

Report of Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)

Report to Executive Board

Date: 16 July 2014

Subject: Community Centre review and pricing arrangements

Are specific electoral Wards affected?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): Killingbeck & Seacroft, Burmantofts & Richmond Hill, Gipton & Harehills, Chapel Allerton, Wetherby, Alwoodley, Middleton Park, Beeston & Holbeck, City & Hunslet, Rothwell, Ardsley & Robin Hood, Morley North, Morley South, Kippax & Methley, Cross Gates & Whinmoor, Garforth & Swillington, Kirkstall, Hyde Park & Woodhouse, Weetwood, Otley & Yeadon, Bramley & Stanningley, Armley, Calverley & Farsley, Pudsey, Farnley & Wortley		
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input 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

This report updates members on the Community Centre review and makes further proposals for the portfolio of community centres which considers the costs and benefits, financial and non-financial from the community centre network, and opportunities for more efficient arrangements. It proposes to bring forward recommendations to Executive Board for formal consultation.

The report also proposes a revised and simplified pricing policy, to reduce complexity and inefficiency.

Recommendations

Executive board is asked to:-

- Request that the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and communities) conducts a full review of the Council's portfolio of community centres the benefits and costs to the local community, and brings forward specific proposals for consultation.

- To endorse the revised pricing policy set out in this report, subject to the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and communities) consulting with Community Committees prior to proposed implementation of the changes with effect from 1st September 2014.

1.0 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to propose the next phase of reviews of Council's provision of Community centres and to seek Executive Board approval to bring forward proposals on the future extent of the portfolio and the outcomes which it will deliver to support the Best City / Best Council aims.
- 1.2 The report also asks members to endorse revised pricing arrangements for lettings in the Community Centres to support their sustainability, subject to consultation with Community Committees.

2.0 Background information

- 2.1 Leeds City Council has maintained community centres for many years with the objective of providing space for community groups and community activity to take place.
- 2.2 The portfolio is mixed including:
 - Legacy civic infrastructure which provides the venues for significant community events, such as Blackburn Hall (Rothwell), Yeadon Town Hall, and Morley Town Hall;
 - High quality purpose built centres, e.g. Little London, Ebor Gardens, Mandela Centre (Chapelton);
 - Buildings which had previous uses, often schools and Churches which have been reused as community centres, such as St Matthews and St Gregory's, and some miscellaneous buildings such as the Old Coburn Sports hall; and
 - Other buildings, often on Council Housing estates, linked to the objective of creating effective local communities on those estates, which have been purpose built or have been adapted, for example, from estate shops.

3.0 Budget

- 3.1 The approved budget position for the portfolio is £1.4M revenue. This reflects a reduction of £250k compared to expenditure in 2012/13. One of the objectives of the review is to bring forward proposals that enable the efficiency savings to be fully realised. To date £100k has already been achieved through revised facility management arrangements and as a result of care closures as detailed at paragraph 5.4. Therefore proposals are required which achieve £150k of further savings.
- 3.2 Income is generated by a combination of lease income (from long-term users of the centres including other Council services such Children Services and Adult Social Care) and from lettings of individual rooms by community groups and individuals.

The current amount generated is at £92k in internal income and; £260k in external income.

3.3 In recognition of the contribution the centres make to council tenants the Housing Revenue Account contributes £473k to the overall budget.

4.0 Pricing

4.1 At the present time the portfolio has a complex charging structure for Community Centre lettings. It seeks to take account of a wide range of different needs, and provide solutions in all circumstances. It has been concluded that its complexity is a cause of inefficiency in the present arrangements, in particularly delaying the turn-around of bookings. This report, therefore, proposes a new charging structure.

5.0 Community centre and asset review

5.1 Throughout 2013 work was progressed on reviewing Community Centres and engaging with Council services and users of the centres. This provided the opportunity to:

- Encourage the consideration of Community Transfers, and approaches which have resulted in the responsibility for some facilities being transferred to third sector partners, for example the Woodhouse Community Centre to the stewardship of Oblong. Further opportunities are being considered which will improve the outcomes delivered, while reducing, on-going revenue costs for the Council.
- Put into place more effective arrangements to ensure that income is collected and robust agreements were in place with centre users, in particular long-term users.
- The closure of the William Gascoigne centre, and its users transferred to Middleton Sports centre. The building has since been leased and is now securing income for the council.

5.2 Additionally the asset review led by the Director of Development has put an additional focus on the delivery of savings from assets as detailed in the Council's financial strategy.

5.3 The portfolio was transferred to the responsibility of the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) from 1st October 2013. This responsibility runs alongside the Executive Delegation to Community Committees.

5.4 Since the transfer, three centre closures have been agreed at a local level with the facilities now utilised for other purposes:

- Alston lane has closed and the site has secured external funding to develop additional Council housing;
- Palace centre, which was in a poor state of repair, has closed and users, transferred to the nearby Mandela centre. The building will be sold generating a capital receipt in addition to revenue savings, and;

- Nowell Mount has been transferred from the Community Centre portfolio to Children's Services for under two's provision.

5.5 The review work proposed in this report will be complimentary to the overall plans of the Council to work with local people meeting need where it arises. The pathfinder plans for the Community Hubs will include new models of community facilities, making more extensive use of 'front of house' facilities, and working in partnership with other public, private and third sector bodies to ensure localities are effective. The Community Centres will contribute to our ambition to take the services of the Council and partners to local people.

6.0 Main issues

6.1 A Community Centre review

- 6.1.1 Community centres play a valuable role in bringing communities together, for example meeting the needs of both young and older people, providing a place to meet, learn and to positively engage. This work supports the Council's wider objectives, and it is appropriate for the council to support the effective running of community buildings.
- 6.1.2 The Council has a range of different arrangements in place for community buildings and the review will therefore consider whether common arrangements should be agreed for additional buildings, such as those previously operated by the ALMOs and now returned to mainstream Council management, and other community facilities.
- 6.1.3 There is also a need to maximise income generation so that costs to the council are minimal. It is also appropriate to consider what can be done to avoid duplication.
- 6.1.4 The proposed review will consider the 'balance sheet' of costs and benefits, financial and non-financial from the community centre network. It will examine evidence about how to most effectively control costs of the community centre portfolio, ensuring sustainability to meet the challenges of the Council's Financial Strategy.
- 6.1.5 It is proposed that the following areas are investigated;
- The revenue costs of the community centres and the opportunities to reduce costs;
 - The income achieved and opportunities to increase income;
 - Considering the level of usage of each centre and whether that is appropriate;
 - Exploring value for money; and alternative uses for buildings which meet more effectively Council objectives and the needs of communities, including asset transfer options.
- 6.1.6 It is suggested the review is undertaken to the following timetable.
- July/ August 2014 – evidence gathering based on the issues detailed at 6.1.5

- September 2014 – proposals developed and presented to Executive Board for consultation with Community Committees, local communities and stakeholders
- November 2014 - Final report to Executive Board for decision

6.2 Pricing policy

- 6.2.1 The present pricing policy is very complex. To demonstrate this the Inner North East Community committee area charging policy is attached at appendix A. It illustrates the degree of complexity in the arrangements which have been adopted, not least when you multiply this ten times to cover each community committee.
- 6.2.2 It should be noted that a minority of the income generated by the portfolio is from casual lettings; rather the majority is from long term arrangements with community organisations and Council departments.
- 6.2.3 Feedback has been received that the lettings arrangements are on occasions cumbersome and this is largely because of the difficulty of establishing how much it will cost a customer to hire a space. The proposed policy seeks to address that problem.
- 6.2.4 It is proposed that separate bespoke arrangements are developed for the venues in the portfolio (Blackburn Hall, Morley Town Hall, Yeadon Town Hall) reflecting the different activity which takes place in these buildings, compared to standard community centres. It is proposed to leave the arrangements for these buildings unchanged at this time.
- 6.2.5 It is proposed that three price points be set for each space available, reflecting the facilities on offer.
- Point 1 – Full commercial rate. This would include the private sector for profit activity, private individuals and political parties.
 - Point 2 – Reduced community group rate. This would include charitable and community organisations.
 - Point 3 – Free. This would be determined by the Community committee based on local priorities.
- 6.2.6 There will be a simple definition of spaces as halls, delivery spaces, or kitchens. The policy is summarised at appendix B. The default arrangement will be payment in advance. If these recommendations are agreed the service will publish a list of available rooms, defining them as halls, delivery spaces or kitchens.
- 6.2.7 It is proposed that free lets shall be approved by the Community Committees, supported by appropriate locality based delegated decisions. It is also proposed that Community Committees will be provided with an annual report detailing costs incurred, costs waived and income generated. Through these reports Community Committees will have more effective oversight of these facilities on behalf of local people.

- 6.2.8 Pilot arrangements to test the new pricing policy commenced in April 2014. Although this is a limited time to test – there have been no adverse responses, and it is therefore considered appropriate to now recommend this approach across the portfolio, subject to consultation with Community Committees.

7.0 Corporate Considerations

7.1 Consultation and Engagement

- 7.1.1 The current arrangements have been developed in consultation with elected members through Area Committees, and discussion about individual centres. User groups and interested community organisations have the opportunity to be involved.
- 7.1.2 Since the transfer of the portfolio Resources and Council Services Scrutiny Board have taken an interest in the arrangements for community centres and have considered evidence on the current operations and the need to improve both the operational arrangements including pricing, and the overall objectives in this area. See Minute at appendix C.
- 7.1.3 The review will systematically consult with members, users and the wider public on the options for the Community Centre portfolio.

7.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

- 7.2.1 In conducting the review full account will need to be taken of equality and diversity issues, this will be included in the conclusions reported to members. The consideration of pricing policy has been screened and that is attached and concludes there are no equality and diversity impacts to consider.

7.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 7.3.1 The Vision for Leeds 2011 – 2030 sets out the long-term aim for Leeds to be the Best City in the UK. A key aim is that: Our communities will thrive and people will be confident, skilled, enterprising, active and involved.
- 7.3.2 The provision of community centres fits into this long-term strategic aim, and also the Best Council 2013-17 objectives of ‘Supporting communities and tackling poverty’ and ‘Becoming a more efficient and enterprising council’ which includes respectively the priorities of ‘Strengthening local accountability and being more responsive to the needs of local communities’ and ‘Improving how we’re organised and making the best use of our assets’.

7.4 Resources and value for money

- 7.4.1 The review proposed in this report has the aim of improving value for money, the proposed pricing changes aim to improve efficiency and raise additional income. Proposals will be developed which aim to achieve efficiency savings of £150k as part of the Council’s financial strategy.

7.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 7.5.1 There are no legal implications.

7.6 Risk Management

7.6.1 The primary risk of the Community Centre portfolio is that a failure to control costs results in the costs exceeding budgets. There is a competing risk of insufficient community infrastructure to meet the Council's vision for vibrant localities. The review will examine the appropriate balance and make recommendations accordingly.

8.0 Conclusions

8.1 The Community Centre portfolio contributes to Leeds City Council priorities for the development of local communities, creating a space for community activity, meeting the needs of citizens old and young; and bringing different communities together. It is appropriate that Council resources contribute to that objective, but consideration needs to be given to maximising income, minimising costs, and avoiding duplication.

9.0 Recommendations

9.1 Executive board is asked to:-

- Request that the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and communities) conducts a full review of the Council's portfolio of community centres the benefits and costs to the local community, and brings forward specific proposals for consultation.
- To endorse the revised pricing policy set out in this report, subject to that the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and communities) consulting with Community Committees prior to proposed implementation of the changes with effect from 1st September 2014.

Background documents¹

- None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

Appendix A current Charges Inner NE

Categories	Main Group	Examples	North East Inner	Room Band / Charges
Cat 1	Adult Learning / Educational Classes (inc. provision for	FE Colleges	£2.50 per hour per room for all rooms. (This rate applies up to 2000hrs use)	Band A (£25 per hour)
		Schools	£2.50 per hour per room for all rooms	Band B (£18 per hour)
		WEA (Workers Education Association)	£2.50 per hour per room where WEA charge users, free use if they do not charge users.	Band C (£12 per hour)
Cat 2	Centre Management Committees / User Groups	Applies to meetings to discuss building related issues held either by the centre	No charge Monday to Friday.	Band D (£5 per hour) (only charge if kitchen booked for food preparation)
		Management Committee activities i.e. Centre fundraising events, Centre open days or fun days, management committee run parties such as Halloween, Christmas	£5 per room per hour at weekends/council holidays. 6 free events per year. £5 per hour per room thereafter.	Band E (negotiable fee)
Cat 3	Meetings of Community Benefit	i.e. Pubwatch, TARA, Nhood Watch, crime reduction advice, fire safety	No charge Monday to Friday	
			£5 per room per hour for weekend/council holiday usage of rooms.	
		ADP (Area Delivery Plan) Priority events Groups which fall under this category will only be put forward by area management, lettings will not assess groups against this criteria, they will be advised by AMT	No charge	
Cat 4	Commercial use	General - sale of goods - including gold, jewellery, carpets clothing, auctions	Standard charges	
		TV Filming	£1000 per day	
Cat 5	Council Departments or Statutory Agencies	Public performance	£250 per half day (four hours)	
		Internal / inter-agency meetings or events (officer only, not involving general public)	Standard charges to be applied seven days per week. Use by the Area Management Team would be free of charge. Any meetings consulting or involving members of the public to be charged at Cat 3 rate.	
Cat 6	Lifestyle and leisure groups	Lifestyle and leisure groups - charged activity, surplus reinvested in service (no profit)	No charge Monday - Friday. 50% charges at weekends and Council Bank Holidays	
		Lifestyle and leisure groups - charged activity surplus not reinvested (profit)	Standard charges seven days per week	
		Lifestyle and leisure - free activity	No charge Monday - Friday. £5ph charges at weekends and Council Bank Holidays	
Cat 7	Older Peoples Groups	Older Peoples' groups (60+) free activity	No charge	
		Older Peoples' groups (60+), charged activity, surplus reinvested (no profit)	No charge Monday - Friday. £2.50 per hour per room at weekends and Council Bank Holidays	
		Older Peoples' groups (60+), charged activity, surplus not reinvested (profit)	50% charge Monday - Friday. Standard charges at weekends and Council Bank Holidays	
Cat 8	Amateur Productions by community and voluntary organisations.	Performances	Performances charged at the hourly room rate.	
		Rehearsals	Rehearsals charged at 50% of the hourly room rate.	
		Set Building	No charge when building is already in use / caretaker on site. Otherwise group will have to pay caretakers charge	
Cat 9	Private Functions	General functions e.g. conferences, seminars, presentations	Standard charges for room hire for other functions. Additional charges as appropriate based on costs of any extra services needed for the function - security, caretaking and cleaning.	
		Wedding Ceremony + civil partnerships	Standard room rate seven days per week	
		Wedding Reception	The wedding reception falls under charges for parties	
		Birthday parties under 13 yrs	Children's Birthday parties (under 13) room rate only plus cost of cleaning	
		Parties upto 100 people	Parties of up to 100 people Room rate + possible cleaning charge (N.B. a cleaning charge will only be applied if the hirer does not clean up after the event.)	
		Parties upto 101 - 200 people	Parties 100-200 people £25 room rate x 5 hours Possible cleaning and skip charge (N.B. a cleaning / skip charge will only be applied if the hirer does not clean up after the event.)	
		Parties upto 201 - 400 people	Parties 300 - 400 people £25 room rate x 5 hours Possible cleaning and skip charge (N.B. a cleaning / skip charge will only be applied if the hirer does not clean up after the event.)	
		Parties upto 401 - 600 people	Parties 500-600 people £25 room rate x 5 hours Possible cleaning and skip charge (N.B. a cleaning / skip charge will only be applied if the hirer does not clean up after the event.)	
		Parties upto 601 - 800 people	Parties 800-1000 people £25 room rate x 5 hours Possible cleaning and skip charge (N.B. a cleaning / skip charge will only be applied if the hirer does not clean up after the event.)	
		Parties upto 801 - 1000 people	Parties 1000-1500 people £25 room rate x 5 hours Possible cleaning and skip charge (N.B. a cleaning / skip charge will only be applied if the hirer does not clean up after the event.)	
Cat 10	Not for profit organisations	Charities, Company Limited by Guarantee, un registered groups, Industrial societies or co-operatives carrying out charitable fundraising events (jumble sales, charity auctions etc).	50% discount on standard charge seven days per week	
Cat 11	Young People	Young people - Under 19. Charged activities, surplus reinvested - e.g. Breakfast clubs, after school clubs, play schemes, playgroups, uniformed services (scouts, guides, St John's Ambulance)	No charge Monday - Friday. £2.50 per hour per room at weekends and Council Bank Holidays	
		Young people - Under 19. Charged activities surplus not reinvested - e.g. Martial arts, Under 18 discos, Dancing classes	50% charge Monday - Friday. Standard charges at weekends and Council Bank Holidays	
		Young people - Under 19. free activities - e.g. Youth Service provision	No charge	
Cat 12	Vulnerable Adults (Self Help and Support Groups)	Self - Help Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, Mental Health Support Groups, Disabled groups (blind, deaf, physically impaired, learning disabilities), Counselling	No charge Monday to Friday and £5 per room per hour for weekend/council holiday usage of rooms.	
		Support Mental Health Support, Special Needs and Learning Disability Support, Physical disability Support	No charge Monday to Friday and £5 per room per hour for weekend/council holiday usage of rooms.	
		Advice (free advice) CAB, debt counselling, any other free advice type session	No charge Monday to Friday and £5 per room per hour for weekend/council holiday usage of rooms.	
Cat 13	Political Meetings	Councillors & MPs surgeries	No charge Monday to Friday and £5 per room per hour for weekend/council holiday usage of rooms.	
		Political group meetings	Standard charges to be applied.	

Centre	Address
Mandela Centre	Chapeltown Road, Chapeltown, Leeds LS7 3HY
Palace Youth Centre	90-92 Shepherds Lane, Leeds LS7 4DZ

Appendix B

Simplified Community Centre Pricing

- Large Rooms generally Halls
- 'Delivery space'- all other rooms
- Kitchens for food preparation

The proposed charges are

	Commercial Rates	Community Rate
Large Rooms generally Halls	£25.00 per hour	£10 per hour
'Delivery space'- all other rooms	£12.50 per hour	£5 per hour
Kitchens for food preparation	£5.00 per hour	£1 per hour

Appendix C

Minutes

Scrutiny Board (Resources and Council Services)

Monday, 24th February, 2014 10.00 am

The Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) submitted a report detailing progress with the improved arrangements for the Community Centre portfolio.

The following were in attendance and responded to Board Members questions and comments:

- Councillor Peter Gruen, Executive Member, Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services
- Martin Dean, Head of Service (Communities)

The Scrutiny Board acknowledged that community centres play a valuable role in the city and that the current work undertaken at community centres

supports the Council's wider objectives. The Scrutiny Board also agreed that it was appropriate for the council to support the effective running of the buildings maximising the income generated from users so that the costs to the council are controlled.

The Scrutiny Board supported the establishment of three price points for each space available, reflecting the facilities on offer:

- Point 1 – Full economic cost or 'Market Rent'
- Point 2 – reduced community group rate
- Point 3 – Free.

The Scrutiny Board also supported proposals to simplify the lettings process by:

- Separating venues and community centres so that appropriate information is collected;
- Utilising the option to pay in advance by credit/debit card;
- Considering whether all the information currently collected is necessary, with a view to simplifying the process.

The Board continued to raise its concern over the standard of service received on occasion from the lettings service. The Head of Service (Communities) confirmed that this matter had been taken up with the relevant officer.

The Board noted the positive role Area Committee could have in relation to pricing.

RESOLVED –

(i) To support the proposals outlined in the report.

(ii) To receive a further progress report in the new municipal year.