

**My Community**

# Community Buildings Roadmap Guide

## Part 4: Completing the Project



locality

# Opening the Doors

Planning for the opening and running of buildings or facilities will be undertaken throughout the project development and delivery process. This section of the guide does not aim to cover opening and running in any great detail, but to consider resources and systems that need to be prepared in advance.

## Human Resources

**Management structure:** In many cases, community organisations will run the new facility and will already have governance, management and staffing structures. There will however, be new responsibilities for board members and it is likely that new staff or volunteers will be required for running the new project. In some instances, it may be that a new separate or semi-independent body is being set up to run the new facility, requiring its own governance, management and staffing.

**Staffing structure:** Most new developments will require the recruitment of new staff and/or volunteers or the redeployment of existing staff and volunteers. A simple staff diagram should indicate who is in overall charge of the organisation, those with responsibility for particular buildings or activities and those with subordinate roles. Connecting lines will show who is responsible to whom.

**Job descriptions and person specifications:** These should be written for all new staff and volunteers and will need to be reviewed and revised for those whose roles change.

**Recruitment plan:** Having agreed the structure, new positions should be identified and staff recruited. New appointments should be timetabled to fit with the completion of the construction phases (often a moving target), incorporate time for advertising and interview stages and allow for notice periods to be served.

## Fitting Out

The completion of the construction phase will provide a building or facilities complete with any fixtures and finishes that have been specified as part of the build. This may include wall and floor coverings, kitchen units, light fittings, plug sockets, mechanical systems such as lifts and air conditioning, door openers, etc. This may be all that is required for some tenants, but many spaces will require furniture and fittings before they can be used. The following are just the basics.

## Furniture

- offices – desks, chairs, cupboards, tables, shelves, tables, filing cabinets
- meeting rooms – chairs, meeting tables, projector stands, lecterns
- cafés – chairs, tables, sofas, counters, kitchen units
- residential units – sofas, beds, wardrobes, dining tables, drawers

### **IT and electricals**

- offices – computers, printers, telephones, photocopiers
- meeting rooms – projectors, PA systems
- cafés – cookers, fridges, toasters, scales, food processors
- residential units – cookers, fridges, washing machines, TV, hi-fi

### **Equipment**

- offices and meeting rooms – projector screens, flip chart easels
- cafés and residential units – cutlery, crockery, utensils

### **Communications**

- for all kinds of facilities – phone lines, broadband, Wi-Fi.

These lists are generic and specialist equipment and fittings will be required for specialist uses, for example gymnasiums, swimming pools and industrial units.

### **Systems and Finance**

Systems should be developed to support the operation of the facility. These may include things like databases, financial management packages, time recording facilities, records and filing.

The new facility is likely to need a bank account. It may require an accountant and auditors to be appointed. Insurance will be required and could include things like buildings, contents, equipment, public liability, professional indemnity and employer insurance.

The new facility may need to obtain memberships or accreditations in order to operate.

### **Opening**

Regardless of the level of community engagement and publicity that has taken place during the designs and construction phases of the project, it will be important to let local people, stakeholders and potential tenants and customers know that the new facilities are open and available for use.

A Marketing Strategy prepared in advance of opening will consider who needs to know about the facilities, where they are, what they may be interested in, how best to inform them and when various marketing initiatives need to take place. Make full use of local and social media, networks, printed material and signage.

An opening event can provide an excellent opportunity to raise the profile of the new facility. Official opening events often take place after a few months (to allow the project to become established) and are a good opportunity to welcome tenants and thank sponsors, funders and partners, so make sure they are all invited. Guest celebrities or civic dignitaries may also help attract media attention.

## Monitoring and Impact

It is important to review the business plan and any income projections prior to opening. A plan made (maybe years in advance) to satisfy funders or investors may need to be revised considerably to reflect the current and changing circumstances. Close monitoring against the income and expenditure targets will be necessary as well as keeping an eye on cashflow.

If funding extends beyond the capital phase of the project to include opening and operation, funders will require detailed feedback on progress and will usually expect regular reports on the completion of milestones, numbers of beneficiaries, occupancy rates and other targets achieved.

FYI Many community-led organisations carry out regular impact assessments to monitor and demonstrate how they are affecting the lives of people who live in the area. These are often part of an ongoing programme, which would ideally commence before the development opens.



Stanwick Lakes Visitor Centre



The Lyvennet Community Trust housing after completion in July 2012. Courtesy of Lyvennet Community Trust.



Perry Common Regeneration.  
Courtesy of Witton Lodge  
Community Association.