

**Report of East North East Area Leader**

**Report to East Inner Area Committee**

**Date: Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2013**

**Subject: Nowell Mount Community Centre Review**

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Burmantofts & Richmond Hill		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:		

**Summary of main issues**

1. Nowell Mount Community Centre is part of a portfolio of community centres delegated to Inner East Area Committee. Nowell Mount Community Centre has been highlighted for review due to low levels of use.
2. The centre is directly managed by Leeds City Council through Facilities Management. In 2012/13 financial year the building cost £15,388 to operate with an average of three hours per week use. Work has been undertaken to increase use at the centre but following feedback from some users, it looks likely that they will reduce their operating hours. This is due to lack of attendance at sessions.
3. LCC Children's Services have indicated that they would be interested in developing the centre into a provision for under two's due to shortage of space for this age range. Further details are outlined under section 3.8.

**Recommendations**

4. Inner East Area Committee are asked to review the content of this report and agree to proceed with Option 1 to change the facility into a Children's Services facility for under two's.
5. Inner East Area Committee agree to proceed with Option 2 if the Children's Services proposal is found not to be viable.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Inner East Area Committee with an overview on the current position with Nowell Mount Community Centre and agree the way forward for the future of the facility.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 Inner East Area Committee currently have a portfolio of nine delegated community centres. Nowell Mount Community Centre is one of those buildings. There is an Inner East Community Centres Working Group in place to oversee and recommend actions to be implemented to improve facilities across the area. The Working Group is chaired by Councillor Hyde, and has Councillors representing each ward involved in the group to make decisions on centres within their area.
- 2.2 In June 2012, Burmantofts & Richmond Hill Ward Members were given a period of six months to increase the use at the building or it could face possible closure. An additional six month extension was granted to work through potential proposals for a childcare provider to operate from the building but unfortunately, this didn't come to fruition.
- 2.3 The Council's city-wide Asset Review has now encompassed the work of the Community Centres Review. The Asset Review has again highlighted Nowell Mount as a facility which is underutilised and one for which future operational arrangements need to be considered.
- 2.4 The sections below provide an overview of activity, running costs and future options for Nowell Mount Community Centre for the Inner East Area Committee to consider and agree a way forward.

## **3 The current overview of Nowell Mount Community Centre**

- 3.1.1 Nowell Mount Community Centre is a relatively new facility. The building comprises of two meeting rooms, a kitchen, a caretakers office and toilet facilities. There is also a small car park within the centre grounds which is surrounded by a fence with a security gate. The size of the centre is 150 square metres. There is no condition survey on file for the centre, so it is difficult to determine the levels of backlog maintenance or building condition rating.
- 3.1.2 The building is next to Nowell Mount Park playing pitches and MUGA. In the original building plans, it did indicate that there would be changing facilities constructed as part of the development of the centre.
- 3.2 **Centre Management**
  - 3.2.1 The centre is directly managed by LCC's Facilities Management; who provide a cleaning service at the facility and an ad hoc caretaking service for users of the centre who are not key holders. The registered key holders at the building are LCC Youth Service, Nigerian Supplementary School, East North East Area Support Team and Councillor Grahame. No other groups have authorised key holding status at present. It has recently come to light that a group is accessing the building with

keys they haven't been authorised to use. This issue is currently in the process of being addressed by Facilities Management.

- 3.2.2 All bookings for the centre are undertaken by the Council's Lettings Unit. Ward Members were concerned that people didn't know how to book the facility. To address this issue, a clear bookings procedure was put in the notice board outside the centre. This procedure is also listed on the Council's website and is used with all directly managed community centres.

### 3.3 Building Repairs

- 3.3.1 Since January 2009, there have been a number of repairs undertaken at the facility. The amount invested in repairs at the facility total £2,013.78. The main repairs have related to plumbing issues, broken windows and replacement locks at the centre.

### 3.4 Budget Position

- 3.4.1 The current budget for the centre stands at £17,010 for the 2013/14 financial year. Last financial year, 2012/13, the Council spent £15,838 on operating the building with only £500 of external income being generated for use of the facility. The net operational budget excluding income was £15,338. A budget break down is shown in the table below:

<b>Budget Heading</b>	<b>Actual 12/13</b>	<b>Budget 13/14</b>	<b>Actual 13/14 as @ 10/07/13</b>
Grounds Maintenance Work	806	810	830
Carbon Reduction Commitment Levy	57	100	0
Gas	113	400	19
Electricity	86	790	-28
Water Services	107	300	0
Removal Of Workplace Waste	281	310	114
Cleaning Agency Recharge	5,060	5,110	3
Premises Security Services	842	800	67
Office Furniture & Equipment	16	100	0
Operational Materials	0	100	0
Other Hired And Contracted Services	70	0	0
National Non-Domestic Rates	1,725	2,060	2,038
Community Buildings Recharges - Staffing	64	0	23
Community Buildings Recharges - Management Fee	1,530	1,650	1,650
Premises Related Insurance	90	0	94
Licences	116	0	0
Capital Depreciation	4,875	5,100	0
Income	-500	-620	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,338</b>	<b>17,010</b>	<b>4,810</b>

- 3.4.2 The lack of income is due to the type of activities taking place at the facility. The predominant activity operating from the centre is LCC Youth Service provision, which is a non-chargeable letting.

3.4.3 Based on the 2012/13 average use of three hours per week at the centre, the building was costing on average £98.64 per hour to operate.

### 3.5 Use of the centre

3.5.1 The official weekly use profile from the most recent Lettings information for the facility is as follows:

Day	User	Time	Duration
Monday	Organisation for Conflict Resolution & Reconciliation* LCC Youth Service	9.30am – 12.30pm	Three hours
		7.30pm – 9.30pm	Two hours
Tuesday	No use	Not applicable	n/a
Wednesday	Organisation for Conflict Resolution & Reconciliation* LCC Youth Service	9.30am – 12.30pm	Three hours
		5pm – 7pm	Two hours
Thursday	No use	Not applicable	n/a
Friday	Organisation for Conflict Resolution & Reconciliation* LCC Youth Service	9.30am – 12.30pm	Three hours
		7pm – 9pm	Two hours
Saturday	Nigerian Supplementary School	12pm – 2pm (term time only)	Two hours
Sunday	No use	Not applicable	n/a

\* Please note, the Organisation for Conflict Resolution & Reconciliation have asked to reduce the hours of their booking but have yet to submit their revised lettings form.

3.5.2 Nowells Together residents group also use the facility for one hour per month for a community meeting. However, there is a low number of attendees at the meeting and further support has been requested from East North East Homes Partnerships Team to strengthen the group and increase attendance.

3.5.3 Burmantofts & Richmond Hill Neighbourhood Policing Team used the facility until March 2013 for a Police and Communities Together (PACT) meeting. The booking wasn't renewed due to issues of double bookings with other groups and poor levels of attendance. The NPT are now looking at alternative communication methods to engage with local residents.

### 3.6 Market Valuation and Unitary Development Plan

3.6.1 To inform decision making on the future of the site, a market valuation has been undertaken. The indicative sale value of the building is £40,000. This sale value is based on the most likely future use of the site which has been deemed as a small residential development. In the Council's Unitary Development Plan, which classifies use of certain sites across the city, this particular location is classified to be used as protected playing pitches and for community use. The use of the site can be changed to allow sale for any use but it would need the necessary consents to be able to do so.

### **3.7 Potential use of centre**

3.7.1 At a recent Burmantofts & Richmond Hill Ward Members meeting, Councillors suggested that a potential future use of the facility could be as a One Stop Centre (OSC), combining a range of public services under one roof. After consultations with officers who oversee the OSC provision across the city, it was felt that the area was catered for through existing provision. From recent data, there have been 10,850 enquiries made at One Stop Centres by residents of Burmantofts & Richmond Hill. The majority of enquiries have been made by BRH residents at the City Centre OSC, 33.5% (3,634), and the Compton Centre 30.5% (3,306). A high number of BRH residents also use the Osmondthorpe OSC accounting for 14.2% (1,536) of enquiries.

### **3.8 Options for future of the facility**

3.8.1 There are two options for the future use of the facility and site for Members to consider:

#### **3.8.2 Option 1**

Children's Services have recently expressed an interest in taking on the management responsibility for Nowell Mount and turning the facility into a provision for under two's. Area Support Team have been informed that there is a shortage of under two's provision across the city and this building has been identified as a potential location to operate this type of provision.

The idea is for Children's Services to deliver family services across the week, 3-4 days, from 8am to 5pm, or even full time. The programme of activities would include parent and baby-toddler groups, parent courses with crèche, outreach services and drop-in sessions for parents in local area, parent appointments with commissioned services such as Job Centre Plus and childcare advisors, as well as activities in the neighbouring park during holidays and possibly opening opportunities to deliver family activities at weekends.

This proposal still needs to be worked up in more detail but if it was agreed to go ahead, there would need to be a date put in place whereby existing use stops at the facility. Once the building is turned into a provision for under two's, the community wouldn't be able to use the facility due to safeguarding. However, Members would like two hours community use for the resident group to continue to meet to be agreed as part of the transfer.

If this was chosen as the preferred option, there would be no funding for Councillors to re-invest into other projects in the ward. This would be because through this option the building would transfer to another Directorate rather than the asset being sold to generate a capital receipt.

#### **3.8.3 Option 2**

The facility is declared surplus and put up for sale. The building could be marketed for use as an opportunity for a small business or a social enterprise to take on, subject to the authorisation of change of use.

It was agreed that if Option one was found not to be viable, then Option 2 would be proceeded with. If the building was sold, 20% of the capital receipt would come

back to spend on other local projects. 15% of which would be added to the Ward Based Initiatives fund for the area, with the other 5% being added into a City wide pot which would then be redistributed to Area Committees based on levels of population and deprivation. Members may choose to ring fence this funding to invest in a project which would specifically benefit the Nowells, for example, additional play equipment or improvements to Nowell Mount Park to achieve the Leeds Quality Standard for parks.

### **3.9 Decanting of existing users**

- 3.9.1 If Inner East Area Committee choose an option whereby existing users will need to be decanted from the centre, support will be provided to find other suitable facilities. For example, other LCC Community Centres will be offered as an initial option, for example, Richmond Hill, Ebor Gardens or Lincoln Green Community Centres. The Compton Centre along with other facilities such as local churches will also be looked at possible options for users of Nowell Mount to relocate their activities to.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

- 4.1.1 An initial user consultation was undertaken in March to gain regular users views about the community centre. The feedback from users was that the building is very difficult to access at times due to caretakers not turning up to open the building. There were also a number of frustrations highlighted regarding the booking process – time it takes for applications to be processed and lack of feedback on the progress of applications.
- 4.1.2 A similar consultation has been undertaken with regular users in July, to find out views about the facility and options for future provision of activities. The feedback from regular user groups is as follows:

#### **Nowells Together**

- 4.1.3 This group use the facility once a month for community meetings. However, there have been a number of issues with access to the facility due to the caretaker not being present to open up the building. This has been the case despite the group double checking with Facilities Management on the morning of the booking. In the words of the group; a simple process has turned into a complete lottery.
- 4.1.4 Nowells Together have also stated in their feedback that they feel that the facility should be the hub of the community but due to the transient nature of the local community this has led to a lack of community spirit and lack of interest in the development of community activities.
- 4.1.5 The group continue to struggle to attract membership to the community organisation, with only a core group of five to seven people attending each meeting. It's felt that if the building was no longer available for use, the group could potentially fold but there is concerns around this any way due to low levels of people attending the meetings.

### **Nigerian Supplementary School**

- 4.1.6 No response was received from this group as part of the consultation on this proposal. It is hoped that this activity can be re-provided at another community centre in the area if Nowell Mount was no longer available for use.

### **LCC Youth Service**

- 4.1.7 Again, the Council's Youth Service did not provide a response to the consultation exercise in August. It is hoped that sessions would still be provided for young people through the mobile youth bus and through detached outreach work.

### **Organisation for Conflict, Resolution & Reconciliation (OCRR)**

- 4.1.8 Through consultation with the group, they said that the building was located in the right location but was difficult to support the people who they are working with due to lack of IT provision at the centre. On many occasions, OCRR have to go use the IT at the Compton Centre to carry out online tasks. It is also felt that the community do not know they can use the centre and think it's changing facilities for the football pitches. OCRR also agreed that they feel due to the transient nature of the local community, it's difficult to build community spirit and put on community activities.
- 4.1.9 If the facility was no longer available, OCRR would move their activities to a different facility but continue to undertake outreach work within the neighbourhood.
- 4.1.10 A Burmantofts & Richmond Hill Ward Members on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2013, this report was discussed. Ward Members agreed that the option to turn the building into a provision for under two's was the best use of the building and supported this proposal going forward to Inner East Area Committee for formal approval.

### **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

- 4.2.1 This proposal has been carefully considered before being developed to mitigate any negative impacts on the community. It is acknowledged that there is a range of diverse groups currently using the facility. Support will be given to accommodate the groups into other facilities if Inner East Area Committee decided that the facility is to be declared surplus.

### **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

- 4.3.1 This proposal links in with the Council's Asset Review, as highlighted in earlier sections of the report. The Asset Review is a key part of the work which is being delivered as part of the Council's Financial Strategy. The key aims of the Asset Review are to reduce running and maintenance costs of facilities by 20% and ensure that there are suitable assets to support the delivery of Council priorities.

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

- 4.4.1 As the sections above show, the building is currently not proving to be value for money, costing just under £100 per hour to operate in 2012/13 financial year.
- 4.4.2 In comparison to this, a similar assessment has been undertaken for Lincoln Green Community Centre, with the rationale being it was the centre with the most similar size to Nowell Mount. On average, Lincoln Green has 27 hours of use per week, with 2012/13 running costs of £19,829.20. This equates to approximately £14.12 per hour to run the facility.

#### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

4.5.2 There is no exempt or confidential information contained in this report.

4.5.3 There are no key decisions associated with this report, so it is not subject to call in.

#### **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 The main risk associated with this particular scheme is that if Nowell Mount Community Centre is no longer available for use, this could lead to community activities that have been established ceasing. Every effort will be made to relocate users to ensure that there is a continuity of service provision, albeit from another facility. The Area Committee may wish to consider ring fencing some Wellbeing funding to cover groups room hire costs in other venues, if applicable.

#### **5 Conclusions**

5.1 The most viable and sensible solution for the future of this facility is for the building to be transferred to Children's Services for under two's provision. This is a much needed resource in the area and would turn a underutilised community centre into a positive service being delivered in the neighbourhood.

#### **6 Recommendations**

6.1 Inner East Area Committee are asked to review the content of this report and agree to proceed with Option 1 to change the facility into a Children's Services facility for under two's.

6.2 Inner East Area Committee agree to proceed with Option 2 if the Children's Services proposal is found not to be viable.

#### **7 Background documents**

7.1 Inner East Area Committee: Inner East Area Update Report Appendix B 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2013

Inner East Area Committee: Inner East Area Update Report Appendix B 20<sup>th</sup> June 2013