



## Report of the Director Environment & Neighbourhoods

### Inner North West Area Committee

Date: 13<sup>th</sup> December 2007

### Subject: Community Centre Pricings Policy Review Update

#### Electoral Wards Affected:

**Headingley**  
**Hyde Park & Woodhouse**  
**Kirkstall**  
**Weetwood**

Ward Members consulted  
(referred to in report)

#### Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Disabled People

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

A report was submitted to the Inner North West Area Committee at its June 2007 meeting which sought approval to undertake consultation on a proposed new pricing policy. The Committee requested that ahead of consultation being undertaken a draft pricing structure be brought back for consideration.

In June 2006 the Inner North West Area Committee was delegated responsibility for the management of four community centres, Headingley, Woodsley Road, Becketts Park and Burley Lodge. Of these Becketts Park and Burley Lodge are subject to lease arrangements with third sector organisations, and are therefore excluded from the parameters of this report.

Under present arrangements there is wide ranging variation in charges levied for room bookings within community centres across the city. Some groups have free use, whereas others are charged the full cost. No transparent or equitable policy is in place to provide a rationale for who gets charged and who doesn't.

Through the delegation of community centres the Area Committee is obliged to carry out a review of the existing pricing structure of Headingley and Woodsley Road (and any further centres that enter the Area Committee's portfolio).

The Area Committee is asked to agree to a common pricing structure, to be applied across the city, and to approve further work to be undertaken, through a Member working group, on a discount strategy which will include consultation with existing community centre users.

## **1.0 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the Area Committee with up dated information regarding the review of the citywide community centre pricing policy, and to gain approval for progressing development of a complementary discount structure.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Since 2006 Area Committees have been delegated the function of Community Centres within their respective areas. In delegating this function Executive Board transferred the following responsibilities to Area Committees:-

- Overseeing revenue budgets;
- Operational arrangements and the use of the centres;
- Agreeing and implementing a schedule of charges and discounts for directly managed centres; and
- Making asset management and investment proposals to ensure the portfolio is sustainable and meets local needs.

- 2.2 In October 2004 Executive Board were presented with a report on community centre pricing structures. As a result the Board requested that initial citywide consultation be undertaken with user groups and Area Management teams, with a view to producing a common framework pricing policy.

- 2.3 As a result of this consultation evidence was gathered on the wide ranging variation in existing community centre charges. With some groups having had longstanding free use of centres, whilst others incur charges. Variances in charges were not consistent and could depend on location, type of group and time when bookings were first made. Understandably, the main comments arising from the consultation were about charges and discounts rather than the principles of the policy. A summary of key points raised during this consultation are detailed in Appendix 1.

- 2.4 In March 2006 Executive Board further considered the draft pricing policy and agreed to give Area Committees the responsibility for setting consistent charges across the city, and discretionary discount structures for users within each area. It also instructed that Area Management teams undertake local consultation on proposed revisions to the pricing policy and discount structure.

## **3.0 Update**

- 3.1 In June 2007 the Area Committee received an initial report on proposals to develop and implement a revised pricing policy. The Committee requested that further work be carried out on a draft pricing structure ahead of consultation commencing, and that this be brought back to a future meeting.

- 3.2 Since June advice has been received that Area Committees are requested to adopt a standard pricing policy, as detailed at 5.0. In addition to this there is the opportunity

for Committees to develop and apply a discount structure, allowing for subsidised rates to specified types of groups.

- 3.3 A citywide group, consisting of officers from Area Management and Regeneration Partnerships (who lead on citywide community centre issues), is currently meeting to discuss this issue to try to achieve a workable framework for delivering the new pricing policy and associated discount structures.

#### 4.0 Inner North West Community Centres

- 4.1 The following centres (see Appendix 2-3 for data sheets on each) have been delegated to the Area Committee (leased centres would not be covered by a revised policy):-

- Woodsley Road
- Headingley
- Burley Lodge (leased)
- Becketts Park (leased)

- 4.2 It is anticipated that the following centres (see Appendix 4-6 for data sheets on each) will join the existing Area Committee portfolio in 2008/07 financial year:-

- Meanwood
- Little London
- Woodhouse

- 4.3 Present charging arrangements at all the centres, except those leased, means that only one-off bookings, for example Area Management arranged meetings, are charged. The result of this is that each centre has minimum revenue income, the total of which for 2006/07 (for Woodsley Road and Headingley) was £11,100.

- 4.4 The overall revenue budget, as detailed in the Area Function Schedule for 2007/08, needed to cover the running of Headingley and Woodsley Road Community Centres is as follows:

<b>Heading</b>	<b>Budget 2007/08 (£)</b>
Rates	7,010
Rental Support	0
Supply & services	1,770
Caretaking	91,590
Premises	30,000
Management & supervision charges (levied by City Services)	14,650
Income for centre rentals	0
Income	-11,100
<b>Net Revenue Budget</b>	<b>133,920</b>

## 5.0 Developing a Charging Policy

5.1 It is not the intention of the revised pricing policy to maximise revenue income from community centre use, it is therefore anticipated that the majority of existing users will not be negatively impacted upon as a result. The primary purpose of the revised policy is to provide transparent and equitable citywide pricing.

5.2 It is important to stress that any charging policy would be complemented by a structure for offering discounted rates to groups meeting area delivery priorities, or as otherwise specified.

### 5.3 *Charging for Office/Permanent Space*

5.3.1 There are some organisation using space within community centres as their offices. These range from voluntary and community groups to council services. It is proposed that the starting point for regular office use should be based upon a cost per square metre.

5.3.2 As a matter of principle, the Area Committee is asked to consider having a range of charges based on calculations per square metre, ranging from full, to discounted, to wholly subsidised, depending on the type of organisation using the centre and how closely it fulfils Area Committee priorities.

5.3.3 The proposal would be for the use of lease agreements with these organisations, with discounts linked to clear community benefits that would be delivered as a result of the activities undertaken by the organisation.

5.3.4 Current office space arrangements within the area's community centres are as follows:-

<u>Centre</u>	<u>Office Space</u>
Headingley	No arrangement
Woodsley Road	No arrangement
Meanwood	Meanwood Valley Baptist Church & Youth Service
Little London	Youth Service
Woodhouse	Youth Service

### 5.4 *Charging for Events, Activities and Meetings*

5.4.1 It is suggested that basic charges are introduced depending on the size of the room.

<b>Room Band</b>	<b>Size</b>
Band A	large, up to 12m x 12m (144 sq m)
Band B	medium, up to 9m x 9m (81 sq m)
Band C	small, up to 6m x 6m (36 sq m)

5.4.2 The proposed charges have been based on average charges for hired rooms across the city (i.e. schools, church halls and other non Council community venues) are as follows (per hour):-

<b>Room Band</b>	<b>Current Standard Charge</b>	<b>Proposed Standard Charge (weekdays)</b>
Band A	£17 - £30	£25
Band B	£10 - £17	£18
Band C	£5 - £10	£12
Kitchen	£5 - £10	£5
Storage Rooms	n/a	Subject to individual negotiation

5.4.3 It is important to remember when considering the above proposed charges, that these are exclusive of any discount structure that may apply.

5.4.4 It is proposed that for weekend use of community centres the lettings team will calculate the additional cost for caretaking and cleaning services on an individual basis, and then apply any discounts to that price.

5.4.5 At present community centre hire for weddings is £450, which does not cover the cost to the Council in terms of caretaking, security, cleansing and other overheads. It is proposed that this standard charge be increased to £650, which is still below the amount required for the Council to cover its costs. The revised price has been arrived at based on the cost to the Council and on what neighbouring authorities charge, which is considerably higher than £650, in one case £900.

## 5.5 *Charging for Further Education Use*

5.5.1 Since 1992 colleges have been granted user rights to some centres in order to secure further education provision in areas of need. Present user right arrangements are as follows:-

<u>Centre</u>	<u>College</u>	<u>Hours/week</u>
Headingley	No arrangement	
Woodsley Road	No arrangement	
Meanwood	Park Lane	12 hours
Little London	No arrangement	
Woodhouse	No arrangement	

5.5.2 It is proposed to continue with existing pricing arrangements for colleges with user rights, at £2.50 per hour, per room.

## 6.0 Developing a Discount Structure

6.1 In order to ensure transparent and equitable charges for use of community centres a discount structure must clearly define who is eligible for subsidised rates, whether there are any exemptions and why the eligibility exists (e.g. group delivers benefits towards area priorities).

6.2 The below is an example of how the Area Committee could develop a simple, easily workable discount structure:-

User/Type of Booking	Full Cost	50% discount	100% discount	Rationale/ Exemption
Youth Group			●	Meets Area Committee priorities
Baby/Toddler Group			●	Where the group is run commercially full price will be charged
Older People's Group			●	Meets Area Committee priorities
Commercial	●			Commercial activities should not be subsidised by the Council
Community Consultation (private organisation)	●			Commercial activities should not be subsidised by the Council
Partner Agencies (e.g. police, PCT)			●	Enhances partnership work
Hobby/interest groups (e.g. art, music, games)		●		Recipients of services may not be entirely local to the inner north west
Support Groups (e.g. CAB, Alcoholics Anonymous)		●		Recipients of services may not be entirely local to the inner north west
Community/Resident Associations			●	Meets Area Committee priorities
Healthy Activities			●	Where the group is run commercially full price will be charged
Political Groups	●			Does not meet Area Committee priorities

6.3 The above list is by no means exhaustive, more analysis could be undertaken on existing users with a view to producing a detailed listing of user types. Alternatively, the Area Committee could look to create just a few broad categories within which to fit existing users.

## **7.0 Next Steps**

7.1 It is proposed that a Member working group is established with Area Management, to develop a discount structure following consultation with existing community centres users.

7.2 A report detailing the outcome of the consultation, the recommendations of the Member working group and a revised policy and discount structure for approval, will be submitted to the Area Committee at its April 2008 meeting.

## **8.0 Recommendations**

8.1 The Area Committee is asked to:-

- a) note the contents of the report;
- b) agree to the principles of the proposed pricing policy, as detailed in 5.0; and
- c) agree to establish a Member working group to guide consultation with existing community centre users and the development of a discount structure.