



Report of the Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods Directorate

South Leeds (Outer) Area Committee

Date: Monday 30th March 2009

Subject: St Gabriel's Community Centre – 12 Month Review Report

<p>Electoral Wards Affected:</p> <p>Ardsley & Robin Hood</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ward Members consulted (referred to in report)</p>	<p>Specific Implications For:</p> <p>Equality and Diversity <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Community Cohesion <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Narrowing the Gap <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Council Function <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Delegated Executive Function available for Call In <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Delegated Executive Function not available for Call In Details set out in the report <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Executive Summary

This report provides a detailed review of the operation of St Gabriel's Community Centre over the last 12 months. It highlights the work of the Management Committee, Area Management Team and partners in supporting the development of the centre and provides options for the future.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the Outer South Area Committee with an overview of activity that has taken place at St Gabriel's Community Centre over the last 12 months since it was decided to extend the review period on the building for a further year.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 In November 2007, a piece of work on the Outer South's Community Centre portfolio commenced. The scope of the work was to ensure that the Area Committee had a portfolio of facilities which were well used, in relatively good condition and were financially efficient to operate. From this exercise, a number of buildings were highlighted for review, with St Gabriel's Community Centre being one of them.

2.2 St Gabriel's became part of the review due to a number of factors – the lease between Leeds City Council and the church for the building was up for renewal, the centre was only being used for eight hours per week for Youth Service sessions and the facility nearly £23,000 to operate in 2007/08, with £279 income being generated.

2.3 A report was presented to Outer South Area Committee in April 2008 outlining this detail. Area Committee decided that the facility could have an extended review period of 12 months due to community interest shown in running new activities from the facility and local community members wanting to establish a Management Committee which would publicise and promote the building as well as working with local people to deliver activities which people would like to participate in.

3.0 St Gabriel's Community Centre - 12 months on

3.1 Since the 12 month extended review period was agreed at Outer South Area Committee in April 2008, a great deal of work has happened at the facility in terms of the Management Committee generating new activities and South East Area Management providing support and guidance when needed on operational issues. The sections below highlight the progress made, the challenges faced and the next steps to go forward.

3.2 Support from South East Area Management

3.2.1 Over the last 12 months, South East Area Management has provided a considerable amount of support to St Gabriel's Management Committee. This has ranged from advice on issues such as lettings, insurance and repairs, to support with implementing the key holding at the facility. Area Management have also encouraged the management committee to access Area Well Being Small Grant funding to provide new equipment for the kitchen, as well as providing funding for new tables and chairs for the centre from the Outer South Community Centres fund, as the furniture wasn't adequate. It is felt if the facility was to remain open, the management committee would still require support, mainly around facilities management issues which Corporate Property Management should pick up rather Area Management who don't directly deal with a number of the issues raised and in turn then have to refer the issues on to other officers.

3.2.2 Use of the facility has significantly increased compared to this time in 2008 – the Youth Service were only using the facility for eight hours per week and there were minimal other ad hoc bookings. Now the building is used for nearly 30 hours per week. The majority of activities taking place fall under the category of free lettings, therefore no additional income has been generated but costs to run the building has increased in terms of caretaking. This is due to the time it took to implement the key holding arrangements with the management committee, as between May and October, all lettings at the building required a caretaker to be present. The timetable below shows the programme of regular activities taking place at the centre:

Day	Activity
Monday	Youth Service 6.30pm – 9.30pm
Tuesday	Coffee Morning 9.30am – 2pm Youth Service 5.45pm - 8.45pm St Gabriel's Committee 8.15pm – 10pm
Wednesday	Yoga 6.30pm – 9.30pm Labour Party Meeting (second Wednesday each month) 6.30pm – 10pm Councillor Renshaw's Advice Surgery (fourth Wednesday each month) 5.30pm – 7.30pm
Thursday	OAP Drop In Sessions 9.30am – 2pm Youth Service 6.30pm – 9.30pm
Friday	Mums & Tots 11am – 2pm OAP Soup Lunch (first Friday of each month) 11am – 2pm

Saturday	Karate Sessions 9am – 1pm
Sunday	No activities

3.2.3 Lettings Unit have also questioned some of the information provided to Area Management by St Gabriel's Management Committee around the sessions taking place from the centre as some of the activities provided on certain days didn't always match up with the details submitted on the lettings forms.

3.2.4 As of March 5th, the current expenditure to run the facility in the 2008/09 financial stands at £22,339. A full breakdown is highlighted below. This figure varies by £574.84 compared to £22,914.84 at the end of 2007/08 financial year. The 2007/08 figures are the final figures after the consolidation of accounts at the end of the 2007/08 financial year. The 2007/08 end of year figure varies slightly from the information presented at Area Committee on 14th April 2008, as some charges had been incorrectly allocated against the St Gabriel's cost centre and not all income had been received. Please also note that the capital depreciation charges for the facility are not included in the figures below, as these figures are not variable and something we cannot change. The income generated at the building relates to use by South East Area Management and the centre being used as a polling station for elections in May.

Cost Type	2008/09	2007/08	Variance
Other Services	£49	£289.73	£240.73
Waste Removal	£53	£242.84	£189.84
Rates	£1,109	£1,065.60	£43.40
Caretaking	£15,281	£12,902.05	£2,378.95
Maintenance	£4,098	£6,227.63	£2,129.63
Management Fee (LCC Facilities Management)	£2,042	£2,465.99	£423.99
Income from Lettings	£294	£279	£15
Total	£22,339	£22,914.84	£575.84

3.2.5 Even though key holding has been put in place at the facility, there is still high levels of caretaking costs. The only lettings which the caretaker is covering is the ones for LCC Youth Service. Facilities Management are exploring ways in which the caretaking costs can be reduced, as this is the main expenditure against the St Gabriel's budget. One way in which this cost reduction is being pursued is by Youth Service agreeing to become a key holder at the facility from the 1st April 2009. This will mean that only a cleaning service will be required at the facility and some ad hoc caretaking cover.

3.2.6 Since it was decided that the building was to remain open for a further year, a new boiler has been fitted at the facility. This is the only worked that was deemed essential at the centre. A revised condition survey has also been undertaken at Gabriel's in September 2008. The only remaining outstanding backlog work that needs to be completed is the upgrading of the fire detection system which will cost in the region of £3,500 and is recommended to be undertaken in the 2009/10 financial year.

3.2.7 Consultation has been carried out with ward members regarding the work which has been undertaken at St Gabriel's over the last twelve months. Members were pleased that additional activities had been generated at the facility for the community and that the building was being used by a number of community members who have may not previously accessed the centre. However, some concerns were raised with regards to lack of communication from the management committee, as it was felt that not all ward members were made fully aware of the activities were happening or being planned to take place from the facility. Members would like more information and to be kept more informed of what the management committee is doing at the facility.

3.3 St Gabriel's Management Committee

3.3.1 When it was first announced that St Gabriel's Centre would be one of the community facilities which formed part of the review of community centres in the Outer South area, this prompted local residents to form a management committee. The committee has a membership of 11, including local residents, young people and a local ward member. The committees main focus is around generating activities and promoting the facility to local people. The management committee have also taken on responsibility as key holders for the facility, in order to reduce caretaking costs associated with the running of the facility.

3.3.2 Since the management committee have been focusing on the facility, nine new activities have been set up and are operating from the building:-

- Coffee Morning (weekly)
- Book Club (weekly)
- Karate Club (weekly)
- Fun Days for children aged 5 – 8yrs (School Holidays)
- Bingo / social evenings (monthly)
- Mums & Tots Group (weekly)
- Yoga Classes (three sessions per month)
- Soup Lunches (monthly)
- Community Meetings (quarterly)

Alongside the nine new sessions, Leeds City Council Youth Service are operating a youth club from the facility three evenings per week. Labour Party Meetings and Councillor Surgeries are also being held at the facility.

3.3.3 There has also been interest shown by local community members around having some kind of computer course, which the management committee are currently discussing with Joseph Priestley College to see if there is a possibility of establishing such a session to commence from September 2009.

3.3.4 Over the last 12 months, the management committee feel that the main challenges faced are around the building being suitable and fit for purpose for the activities they wish to deliver. For example, the committee felt that the furniture wasn't adequate in the facility to meet their needs. Outer South Area Committee has approved funding to supply new furniture for the facility. Another issue raised was about how suitable the kitchen / kitchen equipment was – the management committee were advised to submit a small grants application towards new crockery / cutlery, which is currently being processed by South East Area Management.

3.3.5 The management committee hope that the facility will remain open in order for the committee members to take forward their vision they have for the facility. The committee have a number of longer term aims which mainly focus around the provision of activities for young people in the area. However, the committee also state that they would like to work closely with the community to expand the provision offered from the facility.

3.4 Views from St Michael's Church

3.4.1 To link in with the review, the views of St Michael's Church were sought to incorporate in to the report. St Michael's own the church facility and Leeds City Council had a 15 year lease for St Gabriel's with them until it expired in April 2008. Part of the facility is still used for church services and the congregation is growing at the church.

3.4.2 St Michael's Church have a church hall which they hire out for local community activities. This is very well used and find it hard to cater for all parties interested in hiring out space at the church hall. Where possible, groups are referred to St Gabriel's to see if the space there would be suitable for use.

3.4.3 The church trustees also feel that if Leeds City Council were to cease their involvement with St Gabriel's Centre, then they would have no option but to sell the building, as they feel they wouldn't have enough time or sufficient funds to commit the running of the facility or to carry out any repairs to the property.

4.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance

4.1 There are no direct implications associated with Council Policy and Governance as a result of this report.

5.0 Legal and Resource Implications

5.1 The legal implications associated with this report would be associated with the implementation of any lease agreement between Leeds City Council and church trustees. The lease would follow the standard terms and conditions, as agreed by Executive Board in 2005, for a six year full internal and external repairing and insuring lease with a break clause after a three year period.

5.2 Depending on whether Area Committee decide to keep St Gabriel's open as a functional community centre or hand the building back to the church, there will be various budgetary resource implications associated with both options i.e. either an efficiency saving to re-invest into other community centres across the Outer South Area Committee portfolio or and a budget pressure which will have to be offset be the creation of efficiency savings at other buildings.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 It is recognised that there are a number of other community facilities in the area and that the majority of the facilities are fully booked up. The management committee have raised the issue of 'fit for purpose' with regards to the condition / layout of the building a number of times within their review report. It is for Outer South Area Committee to decide whether the building is fit for purpose as a sustainable community centre for all sections of the community within the area or if investing some of their well being funding into another facility in the area to expand provision is the way forward.

- 6.2 Another factor which the Area Committee may want to take into consideration is the Outer South Youth Service youth bus covering the area. The youth bus is now operational in the Ardsley & Robin Hood ward but Area Management is unsure how this provision could impact on the youth club sessions in terms of if there any plans to change the timetable of provision at St Gabriel's due to this mobile provision functioning in the locality.
- 6.3 After a consideration of all the information above, three options have been put forward for Area Committee to decide upon: for the building to be closed, for the review to extended by a further 18 months (this is due to some new activities the management committee would like to run from the facility) or for a longer term lease to be put in place. The lease would be under the standard Leeds City Council terms of six years with a break clause after three years.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 Outer South Area Committee is asked to consider the following recommendations:

7.1.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report

7.1.2 Members are requested to agree on one of the following options for the future of the building:

- Close St Gabriels and return to the facility back to the church
- Extend the review period for a further 18 months
- Leeds City Council to take on a six year lease with the church for the facility

Background papers

Area Manager's Report, 1st September 2008

Area Manager's Report, 7th July 2008

St Gabriel's Community Centre, 14th April 2008