible access to services, infrastructure and public transport to wider London. Their neighbourhoods should also provide a character that is easy to understand and relate to. In addition, this policy states that development should be designed so that the layout, tenure, and mix of uses interface with surrounding land and improve people's access to social and community infrastructure (including green spaces).

1.3   Local Policy

Core Strategy:

- CP13 Opportunities for All (Tackling Relative Disadvantage) – The Council will work with all relevant agencies to reduce disadvantage, particularly in the most deprived areas of the Borough and for disadvantaged individuals, and ensure that a range of opportunities are provided that can be accessed by all residents.

- CP16 Local Services/Infrastructure – this policy sets out the overall strategic approach for the provision of services and facilities for the community. Where opportunities arise, co-location of council, health, library and school facilities is encouraged. The loss of community facilities will be resisted unless it can be shown that the facilities are no longer needed or that the service could be adequately re-provided in a different way or elsewhere.

Development Management Plan:

- Policy DM SI 1 Encouraging New Social Infrastructure Provision – This policy supports new or extensions to existing social infrastructure where:

1. it provides for an identified need;
2. where practicable is provided in multi-use, flexible and adaptable buildings or co-located with other social infrastructure uses which encourage dual use and increase public access;
3. it is in a location that is accessible by public transport, walking and cycling;
4. is of high quality design providing inclusive access for all;
5. it does not have a significant adverse impact on residential character and amenity;
6. provision of car parking and effect on traffic movement and highway safety is in
7. accordance with Policy DM TP 8, and
8. is in accordance with other relevant policies.

- Policy DM SI 2 Loss of Existing Social Infrastructure Provision: This policy resists the loss of social infrastructure unless it can be shown that the facilities are no longer needed or that the service could be adequately re-provided in a different way or elsewhere in a convenient alternative location.

Corporate Plan:

One of the themes in the Corporate Plan is 'Place', which identifies 'Supporting local business, reviving local high street and arts' as one of the main service priority areas. Within this there is a commitment to keep Borough libraries open, promote exhibitions and sustain the Borough's excellence in the arts, theatre and music.

Supplementary Planning Guidance/Documents, including site briefs

All adopted SPGs and SPDs will be applied with respect to any development proposal coming forward in the Site Allocations Plan. There are no specific SPGs/SPDs that deal with community facilities; however, some requirements in this regard are included in SPD offering design guidance, Conservation Area Studies and in relevant site briefs.

Details of all adopted SPGs/SPDs can be found on the Council's webpage: http://www.richmond.gov.uk/supplementary_planning_documents_and_guidance.htm

2.   Research and Evidence

Libraries

Richmond upon Thames has libraries on overall twelve library sites. The Council's Library Strategy 2011-2014 'Connecting Communities' (http://www.richmond.gov.uk/2125_library_strategyweb.pdf) recognises the value and importance of the library service. Its vision is for libraries to be the focal points of communities, promoting reading and supporting learning. At the core of the strategy is a commitment to retaining all twelve public libraries in all existing communities in the borough and to enhancing their role as community facilities.

By 2014, the strategy aims to have delivered:

- significant building improvements to Whitton Library to improve access and the internal layout, having explored options to co-locate other public services in the re-designed library building;

- significant progress in co-locating community libraries with other public services in order to improve their locations and opening hours with a particular focus on the co-location of Kew Library and Ham Library; and
- developed plans for an integrated library in Richmond, bringing together Richmond Lending Library and the library services at the Old Town Hall into a modern all-purpose library building in the heart of the town.

The strategy also sets out to have franchised community library buildings to voluntary sector or community groups to manage. This would involve local communities and the library service working together to extend opening hours and enhance the range of public and community services operated from the library building in line with local needs and requirements.

Community Centres

There are a wide range of different types of community centres across the borough, from which are run many different activities and spaces available to hire. These centres include:

- Old Sorting Office, Barnes – community arts centre run by a charitable trust
- Landmark Arts Centre, Teddington – community arts centre run by an independent charity
- Greenwood Centre in Hampton Hill - home of the Hampton & Hampton Hill Voluntary Care Group, an independent registered local charity
- White House Community Centre, Hampton – run by a registered charity
- Cambrian Community Centre, Richmond – run by a registered charity
- Crane Community Centre in Twickenham
- Etna Community Centre in Twickenham
- Castelnau Community Centre – base for Castelnau Centre Project charity

Similar provision may also be available from some of the arts and culture facilities in the borough (see below on Arts and Culture) and a number of religious groups. Some provide activities for specialist groups such as older people and young people (see below on Youth Centres).

There is a general move to encourage provision through flexible, multi-purpose centres where there can be co-location and dual use of similar facilities and activities for community use.

Youth Centres

Youth Service in Richmond upon Thames provides a diverse range of youth programmes, positive activities and youth support for young people age 13-19 (and up to 24 years old with learning disabilities and difficulties) from these main locations:

- Castelnau Community Project – commissioned youth programmes via Castelnau Community Group as a provider, Barnes
- Ham and Petersham Youth Centre, Ham
- Duke of Edinburgh's Award, Ham and Petersham Youth Centre, Ham
- Hampton Youth Project, Hampton
- Heatham House Youth Centre, Twickenham
- Powerstation, Mortlake

In addition to the above youth facilities, the following youth services are also provided:

- Youth Cafe Bus – mobile provision outreaching across various locations within the Borough subject to needs
- Outreach and detached work in Whitton and Heathfield with plans to develop a designated youth facility within this area

A variety of specific youth support services and projects delivered in house by the Youth Service and other partners are hosted within the above designated youth facilities such as:

- KISS (sexual health service)
- Education Other then in Schools (including delivery of personalised tutoring and PSHE group work)
- Treatment room for delivery of substance misuse treatment and needle exchange services
- Community/Youth cafes in Heatham House and Hampton
- Crofters provision for disabled young people from Heatham House and Powerstation
- Off the Record in Twickenham

Youth facilities are well used by the local community and other partners from voluntary sector to deliver services to young people and local community. Capital investment is needed to improve some of the existing facilities including:

- Ham and Petersham Youth Centre - ideally re-provision of the facility within this locality or further modernisation
- Heatham House Youth Centre – investment in terms of DDA compliance subject to financial viability and conservation restrictions. Further investment improving the existing facilities or re-provision of the facility within this locality
- Hampton Youth Project – internal modernisation of the facility including extension of the facility through building a mezzanine floor

As there is no dedicated youth facility within Whitton and Heathfield, a designated facility is currently being sought within this area, ideally with a sole use by the Youth Service or designed well within a multi-use of a community facility. A number of options are currently being explored.

Arts and Culture

The Cultural Partnership Plan 2009-2013 (www.richmond.gov.uk/cultural_partnership.htm) sets out the vision for a borough where cultural activity encourages participation, brings enjoyment, sparks creativity, contributes to health and wellbeing, transforms public spaces, attracts visitors, stimulates the local economy and brings communities together.

There are a number of galleries, museums, theatres, arts venues and cinemas across the borough which provide for cultural activity. These include:
- Galleries: Orleans House Gallery and the Stables Gallery, Twickenham and the Riverside Gallery, Richmond
- Museums: Twickenham Museum, Museum of Richmond, and Twickenham World Rugby Museum
- Theatres: Richmond Theatre, Orange Tree Theatre, Mary Wallace Theatre, Twickenham, Hampton Hill Playhouse and Normansfield Theatre, Teddington
- Community Arts Centres: Old Sorting Office, Barnes and the Landmark Arts Centre, Teddington
- Cinemas: Odeon and Curzon in Richmond

The Cultural Partnership Plan highlights that funding of culture was seen as a major issue to be addressed particularly in the current economic downturn. The need to increase the number of volunteers in the sector was also identified, as was the need to empower and train local people to deliver cultural opportunities within their own communities.

3.   Consultation

Over the past years, the Council has carried out a number of consultations in relation to libraries and youth facilities, examples of which are set out below:

- Ham Youth Centre Multi Use Games Area:
  http://www.richmond.gov.uk/consultation_details.htm?id=C00986
- Future Youth Provision in Twickenham:
  Consultation 1: http://www.richmond.gov.uk/consultation_details.htm?id=C00932
  Consultation 2: http://www.richmond.gov.uk/consultation_details.htm?id=C00988
- Library Service Review 2010: The Council carried out a consultation (online survey) on a range of options to transform the public library service and make the budget savings required. This consultation fed into the Library Strategy 'Connecting Communities' 2011-2014: http://www.richmond.gov.uk/2125_library_strategyweb.pdf
- Ham Library Improvements consultation:
  http://www.richmond.gov.uk/consultation_details.htm?id=C01297
- Building Improvements to Whitton Library:
  http://www.richmond.gov.uk/consultation_details.htm?id=C00709
- Hampton Hill Library consultation:
  http://www.richmond.gov.uk/consultation_details.htm?id=C00517

In addition, the Council's All in One survey (http://www.richmond.gov.uk/all_in_one) has asked every resident in the borough about their priorities for the local area. Libraries figured quite prominently and positively in the results. The Library Service also carries out annual surveys (CIPFA) of library users and is setting up three Focus Groups as part of its commitment to consultation.