



Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Outer West Area Committee

Date: 14th September 2007

Subject: Greenhill Community Centre

Electoral Wards Affected:

Calverley & Farsley
Farnley & Wortley
Pudsey

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Council
Function

Delegated Executive
Function available
for Call In

Delegated Executive
Function not available for
Call In Details set out in the
report

Executive Summary

This report seeks to provide an update on the current position of Greenhill Community Centre, and to inform the Area Committee that Area Management Team are requesting that the centre be declared surplus to requirement. In order to achieve this, a request has been put forward to Asset Management to ask them to carry out a sale or re-lease for other use.

1.0 Purpose of this Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the current position of Greenhill Community Centre. Area Management Team have obtained Regeneration Management Team's (RMT) permission to declare the centre surplus, and a request has been made to Asset Management to carry out a sale or re lease for other use.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 West Leeds Area Management became responsible for the running of Greenhill Community Centre when it was passed from Learning and Leisure in 2006. Greenhill Community Centre is located on the Gamble Hill estate In Wortley.

2.2 Until December 2006 the centre was used as a community centre providing various activities, ranging from:

- youth groups run by the Youth Service (problems were encountered as younger siblings attended the group, resulting in the Youth Service's target audience not being met. Finally, the Youth Service were barred from using the centre by the Committee due to strained relationships with centre management around usage/supervision.;
- Connexion Service – although with the absence of the young people in the centre meant that service the service was somewhat under utilised;
- Karate Group – withdrew in summer last year and have found an alternative base;
- Gamble Hill Residents Association had found alternative premises due to cost of hiring the centre and other tensions
- Line dancing who have now found alternative provision;
- luncheon clubs, bingo, children's parties etc, which served to raise some income.

2.3 The only current interest in the centre is from a revived voluntary group (club) run by local parents, who have now identified the local Primary School as a suitable alternative base (it is Area Management's intention to support this provision by awarding some of the relevant equipment currently in the centre (e.g pool table, football table etc) for the group to use;

2.4 This centre cost Leeds City Council £11,700 per annum to run (this figure includes repayment of borrowed income to refurbish the building , and the cost of testing fire hazard equipment). As the centre has been unofficially leased to the Committee, they have been responsible for the payment of associated running costs (e.g. electricity, water, business rates etc), and the nominal rent charge. No income has been generated by the centre that Leeds City Council are aware of, other than a small amount of money approx £2.86 which remains in the Committee's bank account.

2.5 It should be noted that the Area Management Team feel that a series of unpaid utility bills may still be outstanding for the centre due to the fact that the Committee withdrew in December 2006, but arrangements have only just been made (by Area Management) to cut off such services. In addition, it has come to Area Management's attention that business rates have not been paid for 2006/7 by the Committee. Business rates have been informed that the centre has been empty since the end of March 2007, which means that business rates will be suspended for 3 months of this date, however, the owner of the building will become liable for 50% of the remaining balance, following this period.

2.6 Over the past months the centre has gradually ceased to operate. With the Committee finally pulling out in December 2006, after verbally declaring their intention to quit some 15 months ago, but staying put longer than expected, in an effort to revive the centre

2.7 The Area Management Team have held several public meetings (5) between February and May of this year to see if anyone would take over the running of the centre to no

avail, with attendance at these meetings dwindling from 6 at best to one at worst. Local Ward Councillors have been informed of Area Management's efforts, and have given their support to declaring the centre to be surplus.

- 2.8 Due to the fact that the building is now empty, Area Management Team have arranged via Civic Buildings for the centre's windows to be boarded up, and the external gates to be padlocked.

3.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance

- 3.1 By declaring Greenhill Community Centre surplus to requirement, this will help to create better governance of Council assets, and links directly to Asset Management plans ("The effective utilisation of the Council's property") by helping to protect the Council's assets.

4.0 Legal and Resource Implications

- 4.1 There will be an overall saving on maintenance and running costs to the Department of Environments and Neighbourhoods. However, the issue of unpaid outstanding bills, may result in the Department having to pay a percentage of these, if the Committee is not able to honour these in full.
- 4.2 If the building were to be sold, a share of the Capital receipt would pass back to Area Management Outer West. This money would be used to support other provision in the area, with a particular emphasis on youth activities.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 Due to the fact that the Greenhill Community Centre has no current users, indeed, all previous users whose groups are still active have found alternative premises, and the fact that there is no local interest in taking over the running of the centre, it is concluded that the centre should be declared surplus to requirements.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 West Leeds Area Management request that the Area Management Committee note the proposal to declare Greenhill Community Centre surplus to requirements, and the fact that this request has been formally forwarded to Asset Management for them to carry out a sale or re lease for other uses.

