

Supplementary Information Outer West Community Committee

Wednesday 1st July 2015

New pricing policy for Community Centres

1. The new three point pricing policy for community centres within the citizens and communities portfolio was implemented for new bookings on 1st May 2015. This was agreed by Executive Board in July 2014. The new policy sets prices at commercial and community rates and allows Community Committees to agree free lettings in their community centres. In order to improve accountability for these decisions, free lettings now need to be agreed for each individual letting. Each Community Committee is able to agree the delegated approval process that best suits their needs. (Please see the appended document for further information).
2. A second stage review will look at developing the community centre delegation arrangements to increase accountability at a local level. Initial discussions will take place with Community Committee Chairs to scope this work including the possibility of greater budget delegation. The implementation of the pricing review has uncovered a number of deficiencies in the availability of management information relating to the usage and financial performance of community centres, which is needed to underpin an improved Community Committee delegation. This will be addressed during review of lettings processes, including the move towards online transactions.
3. A major review is commencing of the service level agreement between Citizens and Communities and Civic Enterprise Leeds covering caretaking, cleaning, repairs, programmed maintenance and building management. Community Committees will be involved in this process as it takes shape.

Recommendations

4. Members are asked to;
 - Agree the delegated approval process that best suits their needs.

Community Centre's Pricing Policy

The revised community centres pricing policy came into effect on 1st May, for all new lettings across the Citizens & Communities Directorate portfolio. The new hourly rates are as follows:

	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

A change in the new policy means that Community Committees are able to agree free lettings in their centres but, to improve accountability for these decisions, these now have to be agreed for each individual letting.

From a report taken to resources scrutiny board on 27th April:

"The decision made by Executive Board in July 2014 allowed for Community Committees to agree free lettings based on the priorities for their area. This is a major change to how the current pricing policy operates in that each individual booking will need Community Committee approval to qualify for a free letting. The intention is for the process for paid lettings to be improved and streamlined to avoid delays in organising lettings. This will also mean that there is improved accountability for decisions made to forego council income.

Under the old pricing policy, decisions to allow free use of community centres have been made through the lettings team using a complicated set of criteria, agreed by Area Committees, which has led to delays in confirming bookings. It has also meant that there is a lack of clarity of how much it costs to hire rooms in community centres. The new policy will allow the Council to publicise the cost of using our centres, both online and at each centre, and will introduce a process for Community Committees to agree free lets in their area.

Under the new process individuals making bookings will be told the cost of their booking at the point that they make the enquiry. If they are willing and able to pay the fee then their letting will be processed as quickly as possible. If they are requesting a free letting then they will need to complete an application and this will be forwarded to the appropriate contact for the Community Committee where the decision will be made.

This means that there will be a delay in confirming any booking if the hirer is requesting a free letting. No free lettings will be agreed without at least 2 weeks' notice before the date of the booking.

To avoid extensive delays in Community Committees being able to consider and agree free lettings, Community Committees will need to agree their own delegated decision

arrangements. These decisions may be made through a sub-committee, a nominated elected member or delegated to the Area Leader.”

Conversations need to take place with the Community Chairs to agree an approval process going forward. As mentioned in the scrutiny boards report the process needs to allow approval within 2 weeks and will likely need some delegated responsibility to avoid having to wait for community committee / sub group meetings to take place.

The only exceptions to this process are bookings made by the Communities Team, Area Teams and the Community Committees. These bookings will be free of charge but won't need to go through the free letting application process. A standard lettings form will still need to be completed for all bookings, a price will need to be applied to the booking and then marked “fee waived” on the database.

As Citezens & Communities Directorate holds the budgets for these centres there is no requirement to charge ourselves. This also applies for Cllr surgeries as these are closely linked to Community Committees.