

REPORT TO CABINET

Open/Exempt		Would any decisions proposed :			
Any especially affected Wards	Mandatory/	Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide		YES/NO	
	Discretionary /	Need to be recommendations to Council		YES/NO	
	Operational	Is it a Key Decision		YES/NO	
Lead Member: Cllr Simon Ring E-mail: cllr.simon.ring@west-norfolk.gov.uk		Other Cabinet Members consulted: Cllr Rust			
		Other Members consulted: Cllr Kemp, Cllr Joyce, KLAC			
Lead Officer: Jemma Curtis E-mail: jemma.curtis@west-norfolk.gov.uk		Other Officers consulted: Chief Executive Officer, Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer, Assistant Director for Housing, Regeneration & Place, Assistant Director for Leisure & Culture, Assistant Director for Property, Assistant Director for Health, Wellbeing & Public Protection, HRBP			
Financial Implications YES/NO	Policy/ Personnel Implications YES/NO	Statutory Implications YES/NO	Equality Impact Assessment YES/NO If YES: Pre-screening/ Full Assessment	Risk Management Implications YES/NO	Environmental Considerations YES/NO

Date of meeting: 23 April 2026

SOUTH LYNN COMMUNITY CENTRE

Summary

The Purfleet Trust has successfully created the Purfleet Pantry and has been operating from a site at Southgates through a meanwhile lease, as the site is scheduled for future development. The site is in a deteriorating condition, and an alternative site is required.

Alive has been operating the South Lynn Community Centre on a "hall for hire" basis however usage levels have fluctuated with a limited community use.

This report sets out moving the Purfleet Trust to the South Lynn Community Centre and highlights the social value and community wellbeing advantages in doing so.

Recommendation

Cabinet Resolves:

To approve that the Purfleet Trust be provided with a lease for the South Lynn Community Centre.

Reason for Decision

Leasing the South Lynn Community Centre to the Purfleet Trust will secure the use of the building for community benefit, and by doing so will support a trusted local organisation in delivering vital services and enabling this to expand.

The proposal aligns with the Council's strategic priorities in relation to the regeneration of the Southgates area and in supporting vulnerable residents, strengthening local partnerships and ensuring efficient use of public assets which align with the Pride in Place programme and the Marmot principles.

1 Background

South Lynn Community Centre

- 1.1 The South Lynn Community Centre (SLCC) was acquired through the Borough Council in 2009 as part of the wider Nar Ouse Regeneration Area (NORA) programme to provide an enhanced replacement community centre for the growing community. External funding was secured through the Homes and Communities Agency to acquire and refurbish the former primary school to provide a range of flexible community rooms, hall, meeting rooms, offices and green space including a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA).
- 1.2 The intention at that time was for a charitable trust to take on the management of the SLCC to embed the local community in the delivery of community activities and programming in the spirit of the wider NORA programme. However, there was insufficient traction with community representatives to enable this to come to fruition.
- 1.3 As a result, since 2012 the SLCC has been operating through Alive West Norfolk on a 'hall for hire' model, booked for community activities, meetings, and local events. In recent years, usage levels have fluctuated, with limited community use and the Council has explored options for improving the sustainability of the building.

The Purfleet Trust (Purfleet Pantry)

- 1.4 The Purfleet Trust (the Trust) is a well-established local charity supporting people experiencing homelessness and social vulnerability, committed to improving the wellbeing, resilience, and long-term stability of vulnerable individuals across West Norfolk. The Trust has a strong track record of managing community focused facilities and delivering high impact social value.
- 1.5 As part of its wider mission, the charity operates the Purfleet Pantry, a successful social supermarket that supports more than 600 active members. The Pantry plays a vital role in the local community by providing affordable food and essential goods, sitting uniquely between a traditional food bank and a low-cost retail model. It enables individuals and families to stretch their budgets further, reduce food insecurity, and build confidence in managing household resources.

- 1.6 The Pantry operates from a council owned building at Southgates under a meanwhile use as the area is scheduled for redevelopment. The pantry has been successful, however the building is deteriorating and becoming increasingly problematic, making relocation essential to ensure continuity of service. This coupled with the underusage of the SLCC provides the Council and the Trust with an opportunity. Due to the deteriorating condition of premises at the Southgates, a number of alternative sites has been explored with the Trust, with the SLCC being identified as preferred location in order for them to expand their service provision.
- 1.7 The Trust's plans include:
1. Delivering wellbeing, training and support programmes
 2. Providing community outreach and engagement activities
 3. Delivering their "house to home" service
 4. Hosting partner organisations offering complementary service
 5. Maintaining availability and access for community groups

Relocation of Purfleet Pantry to South Lynn Community Centre

- 1.8 Relocating the Pantry to the SLCC presents a significant opportunity to safeguard this valuable provision but also will enable it to be expanded and enhanced in with its own priorities, mirroring the community principles of the Pride in Place programme. The new premises will also enable the Trust to strengthen the existing social supermarket offer while introducing a wider range of community focussed activities. The homeless support services will not move to SLCC, this will continue to be delivered by the Trust at Austin Fields.
- 1.9 The relocation also enables the charity to operate more efficiently enabling them to expand the development of cookery classes, budget friendly shopping workshops, and other practical skills programmes designed to help residents make healthier, more sustainable choices.
- 1.10 The increased space and improved facilities at SLCC also create the potential to establish a community café, offering a welcoming social hub that promotes inclusion, reduces isolation and encourages community cohesion. The Trust will secure the long-term future of the Purfleet Pantry, broaden its impact, and maximise the value of a council owned asset for the benefit of the wider community.
- 1.11 In relation to the Councils ambitions for the regeneration of the Southgates area, the move will now enable this to be reviewed and next steps for this important site progressed forwards.

Lease arrangements

- 1.12 Should Cabinet approve the direction of travel for the Trust to occupy SLCC, officers will enable this through a 15-year lease which meets the best

consideration under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, and the related General Disposal Consent (England) 2003. The heads of terms for the lease proposes a peppercorn rent on the basis of the Trust in delivery of its objectives will promote and enhance the economic and social well being of the area, which the Council is permitted to do in accordance with relevant legislation (see section 8).

- 1.13 The target date for commencement of the lease and transfer is 1 June 2026. For clarification the area covered under the lease will not cover the play area, playing field, St Michaels Road drain and the multi use games area which will remain within the Councils control and responsibility.
- 1.14 Some of the existing tenants at SLCC have indicated a preference to stay at the SLCC, landlord responsibilities will transfer to the Trust and they have already identified ways in which the VCSE organisations based there can work collaboratively with them to deliver enhanced services for all of their respective clients. Thus delivering a joined up service to the residents through the SLCC.

2 Options Considered

- 2.1 Lease the SLCC to the Trust – preferred option as set out in this report.
- 2.2 An alternative site to the SLCC – this is not considered a viable option as it is important that the Trust remain in the location they currently serve due to the success of this for the community.
- 2.3 SLCC to continue to be managed by Alive – this is not considered a viable option as this would require ongoing revenue expenditure, staffing and maintenance at a time where usage has been on the decline.
- 2.4 Market SLCC for commercial or alternative use – this is not considered a viable option as it would remove a community asset and does not align with the council priorities, the Pride in Place objectives or the Marmot principles. It would also be contrary to the commitments provided to the community as part of the Nar Ouse regeneration programme.
- 2.5 Do nothing – this is not considered a viable option as the current accommodation is deteriorating and the Southgates area is already earmarked for regeneration, hence the current meanwhile use.

3 Policy Implications

- 3.1 The proposal aligns with the Councils Corporate Strategy and objectives relating to:
 - Delivery of the Housing and Homelessness and Prevention Strategy by enabling expanded support services
 - Contributes to the Councils Social Value Framework through collaboration with the voluntary sector

- The Pride in Place 10 year Vision for Kings Lynn and latest government guidance where the focus is on supporting and enabling the community led organisations in priority neighbourhoods to engage and empower the communities in decision making in the areas which they serve and support
- The Trust is embedding the Marmot principles and emerging recommendations through its charitable work and objectives, therefore supporting the wider system change required to reduce inequalities and improve the life changes for residents.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The transfer of the day to day running costs of the SLCC, will be passed through to the Trust. The lease and proposed Service Level Agreement will, in short, transfer the day-to-day running operational costs of the centre, currently met by Special Expenses. There is no negative financial impact on the budget from this proposal.
- 4.2 The responsibility for the ongoing internal redecoration and operational liabilities associated with SLCC will be the Trusts responsibility under the terms of the lease, thereby reducing the Councils liabilities.

5 Personnel Implications

- 5.1 Not applicable to this report.

6 Environmental Considerations

- 6.1 Not applicable to this report.

7 Statutory Considerations

- 7.1 The 15-year lease will be prepared by officers which will meet the best value consideration under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972, and the related General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 The Local Government Act.

8 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) (To follow)

- 9.1 Initial assessment indicates that the proposal is likely to have a positive impact by enabling expanded support for vulnerable groups and maintaining community access. A full EIA will be completed prior to finalising the lease.

9 Risk Management Implications

- 9.1 Due Diligence of the proposal has been undertaken by finance and legal officers from the council. The key areas of risk resulting from the due diligence.
- **Operational Risk:** Mitigated by the Trust's experience and strong governance. Provisions will be included in the lease and supporting documents

to ensure community access is retained and ability to take back the SLCC should any provisions not be complied with.

- **Financial Risk:** Reduced Council liabilities; lease terms will include safeguards in particular to ensure the ongoing maintenance and upkeep of the centre undertaken, with annual monitoring.
- **Reputational Risk:** Positive partnership working enhances community confidence in ensuring valuable community assets are utilised to their full potential for the benefit of the community.
- **Asset Risk:** Condition surveys and maintenance responsibilities will be clearly defined in the lease and monitored through annual reporting. Step in rights will also be retained by the Council should it have reason to do so.

10 Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted

10.1 Not applicable to this report.

11 Background Papers

None