



Growing the Heart in our Community

Slains Community Enterprise Project

Options Appraisal - Needs



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INTRODUCTION

This Options Appraisal outlines the evidence of needs for the project and then describes the alternative ways that have been considered for meeting these needs.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Our project has arisen because of the need for:

- Increased sustainable community space – our existing hall is too small to meet our current needs, and it cannot be used by more than one group at a time. As a result, play group often operates on a “first come - first served” basis and several social events are held outside the community.
- Improved community care both locally and in NE Scotland – there is a national and local shortage in the provision of respite and short break services. We also need better facilities to care for all our community, including play group, a space for young people to socialise, and access to a drop-in centre for people of all ages, especially the elderly and isolated. With the exception of play group, none of these facilities are currently catered for in the existing hall.
- Improved and more inclusive access to services - the new community centre will form a vital hub in the provision of access to local services. By tying it in with a community transport scheme we can significantly improve access to services for the more disadvantaged members of our

community. The existing hall does not have the functionality, flexibility or space to host these services.

- Performing and visual arts space in the Formartine area – the new centre will provide a much-needed venue for the visual and performing arts, enabling wider participation through the provision of exhibition space, performance space and opportunities for Life Long Learning in the arts. Currently, there is no recognised venue for the visual and performing arts in the Formartine area.
- Managing our community resources in an environmentally and socially responsible way – the new centre is designed to be economically and environmentally sustainable. Now that we own The Rivie*, we also have a great new natural resource to manage that will complement the new facilities and enhance both our unique environment and our access to it.

Evidence of Needs

Evidence of the above needs has been collated from a variety of sources and methods, including: direct observation, user group meetings, questionnaires, an exhibition, postal ballots, public meetings, workshops and informal coffee mornings ('Cuppa with CASCT'). More specifically, the evidence for each need is summarised as follows:

Increased sustainable community space

- A maximum of 60 people can legally attend functions in the current hall. As a result, many community events are now held outside the village (e.g. Burns Supper Night) or in a marquee (during gala). The hall can accommodate up to 18 children at play group, but the roll exceeds this number, such that mothers and children have been turned away when play group

* The prominent headland bordering the site of the existing hall and former schoolhouse

is full. [Supporting Documents SD.18a](#) is a letter of support from Collieston and District Under 5s Group and [Supporting Documents SD.18b](#) is an extract from OSCR detailing increasing income for the charity commensurate with an increasing roll.



'Arctic' Yoga – members of the yoga group try to keep warm during relaxation



Play Group roll exceeds the capacity of the existing hall, and mothers and children have been turned away by this sign

- There is no convenient place or space for young people to meet and socialise regularly.
- There is no drop-in centre for the elderly and more isolated members of our community.
- The limited size of the hall precludes it being used for more than one purpose at a time. When play group is in session or the Post Office Outreach Service in operation, no one else can use the hall.

Improved community care both locally and in North East Scotland

- Discussions with Aberdeenshire Council Care Managers have provided anecdotal evidence that there is a shortage in the provision of respite services in the area. Discussions and correspondence ([Supporting Documents SD.19](#)) with the Council's Strategic Development Manager in the Community Care department have confirmed that research is being conducted to map current resources against predicted demand across all care groups. This will allow the Council to take a strategic approach to the development of new resources

required to address identified gaps. The Council is not prepared to make any commitments at this stage, but have indicated that should its research identify a need for the type of service we intend to provide, it would be keen to enter into discussions with CASCT at that time. Discussions with officials in Aberdeen City Council Health and Social Care have confirmed a gap in the provision of respite accommodation and services ([Supporting Documents SD.20](#)). The Council has recognised a number of possible options for using our facilities should they come to fruition.

We believe that the respite facilities we aim to provide would offer significant advantages over those available elsewhere. These include a unique coastal location, access to a drop-in centre on the same site, proximity to the SNH Forvie National Nature Reserve (with its wheel chair accessible paths), and most importantly, the fact that our community would welcome and embrace those being cared for.

- Discussions with the Care Commission have indicated that there are no impediments for our new facilities being used for the provision of respite accommodation and services ([Supporting Documents SD.21](#)).
- The Grampian Autistic Society has stated that it sees potential in using our new facilities. In addition, it is looking to expand its provision of respite services and our project may be a viable option for delivery ([Supporting Documents SD.22](#)).
- Aberdeenshire Community Health Partnership has also indicated support for the project ([Supporting Documents SD.15](#)).
- There is no drop-in facility for the elderly or those stranded by lack of transport. Now that our village shop has closed there is no focus for social interaction during the day.

Improved and more inclusive access to services

Accessing local services in Ellon or Newburgh is extremely difficult for those without independent transport.

- Public transport to the village is extremely restricted ([Supporting Documents SD.23](#)). There are only two limited bus services to the village. The No. 264 service, operated by Stagecoach Bluebird, which runs once a day on Thursdays and Fridays between Collieston and Ellon, only allows a one and a half hour visit in Ellon. The No. 495 service, operated by Aberdeenshire Local, runs twice a day on Tuesdays and Saturdays, between Collieston and Ellon, but only allows one return trip a day with an hour and fourteen minute stay in Ellon. The No. 263 service between Aberdeen and Peterhead, also operated by Stagecoach Bluebird, runs regularly Monday to Saturday from the road end some 2 miles from the village.
- The cost of a taxi from Collieston to Ellon is £15 one way. As such, it is prohibitively expensive for almost everyone.

The success of Collieston's Coastal Café project indicates a local demand for at least a seasonal café facility. The Coastal Café operated over five weeks of a seven-week summer holiday period in 2006 and 2007. It was set up by a group of young people, called the CATs – Collieston Action for Teens – with the support of a Senior Community Learning and Development Worker from Aberdeenshire Council. The café was open for 2 hours per day, Thursday through Sunday. It was supported by locals and visitors alike. In 2008, CATs were nominated for the Aberdeenshire Community Safety Award for their contribution to improving their community. The group were awarded first prize with a trophy and £300. CATs were able to buy recreational equipment with the profits and prize money. One of the significant outcomes of running the Coastal Café was the 'feel good' factor it provided in the community. Older residents in particular reported their appreciation of having somewhere to go to meet people. The

young people who took part gained practical skills and experience of working in a team.

Performing and visual arts space in the Formartine area

- There are few recognised spaces for the performing and visual arts in the Formartine area. There is no facility on the coast between Aberdeen and Peterhead nor in the nearest town, Ellon. Aberdeenshire Council have acknowledged that this gap in provision would be met by our proposal, especially in regard to providing a site for visual arts exhibitions and small performing arts presentations, accommodation for artists' residences and Life Long Learning ([Supporting Documents SD.24](#)). The success of the Village Sunsets music evenings held in the existing village hall and the Dolphin Gallery held during Gala weekend indicates a demand for another facility in the area.

Managing community resources in an environmentally and socially responsible way

- The privilege of living in such a unique location brings with it a responsibility to manage our resources in the most environmentally and socially responsible way. Our new facilities are designed to be as energy efficient as possible. We believe that good passive design combined with limited implementation of renewable technologies provides the most appropriate solution for our community at this time.

We intend fitting solar panels for heating water, and a wet underfloor heating system that will initially be connected to a conventional oil-fired boiler. At some point in the future, when technologies become less expensive and more reliable, we may consider connecting the wet underfloor system to ground or air source heat pumps powered by wind turbines.

- Ownership of The Rivie brings with it a responsibility to manage it in such a way as to create a valuable natural heritage amenity that will complement our new facilities. We aim to work with Scottish Natural Heritage to develop interpretation material for The Rivie and the beach at Collieston. This would complement the interpretation material on the reserve that is available at the Stevenson Centre. We also intend to co-operate to our mutual advantage in providing visitors (individual and business) with a more rewarding visitor experience ([Supporting Documents SD.25](#)).
- Consultation with our community has demonstrated that growth of the social enterprise must be carefully managed so as not to adversely impact the community. By adhering to our operating principles (CASCT Business Plan, Section 2.4) and working with our Community Council, we will ensure this is the case.

Options to Meet the Needs

A number of alternative ways of meeting the needs have been examined as part of our project.

Options to increase sustainable community space

- Identify facilities outside the community
This option does not meet the project aim of growing the heart of the community. In addition, using facilities elsewhere is likely to precipitate the closure of the existing facility.
- Increased use of community owned marquee
The use of a marquee is restricted to the summer months when the weather is better. The only moderately level site on which to pitch the marquee is not available year round (as it is used for grazing). There are significant logistical and health and safety issues with using a marquee.
- Purchase or hire of portacabins

Hire and heating of temporary accommodation is expensive, especially if required for 150 people. Consequently, it is not considered to be a short, let alone, long term sustainable, or environmentally friendly option.

- **Preferred Options:** Either extend and refurbish the existing hall or build a new community centre

Both these options are capable of meeting the need for a sustainable community space. They are examined in detail in the separate '[Options Appraisal – Capital](#)' document.

Options to improve community care

- Rely on members of the community to visit the elderly

This option does not allow for social interaction between the elderly or between them and other age groups. It also relies on volunteers to visit, which is not generally possible during the day, as the majority would be at work or at school.

- Encourage young people to join youth groups outside the village

This option relies on adults to provide transport and does not necessarily provide all of the young with a convenient meeting place nor meet the aim of growing the heart within our community.

- Consider small-scale refurbishment of the existing hall

This option does not provide the increased space required by play group and other user groups (e.g. yoga). In addition, there would be no space to generate the income required for the hall to be sustainable. Without sustainability, raising funds for any refurbishment would be difficult, if not, impossible.

- **Preferred Option:** Build a new multi-use community centre that will provide play group with a larger space and improved facilities, a welcoming drop-in centre for all ages, especially the elderly, and a convenient location for young people to congregate and socialise. This option has the greatest chance

of reducing social isolation and encouraging participation in community activities.

Options to improve and provide more inclusive access to services

- **Local – deliver outreach services in the village**
Outreach services achieve the aim but where do you locate the service? The current hall is not multi-use, has no storage space for any equipment that may need to be left in location, and is only available at certain times. The only other option is home visits, which would offer a good individual service but would not aid community cohesion.
- **Local – provide transport out of village**
Some services cannot be delivered as outreach services. Transport connections to Ellon, the nearest access point to most services, is poor. Transport schemes to aid movement to services for those without their own transport would meet part of the need.
- **Wider Area – How can our community help and contribute to the wider community of Aberdeenshire?**
The Local Authority and Community Health Partnership both recognise the need to improve local access to services, and to work in partnership with communities. Currently, the local community aids the wider community through provision of a play group, which is limited in numbers due to shortage of space. The community also maintains the landscape around the village and the harbour. The village and harbour serve as a leisure and heritage facility for the wider community of Aberdeenshire. A sustainable community enterprise would offer a better means of sustaining and expanding these facilities to the benefit of visitors and residents alike.
- **Preferred Option:** Provision of a new facility for service provision within community.
A new community centre would provide the space for outreach services to take place whilst other activities were ongoing.

Space to provide services to the wider community of Aberdeenshire, creates potential for generating income to sustain the resource.

Options to provide performing and visual arts space in the Formartine area

- Local Authority provision

There are few recognised spaces in the Formartine area and the Local Authority has no statutory obligation to provide such a facility.

- Travel to Aberdeen

Aberdeen has a number of arts facilities but travel to Aberdeen does not contribute to our aim of growing the heart in the community. It also deprives our sustainable community enterprise of a possible income stream.

- **Preferred Option:** Community provision in a new purpose built facility.

Collieston is a picturesque village, already visited by a large number of local artists. Temporary arts exhibitions and small performances in the existing hall have demonstrated the viability of running an arts facility in the community, and its potential to generate income. A new purpose-built facility will help meet demand for performing and visual arts space in the area whilst generating income for the project.

Options to manage our community resources in an environmentally and socially responsible way

- Is constructing a new community centre environmentally friendly?

This is difficult to argue. A new building would be more energy efficient than the current building. Having no community resource would require people to travel to and from the parish more frequently. A new centre may encourage more visitors to the village. At best, the option is environmentally neutral.

- Request that Aberdeenshire Council or Slains Estate directly manage community resources.

In the current financial climate, Aberdeenshire Council is most unlikely to take on new maintenance liabilities. It is under no statutory obligation to do so. Slains Estate has a poor record of contributing to the maintenance of land it owns around the village. Traditionally the Estate has left the land it owns to be maintained by the community.

- **Preferred Option:** Community takes ownership of own resources.

Residents must live with their local environment. They will take better care of property they own than of property the Council or Estate own.

Summary

Over the years, the community has come to realise that the best way of meeting the identified needs is to build a new community centre with improved facilities. An energy efficient, flexible and multi-use centre will generate sufficient income to be financially sustainable and will facilitate growing the heart in our community.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

SD.15 – Letter of Support, Manager, Aberdeenshire Community Health Partnership

SD.18 – Letter of Support from Collieston and District Unders 5s Group

SD.19 – Letter of Support, Strategic Development Manager, Community Care, Aberdeenshire Council

SD.20 – Letter of Support, Head of Service – Commissioning, Health and Social Wellbeing, Aberdeen City Council

SD.21 – Letter of Support, Regional Manager North, Care Commission

SD.22 – Letter of Support, Manager, Grampian Autistic Society

SD.23 – Evidence of Poor Transport Links

SD.24 – Letter of Support, Arts Director, Aberdeenshire Council

SD.25 – Letter of Support, Scottish National Heritage and Visitor Survey