

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning and Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 23rd September 2019

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Community & Sport

SUBJECT: Community Centres Annual Report for 2018/19

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide Members with information on the Council's Community Centres Service for the period 1st of April 2018 to 31st March 2019.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

2.1 Members consider and comment upon the report.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Community Centres Service provides for the management and delivery of services from five buildings; Castlefields, Ditton, Grangeway, Murdishaw and Upton. The Centres deliver programmes of community activity, varying models of community cafés and service outlets, i.e. children's centre, youth centre, day services. These Centres provide a community hub, a central point at the heart of the communities within which they are located for residents to enjoy chosen activities and receive services in their neighbourhoods. They are based in deprived wards in the Borough and are well utilised.

3.2 Service Performance

Summary of Performance

3.2.1 Whilst overall performance continues to travel in a positive direction some areas have remained steady, others have improved and some have dipped; the individual centre data in section 4.0 provides more detail of this.

3.2.2 Centre Usage

The information set out below shows that Centre usage continues to increase annually;

- 2014/15 - 312,872 Attendances
- 2015/16 - 313,582 Attendances
- 2016/17 - 315,736 Attendances
- 2017/18 - 319,101 Attendances
- 2018/19 - 321,466 Attendances

It should be noted that the attendance information set out above is that which is captured from 'formal' usage of the facilities and services at the Centres. It does not include the level of 'drop in' usage, such as individuals using the community library or café facilities, as this is difficult to capture. If this information was available, it would significantly increase the above figures.

Centre Operating Costs

3.2.3

Similarly to the usage capture above, the direction of travel for net operating costs is more indicative over a longer period. Below is the trend for the past five years:-

2014/15 Net operating costs - £212k (inclusive of £364k income)
2015/16 Net operating costs - £206k (inclusive of £370k income)
2016/17 Net operating costs - £151k (inclusive of £371k income)
2017/18 Net operating costs - £117k (inclusive of £392k income)
2018/19 Net operating costs - £170k (inclusive of £434k income)

The net operating costs for the service had reduced greatly over recent years. Reduced operational costs and increasing income had been key areas of focus throughout that time and led to the significant achievement. In the last operating year the £53k increase in net costs is due to some operating costs from the previous year being absorbed into the 2018/19 budget, as well as financial investment in the buildings' décor, furniture and equipment. The additional costs incurred in maintaining services during periods of long term staff absence was also a factor in the Service's increased operational costs.

4.0 COMMUNITY CENTRE PROFILES 2018/19

The following section contains key performance indicators to illustrate performance at each Centre. The section includes a number of graphs that demonstrate the 'direction of travel' on performance over a three year period. The 'all service average' refers to Halton's five Centres.

4.1 Castlefields Community Centre

- 4.1.1 Castlefields has seen an increase in attendance and opening hours during 2018/19; broken down as follows:-

Total annual opening hours	3,211
Total aggregate hours main room hired	2,188
Total aggregate hours other rooms hired	5,291
Total attendance main room	35,080
Total attendance other rooms	34,675
Total other attendance	8,287
Total attendance	78,042

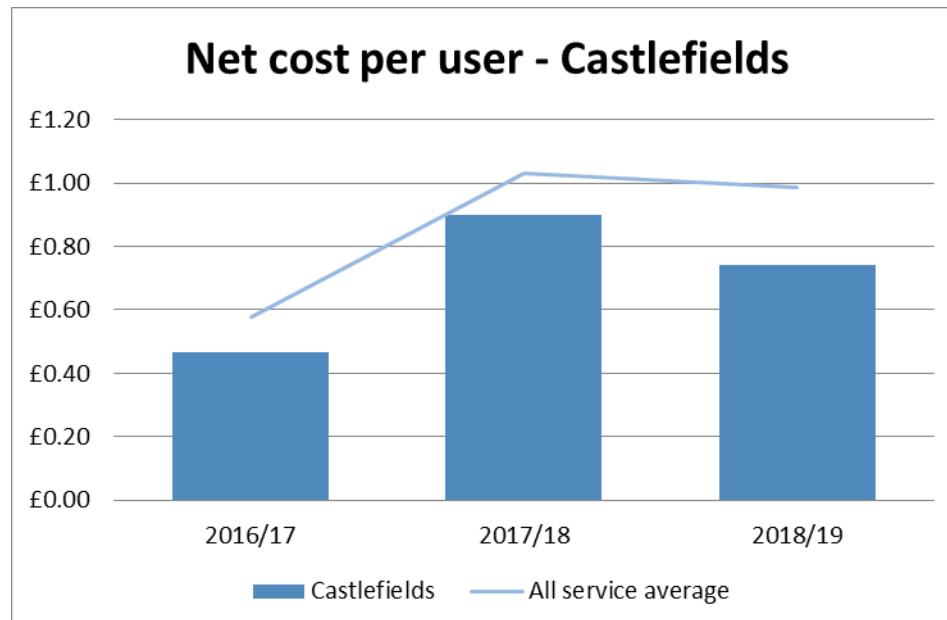
The previous year's attendance was 72,690.

- 4.1.2 Category of usage is at Castlefields broken down as follows:-

Youth & Children	12,961
Lifelong Learning	4,858
Health & Healthy Living	31,916
Arts Development	9,556
Sports Development	6,194
Statutory Agencies	4,515
Events	8,042
Total	78,042

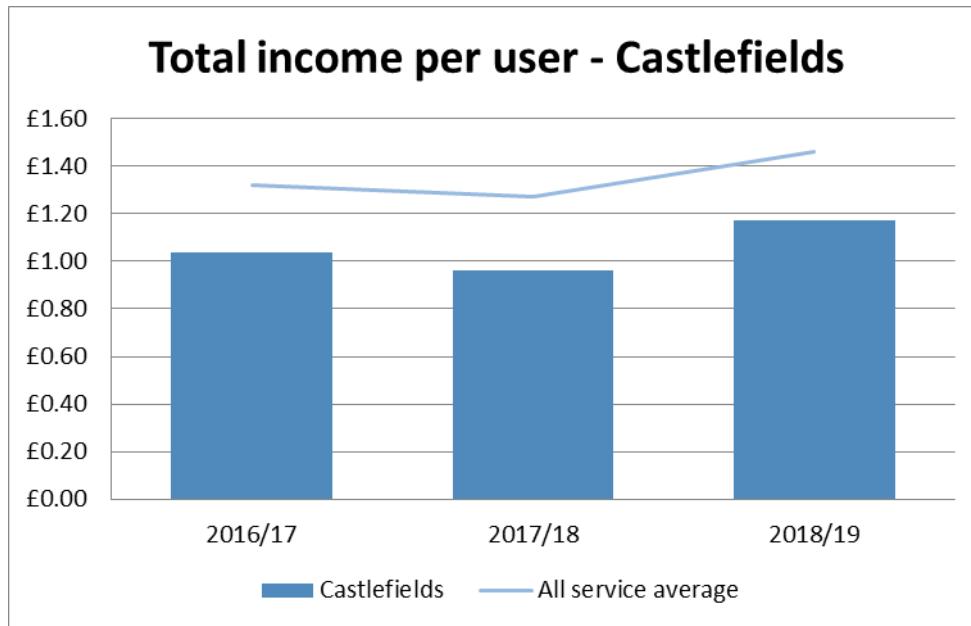
- 4.1.3 Castlefields Direction of Travel Indicators

- Castlefields Net Cost Per User**



The net cost per user has decreased to £0.74 from £0.90. The all service average is £0.98 meaning that Castlefields is the second highest performing for Halton's community centres with this indicator.

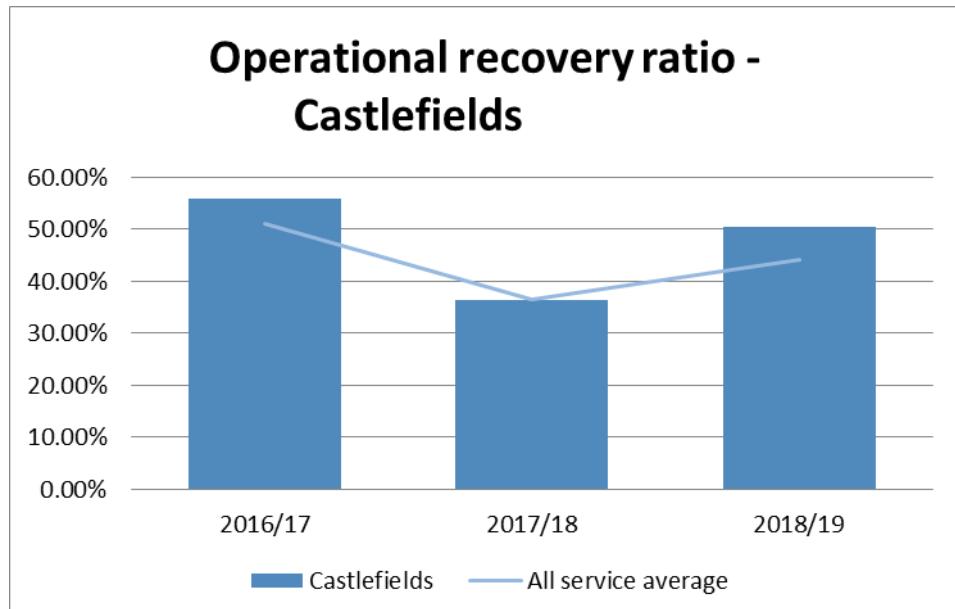
- **Castlefields Total Income Per User**



The income per user has increased from £0.96 in 2017/18 to £1.17. The all service average is £1.46 meaning Castlefields is achieving the lowest income per user. Increased attendance doesn't mean increased income as the majority of income is generated through room hire, nonetheless, increasing income remains a key area of focus.

- **Castlefields Operational Recovery**

Operational recovery is a calculation of usage, costs and income.



Castlefields had a dip in operational recovery in the previous operating year however, it has increased back up to 50.46%. The service average is 44.07% meaning that Castlefields is achieving the highest operational recovery out of Halton's five community centres.

4.2 Ditton Community Centre

- 4.2.1 Ditton attendance has fallen from 75,684 in the previous operating year which is attributable to reduced usage in the main hall. A breakdown of Ditton's usage for 2018/19 is set out below;

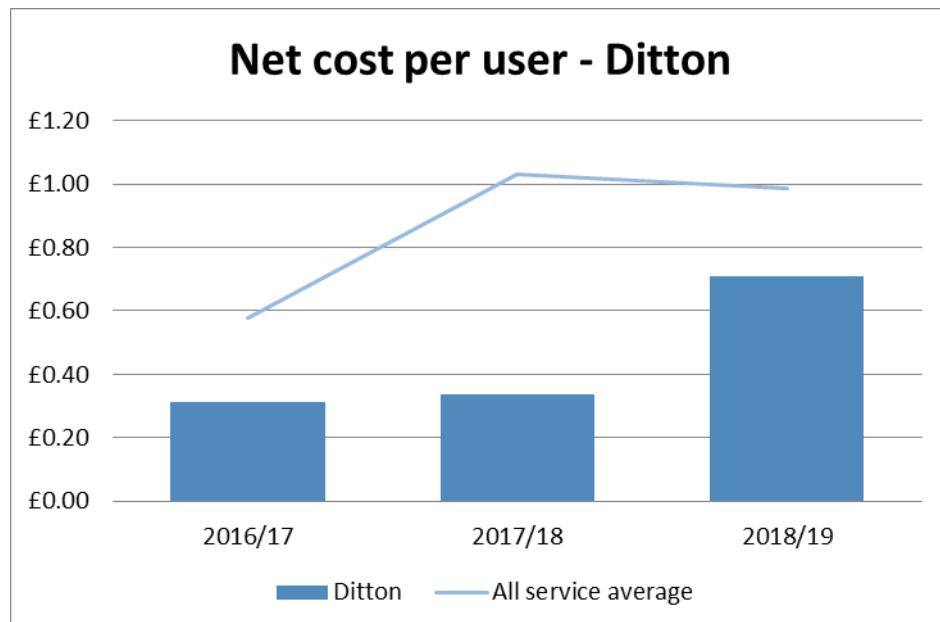
Total annual opening hours	4,014
Total aggregate hours main room hired	1,696
Total aggregate hours other rooms hired	5,325
Total attendance main room	21,832
Total attendance other rooms	40,366
Total other attendance	8,810
Total attendance	71,008

- 4.2.2 Category of usage at Ditton is broken down as follows:-

Youth & Children	12,055
Lifelong Learning	5,215
Health & Healthy Living	23,425
Arts Development	24,408
Sports Development	1,608
Statutory Agencies	3,167
Events	1,130
Total	71,008

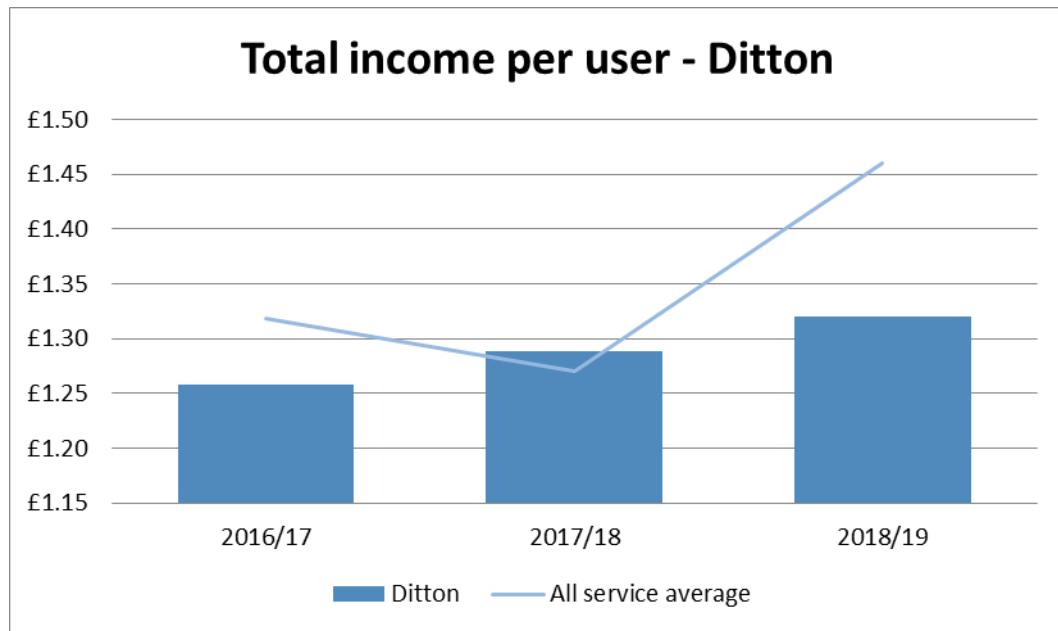
4.2.3 Ditton Direction of Travel Indicators

- Ditton Net Cost Per User**



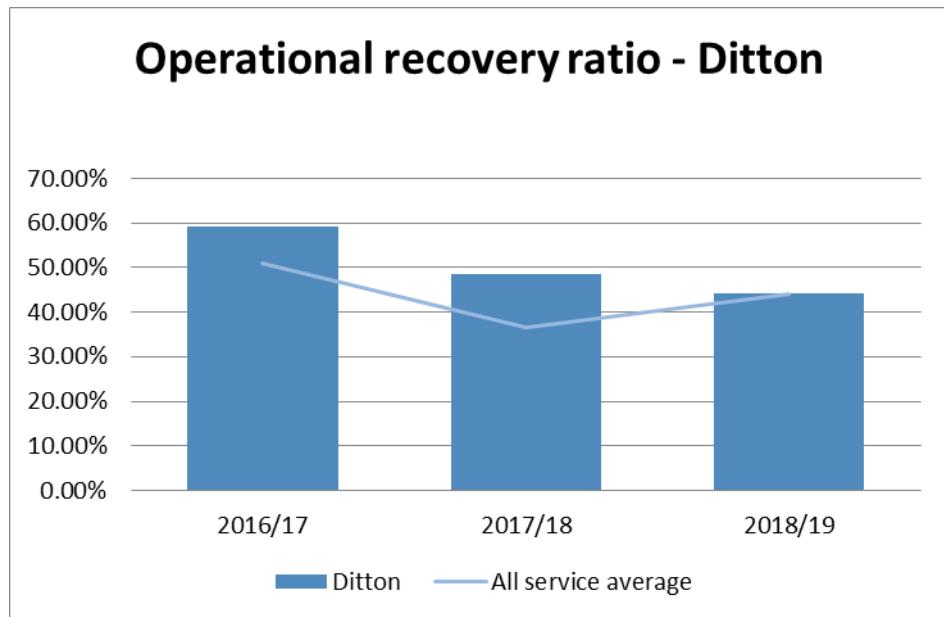
The net cost per user is £0.71. This represents an increase from £0.34 which is a consequence of the reduced attendance numbers.

- **Ditton Total Income Per User**



Albeit marginally, Ditton has continued with the trend of increasing income per user. In 2018/19 the income per user was £1.32; an increase of £0.03. The service average across the five centres is £1.46.

- **Ditton Operational Recovery**



Ditton has continued with a further dip with this indicator reducing from 48.59% in last operating year to 44.17%. The service average is 44.07%.

4.2.3 Grangeway Community Centre

4.3 Grangeway has two distinct areas; the community centre and the ‘hub’ where youth provision is delivered. A service level agreement for exclusive use exists for the hub. The two each make up approximately 50% of the overall site. In terms of data collection, only usage for the community centre is collated as usage in the youth area is outside of Centre Manager’s control and this needs to be taken into account when considering the usage figures.

4.3.1 The overall usage of Grangeway in 2018/19:-

Total annual opening hours	3,932
Total aggregate hours main room hired	1,982
Total aggregate hours other rooms hired	4,193
Total attendance main room	30,012
Total attendance other rooms	36,632
Total other attendance	7,073
Total attendance	73,717

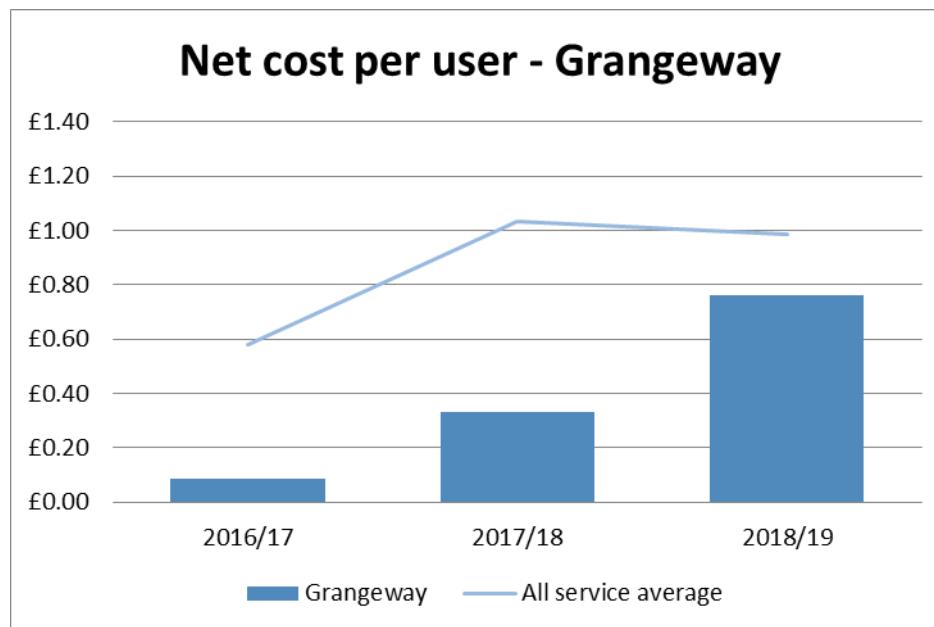
4.3.2 Category of usage at Grangeway is as follows:-

Youth & Children	15,750
Lifelong Learning	1,875
Health & Healthy Living	13,001
Arts Development	8,626
Sports Development	22,347
Statutory Agencies	10,873
Events	1,245
Total	73,717

Grangeway had experienced a marginal decrease with this indicator in 2017/18 with 67,641 users, however, in 2018/19 this has recovered with an increase of 6,076 which is largely attributable to the allocation of an agile work area for Council staff which is being well used.

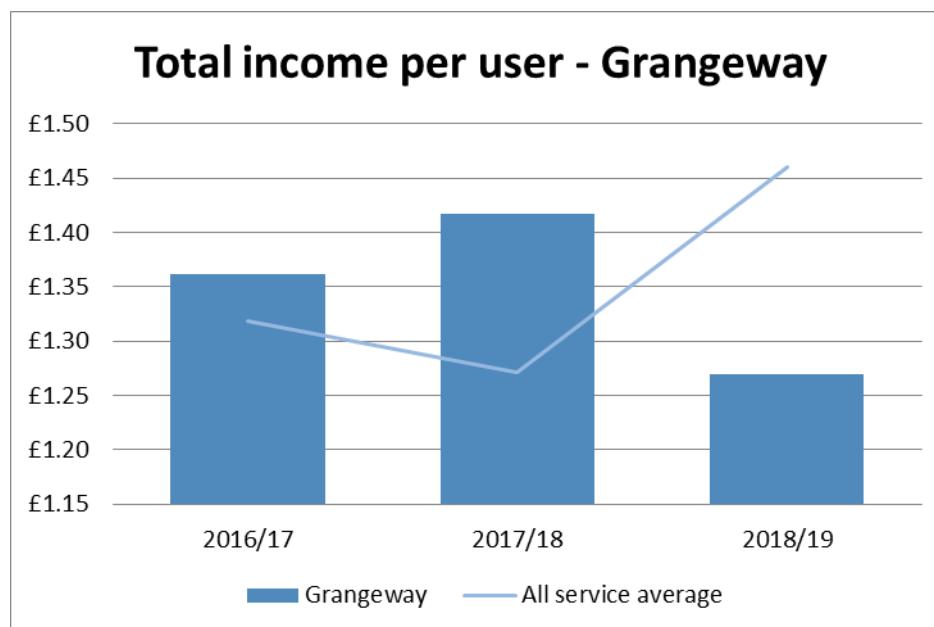
4.3.3 Grangeway Direction of Travel Indicators

- **Grangeway Net Cost Per User**



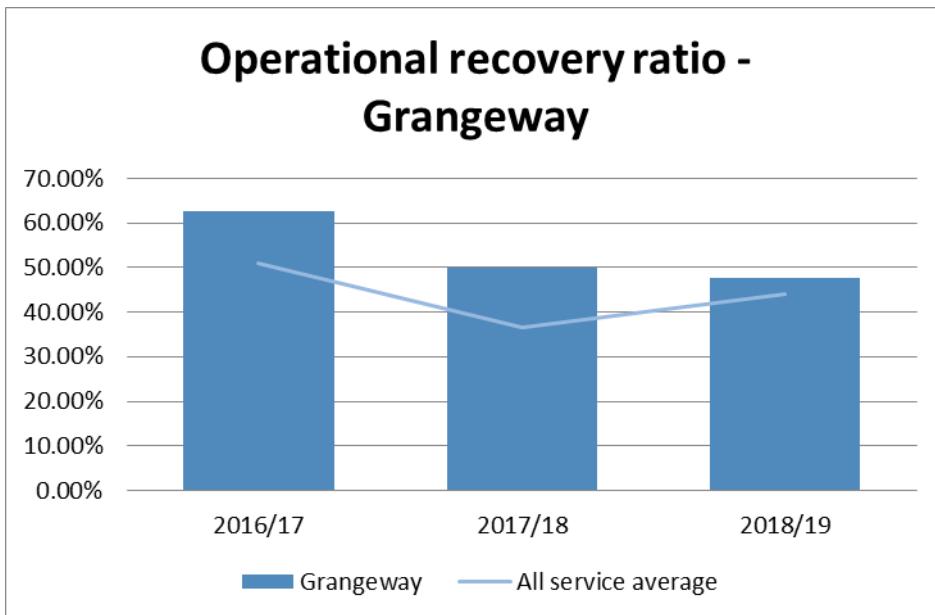
Grangeway has experienced a trend of increasing costs per user. In 2018/19 it was £0.76 but this is still lower than the service average of £0.98.

Grangeway Total Income Per User



Grangeway has experienced a reduction in income per user from £1.42 in 2017/18 to £1.27 in 2018/19. The service average is £1.46.

- **Grangeway Operational Recovery**



Grangeway has experienced the highest achievement in operational recovery in recent years but in 2018/19 it fell to 47.77% from 49.98% in 2017/18. However, it remains higher than the service average of 44.07%.

4.4 Murdishaw Community Centre

4.4.1 Murdishaw Community Centre has a variation in its governance model compared to Halton's other community centres. This centre was developed in partnership with Riverside and Liverpool Housing Trust and has a Board of Directors with a company limited by guarantee. Four local Councillors currently sit on the Board. This distinct governance model enables the centre to apply for charitable funding.

4.4.2 The overall usage of Murdishaw in 2018/19:-

Total annual opening hours	3,028
Total aggregate hours main room hired	1,100
Total aggregate hours other rooms hired	4,604
Total attendance main room	13,027
Total attendance other rooms	9,623
Total other attendance	3,900
Total attendance	26,550

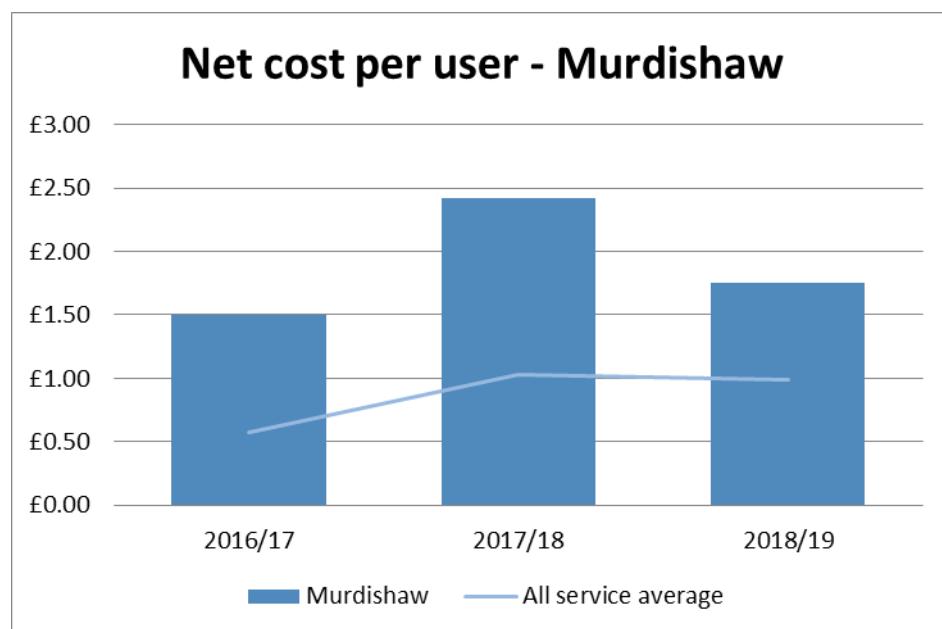
4.4.3 Category of usage at Murdishaw in 2018/19 is broken down as follows:-

Youth & Children	1,961
Lifelong Learning	3,812
Health & Healthy Living	9,135
Arts Development	1,364
Sports Development	1,298
Statutory Agencies	8,330
Events	650
Total	26,550

Murdishaw has experienced a slight dip in attendances with a reduction of 960 compared to the previous year. The number of hours the centre was in use increased by 148 and, despite offering more sessions at the centre, fewer attendees meant that the overall number of attendances was down. Increasing the number of users at Murdishaw will be an area of focus moving forward.

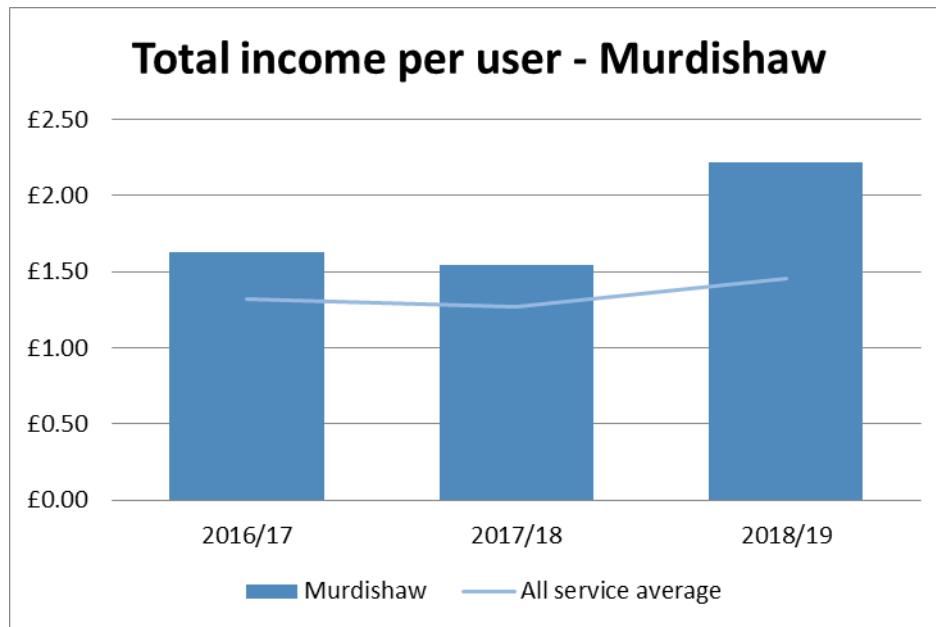
4.4.4 Murdishaw Direction of Travel Indicators

- Murdishaw Net Cost Per User**



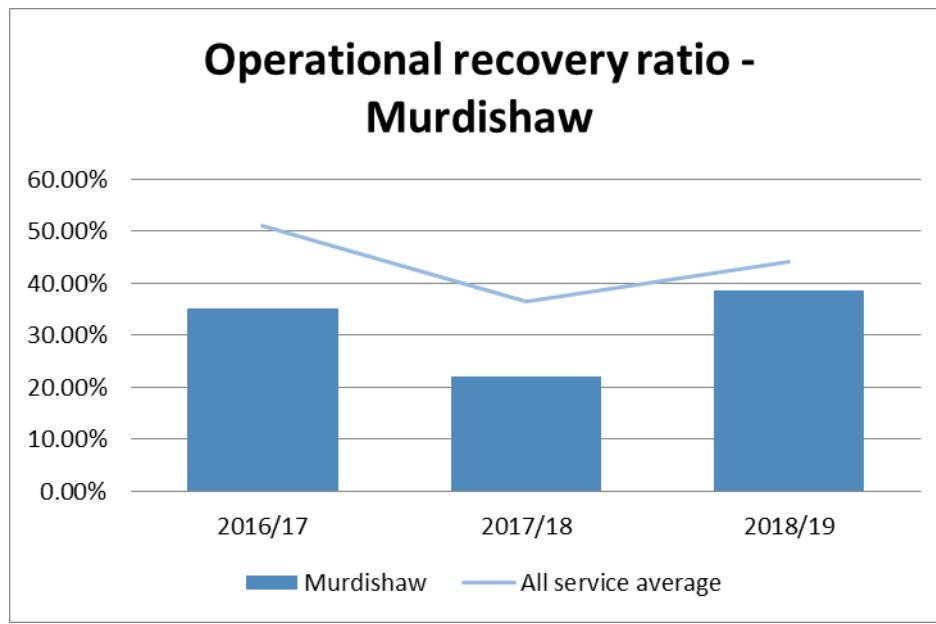
Murdishaw had experienced a significant increase in the net cost per user in 2017/18 rising to £2.43 from £1.52 in 2016/17. This was identified as a key area of focus last year and in 2018/19 Murdishaw achieved a reduction in net cost per user; falling to £1.75. Whilst this is positive, it will remain an area of focus moving forward as it is higher than the service average of £0.98.

- **Murdishaw Total Income Per User**



The income per user significantly increased in 2018/19 to £2.22; which is the highest of Halton's five community centres. The service average is £1.46 meaning that this was a key achievement for Murdishaw.

- **Murdishaw Operational Recovery**



Murdishaw has experienced a marginal reduction in attendances but an increase in income per user which has positively impacted the operational recovery indicator. Murdishaw achieved 38.66%; an increase from 22.11%. The service average is 44.07% and therefore it remains a service objective to continue the positive direction of travel.

4.5.1 Upton Community Centre

- 4.5.1 Upton is the only community centre with a Sports Hall which attracts sports teams from the local and wider community. In addition to senior block booking sessions there are a number of junior football teams using the centre which results in high demand for the hall space.
- 4.5.2 Upton's annual usage in 2018/19 is broken down as follows:-

Total annual opening hours	3,698
Total aggregate hours main room hired	1,979
Total aggregate hours other rooms hired	4,884
Total attendance main room	24,909
Total attendance other rooms	39,160
Total other attendance	8,080
Total attendance	72,159

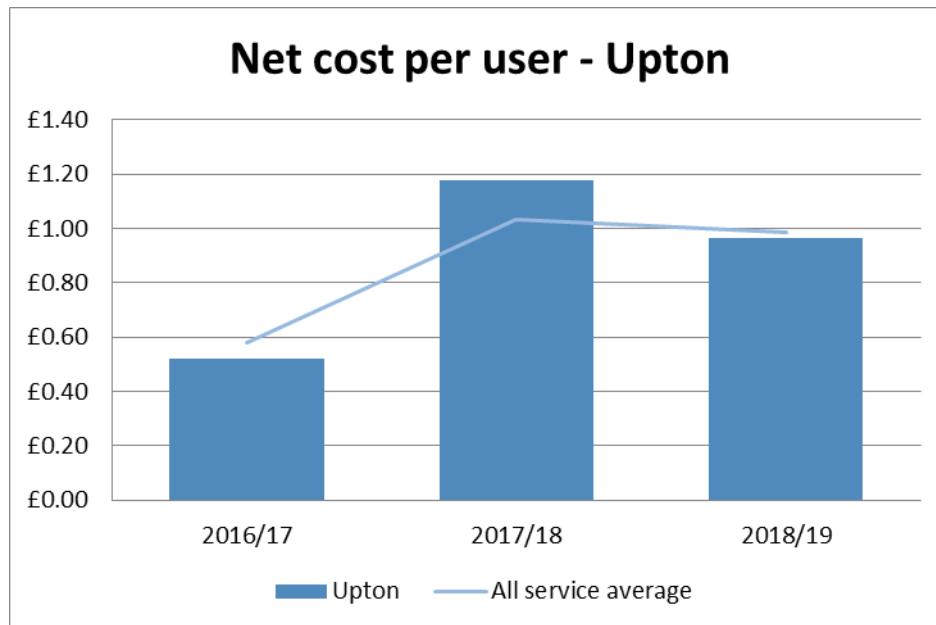
- 4.5.3 Category of usage at Upton Community Centre is broken down as follows:-

Youth & Children	14,134
Lifelong Learning	2,855
Health & Healthy Living	31,964
Arts Development	2,462
Sports Development	14,181
Statutory Agencies	1,740
Events	4,813
Total	72,149

Upton has seen a reduction in attendances which is largely attributable to the loss of a regular session for young people which previously used the building five days a week. The sessions were booked by an organisation that provided sports activities across the north west. Unfortunately, the organisation reduced its service delivery which resulted in the cancellation of bookings at Upton and other regional facilities. Added to this, the café, which is very popular, was closed for five weeks due for a kitchen upgrade and this also impacted upon user numbers.

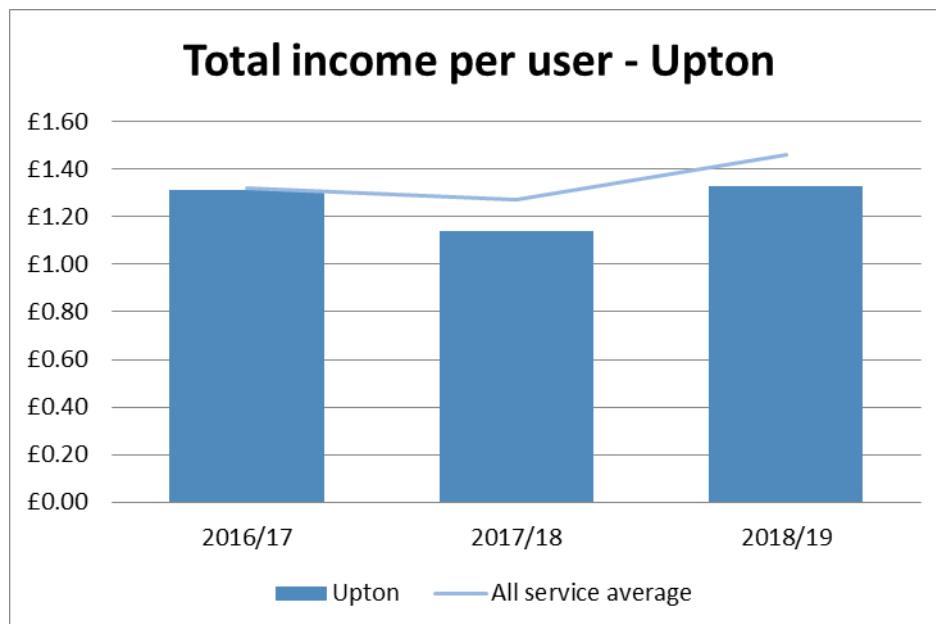
4.5.4 Upton Direction of Travel Indicators

- **Upton Net Cost Per User**



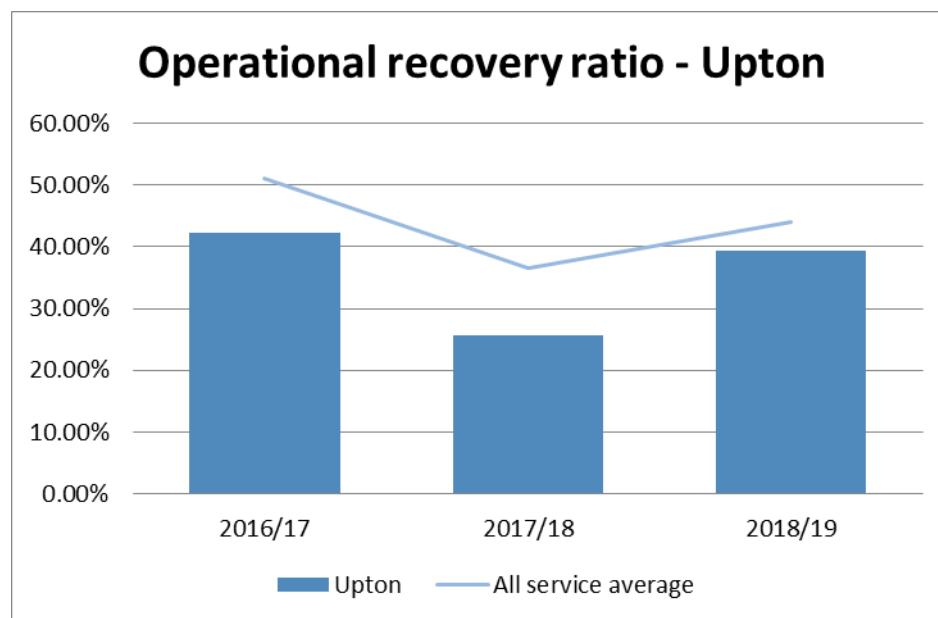
The net cost per user for Upton in 2018/19 fell to £0.96 from £1.18 in the previous operating year. The service average for 2018/19 was £0.98.

- **Upton Total Income Per User**



Income per user at Upton in 2018/19 was £1.33, which is an increase of £0.15 compared to the previous year. The service average is £1.46 and this will therefore remain a key area of focus for Upton.

- **Upton Operational Recovery**



Upton's increase in income per user is a key factor in the operational recovery position improving. Upton achieved 39.3% and, whilst this is an improvement from 25.73% in the previous year, the service average is 44.07% which means that this will also remain a key area of focus for Upton moving forward.

5.0 SERVICE SUMMARY & FUTURE CHALLENGES

- 5.1 Overall, centre usage across the whole service is up by 2,365 attendances and income has increased by £7k. The achievement of net operating costs for five buildings in 2018/19 of £170k is testimony to the efforts of Centre managers and staff in striving to deliver increased efficiency and improved services. Although it will be extremely challenging, the ambition for the service is to endeavour to achieve zero net operating cost.
- 5.2 Customer satisfaction surveys were completed for the Community Centre's service earlier in the year. 424 users took part in the survey and summary of feedback is below;
- 98% rated the Centres as between 7 and 10 out of 10.
 - The most important matters for users were, a safe environment, staff, cleanliness, condition of buildings and accessibility. Hire fees, activities and café provision were the next ranked most important matters for users.
 - 54% thought centre charges were about right - 35% declined to comment.
 - 43% thought that café prices were about right and 11% less than expected - 39% declined to comment.
- 5.3 Some examples of Community Centre activities and events held in 2018/19 are contained within Appendix 1.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Community centres provide a platform for intergenerational activity, community activity and youth service delivery. The individual centre data profiles detail categories of usage; across the five centres approximately 17.5% of usage is youth related activity, an increase of 2.5% from the previous year.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Community centres provide employment opportunities within the service, community delivery points for training and employment initiatives, volunteering opportunities and lifelong learning.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Community centres contribute to a whole area approach to health and wellbeing. They provide a nucleus to support community activity and access to services in neighbourhoods.

Community cafes, health initiatives, health based activity in community centres such as physical activity, smoking cessation, breathe easy, stroke association, community gardening, healthy eating, cook & taste, weight management. Over a third of usage in community centres is directly health outcome related. Community Centres are SHOP (Safer Homes for Older People) and HELPS (Home Equipment at Low Price) outlets providing low cost safety equipment.

6.4 A Safer Halton

A sense of community and community connectedness reduces residents' fears of crime where they live, they are likely to feel a stronger sense of belonging and safety in an environment where the communities know each other, are active and there are established links to other stakeholders like police, housing, community wardens, etc. Community Centres provide a community hub and platform for this. Community centres are safe, accessible facilities located in the heart of our communities. They serve both the local and wider community and promote participation, inclusion and cohesion. All centres are designated Emergency Rest Centres, Hate Crime Reporting Centres and designated Safe in Town facilities.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Community Centres contribute to wider community initiatives and regeneration in the areas they are sited. There are numerous community gardening and local environmental projects across the service working jointly with key stakeholders.

7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 Community centres provide cohesion to those communities they serve. Accessing services and participating in community life contributes to resident's health and wellbeing by providing support, enhancing skills and building connected communities. Not providing community centres or reducing the services and activities provided through them could have a detrimental effect on current and potential future users and would result in poorly served and disconnected communities.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 The service is open and accessible to all Halton's residents.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

10.1 None.

APPENDIX 1

Examples of Community Centre Activities and Events in 2018/19

Castlefields

- Castlefields held their first Summer Fayre on 8th August 2018 with over 200 people visiting the centre. It was a free event, with room hire charge covered by people paying for stalls in the hall. Entertainment was provided by Aladdin's Cave and Palacefields Ukulele Group – various partners were involved with Sports Development putting on free sessions of Soft Archery, there were free fitness sessions with the children and the Road safety Team ran a number of activities for children including Badge Making and offering advice on Road Safety. The café was open and well utilised generating a good source of income for the centre

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/castlefields-summer-fete-a-success/>

- A Christmas Party was held on 5th December 2018 with 60 children in attendance. There was entertainment and a Santa's grotto with children getting to visit Santa and receiving a gift.

Ditton

- February 2018 saw the centre hold its annual nationwide dance festival. It is held over two weekends and attracts competitors and public from all over the North West of England and Wales. During the weekends between 600 and 800 competitors and members of the public visited the centre.
- Wonky Garden - Britain in Bloom – July 2018 saw judges from the TV series Britain in Bloom visit the centre to judge the work of The Wonky Garden and their group of community gardeners and volunteers. The initiative saw the outside allotment space, community centre garden and children's centre crèche garden transformed. The visit was filmed by the BBC and aired in the spring of 2019.

Grangeway

- Macy's Café and the community fridge – Cafe operating for its first full year has brought additional usage to the centre and introduced a community fridge initiative which see's members of the public and local businesses making donations to stock a fridge that can then be used to people who are struggling to put food on the table with the view that when they are back on their feet they may be able to make donations to the fridge themselves.

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/cafe-culture-comes-to-grangeway/>

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/community-fridge-helps-those-in-need-in-the-grangeway-area/>

- Sure Start get together – 2018/19 saw a full programme of themed monthly activities at the centre hosted by HBC Sure Start to Later Life Team. The monthly ‘Get Together’ offer older people the chance to come to the centre to enjoy an afternoon of entertainment and an afternoon tea. The sessions were very well attended with approx. 90+ people attending each of the sessions.

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/grangeway-residents-enjoy-retro-day/><https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/love-is-in-the-air-in-grangewayand-upton/>

- Wonky Garden - Britain in Bloom – July 2018 saw judges from the TV series Britain in Bloom visit the centre to judge the work of The Wonky Garden and their group of community gardeners and volunteers. The initiative saw the outside allotment space to the side of the community centre transformed. The visit was filmed by the BBC and was aired in the spring of 2019.

Murdishaw

- The Centre’s Annual Summer Fun event was held on Wednesday 11th August 2018 with attendance estimated at around 300. There was entertainment outside the centre with a D.J. and guest appearances from popular children’s characters, music & games and a bouncy castle. All activity was supplemented by a performance from “The Studio” Samba band. Inside there was tombola, stalls, displays and activities. There was also a marquee displaying birds of prey with hands on opportunities which proved popular across all ages.
- The Centre’s ninth annual Halloween event on 31st October 2018 proved popular with 59 tickets sold prior to the even. There was music & games and the café was run by the Centre’s own staff offering snacks & drinks.

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/halloween-party-ghoulish-going-on-at-murdershaw/>

- The Centre’s annual Christmas event held on Wednesday 19th December 2018 between 5pm and 7pm, it was family Christmas Party with an entertainer, music & games and a craft workshop in the playroom adjacent to a grotto specially created for Santa. The event was sold out, with many posting feedback cards to put in writing how much they had enjoyed the event.

Upton

- In response to feedback from the Fire Service who expressed concerns as to limited provision for young children within the ward, the centre hosted a 10 week programme of sports activities for children aged 7-14yrs old running from November 2018 to February 2019. Two free sports sessions each week were available to the children - with approximately 15-20 children attending each of the 20 sessions.

- September 2018 saw the centre partner with the Sure Start to Later Life team to deliver a taster Get Together Event. The event, the same as the events hosted monthly at Grangeway Community Centre, saw entertainment and an afternoon tea provided for older people. The event was a success with over 100 people in attendance. As a result of its success a schedule of events was put together to run monthly from February to November 2019.

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/new-event-for-older-people-to-be-held-in-widnes/>

<https://hbcnewsroom.co.uk/love-is-in-the-air-in-grangeway-and-upton/>

- December saw the centre host the annual pantomime, organised by H.E.A.R.T.S dance and theatre school. The performance of Puss in boots was well received with approximately 1000 members of the local community attending across the six performances.