



Report of the South East Area Manager

East (Outer) Area Committee

Date: 8th December 2009

Subject: East Leeds Community Centres – Draft Pricing and Lettings Policy

Electoral Wards Affected:

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

Community Centres became a delegated function of area committees in 2006-07 with centres in the former Neighbourhoods and Housing Department being transferred to the Regeneration service first, followed by former Learning and Leisure centres in 2008-09. There are currently 72 centres across the city within the Regeneration portfolio, 22 of which are leased out to voluntary organisations while 50 are directly managed by the council.

This report is further to a report submitted to Area Committee in March 2009 where the revised proposed Pricing and Lettings Policy was approved for its directly managed community centres and implementation agreed for October 2009.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 1.1 This report provides an update of the implementation of the Pricing and Lettings Policy and proposed amendments to the policy. The policy details how much groups would be charged for the use of community centres in Outer East Leeds in order to ensure the portfolio of centres becomes financially stable and viable.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 In April 2008, as part of the annual Area Function Schedule, the Area Committees became responsible for a portfolio of community buildings across East Leeds. There are a number of responsibilities that have also transferred to the Area Management Team to carry out on behalf of the Area Committee, these responsibilities are:-
- Liaising with users, user groups, local members and management committees on issues related to centres in their area
 - Developing proposals for re-shaping the portfolio in the area
 - Developing capital schemes and funding packages
 - Monitoring the service level agreement with City Services for centres in their area and monitoring capital and revenue budgets
 - Ensuring that leases and licenses are in place and reviewed periodically
 - Developing, implementing and overseeing the administration of a new schedule of pricing and discounts for centre usage
- 2.2 There are six directly managed centre's in Outer East Leeds which are listed below.

Name of Community Centre	Ward
Allerton Bywater Y&A Centre	Kippax & Methley
Fieldhead CC	Cross Gates & Whinmoor
Kippax Kabin	Kippax & Methley
Methley Village Centre	Kippax & Methley
Micklefield Y&A Centre	Kippax & Methley
St Gregory's Y&A Centre	Cross Gates & Whinmoor

- 2.3 Following a period of consultation with the wider community and users of the centres, the Area Committee, at its March 2009 meeting, approved the draft lettings and pricing schedule which included a number of proposed changes following consultation with users.

3.0 Implementation of the Pricing and Lettings Policy

- 3.1 Due to the range of discounts being offered by each Area Committee, it was necessary to develop a new lettings database that could accommodate the variable charges that will be applied. The new database went live in autumn 2009 following a test period.
- 3.2 Following the implementation of the Pricing and Lettings Policies across the city the new database was used to identify hire charges for user groups with current and planned lettings in the directly managed centres.

- 3.3 Once this process had commenced a number of anomalies were identified with both the system and policies implemented across the city. A range of groups had significant estimated charge increases. This occurred for a number of reasons including the interpretation of local policies, the way groups were categorised due to lack of information or detail on their bookings forms, or changes in circumstance.
- 3.4 A temporary hold was placed on the implementation of the Pricing and Lettings Policy to enable issues to be worked out appropriately. Groups were written to by the central lettings team informing them that the changes to charges would not be implemented until issues had been resolved centrally and at a local level. Groups will remain to be charged as per the old pricing policy or agreements until the end of the financial year.
- 3.5 Within the South East area the majority of issues were dealt with immediately by liaising with groups and ensuring that individual lettings were categorised appropriately and therefore receiving the correct discounts. However a number of changes have been incorporated in the South East Pricing and Lettings Policy to overcome issues such as charges to Parish Councils that require amendments to the database.

4.0 Proposed changes to the Pricing and Lettings Policy

- 4.1 A number of proposed changes have been made to the policy to take into account the issues raised during the implementation and testing period, following Ares Committee consideration these amendments will then be mirrored on the Lettings database. Changes have been identified at either a local, wedge or city wide level. The South East Area Management Team have mirrored issues raised at a wedge or city level to cover anomalies or eventualities that may impact upon our delegated community centres in the future or possible future lettings requested by potential users. **Appendix 1** outlines the proposed revised Pricing and Lettings Policy. Outlined below are those amendments directly affecting Outer East lettings or community centre's.
- 4.2 **Category 3 (Meetings of Community Benefit)**- The category previously named Community Meetings has been changed to 'Meetings of Community Benefit' to ensure the database identifies a wider range of groups providing a direct benefit to the local community. A sub category discount has also been included to provide discount for Councillor and MP surgeries as it has been raised in the wider area that residents directly benefit from advice and council provided by surgeries.
- 4.3 **Category 5 (Council Dept or Statutory Agencies)** – Following concerns raised by an Outer East Parish Council legal advice was sought and a further sub category has been included in the policy. The Local Government Act stipulates that Parish Councils must be supported by the Local Authority if the Parish Council does not own any buildings in the vicinity to carry out council business. This applies to meetings only. Therefore Town and Parish Councils will not be charged for meeting rooms within delegated community centre's.
- 4.4 **Category 6 (Lifestyle and leisure groups)** – a sub category has been included to ensure the database provides a discount for those groups reinvesting any income received. This provides support to key activities meeting Area Delivery Plan objectives such as healthy eating groups, exercise classes, computer skills courses. Charges

will continue to stand for Lifestyle and Leisure groups where charged activity is not reinvested into the group for example Slimming World, dance classes etc.

- 4.5 **Category 7 (Older People's groups)** – a sub category has been included following a number of instances where older people's groups who charge a nominal fee to sustain their activity were not being categorised as qualifying for discounts by the Lettings database. The sub category ensures older people groups charging for activity but where income is reinvested such as luncheon clubs or craft classes will not be charged for activity during the week.
- 4.6 **Category 10 (Not for profit organisations – changed from Charities)**– A reduction has been made to not for profit organisations including charities to 50% discount on a standard charge throughout the week following issues raised in the wider South East wedge.
- 4.7 **Category 13 (Democratic Structures)** - The Democratic Structures category has been adapted following the inclusion of MP and Councillor surgeries in 'Meetings of Community Benefit' discounts. Standard charges for political party group meetings will continue to be charged at the standard rate.
- 4.8 It is proposed that Fieldhead Community Centre be designated as a 'Weekend Use' centre which would mean weekend charges be removed and replaced with weekday discounts. Whinmoor Warriors currently have lettings for the majority of the centre space during the weekend period due to the schedule of fixtures and range of teams and leagues they operate in. This has led to significant costs that could not be met by the club. No other centre in either this ward or across the area currently have any significant lettings over the weekend period and would therefore not be subject to such vast charges.
- 5.0 **Community Centre building updates**
- 5.1 **St Gregory's Youth & Adult Centre** has received a number of improvements over recent weeks including the welding of fencing panels to prevent criminal damage and access to the site, improved signage for the centre, installation of a dishwasher, improved security lighting around the perimeter of the site and the installation of upgraded CCTV system. Probation has commenced painting at the centre to improve all outdoor window frames and fascia boards. Work is due to be completed over the coming weeks to capital improvements via the Sure Start Out of School & Extended Services funding. This has included improvements to outdoor play areas, controlled access points to the building, improvements to toilet and changing facilities.
- 5.2 **Fieldhead Community Centre** Management Committee are currently planning a Christmas event to encourage further use of the centre and provide a festive event for the community. Work is taking place to make improvements to the kitchen area including the installation of improved oven to meet the catering needs of the user groups.
- 5.3 **Kippax Community Centre** – funding is currently being sought to install a new kitchen in the building to bring it up to standards and fit for purpose. A Probation project is planned to carry out internal and external painting work.

5.4 **Methley Village Centre-** work is scheduled for painting improvements to fascia boards and window frames for the community centre and signage improvements.

6.0 Implications For Council Policy and Governance

6.1 The range of community centre issues detailed in this report fit with agreed Council policy and governance arrangements.

7.0 Legal and Resource Implications

7.1 There are no new legal implications arising from the contents of this report.

7.2 There could be some budgetary impact in terms of increased or even reduced income for community facilities. Any increased income will be re-invested into the buildings to make them of a higher standard for all users. If the income levels were to fall, efficiency saving measures would have to be explored to see how these costs could be recovered.

7.3 In terms of staffing resources, an officer from the Area Management Team will oversee the implementation of the new policy with the Corporate Property Management, who will still be responsible for the management of lettings for all directly managed community facilities across the city.

8.0 Recommendations

8.1 That the Outer East Area Committee approve the changes to the Pricing and Lettings Policy.

8.2 That the Area Committee consider and approve delegating Fieldhead Community Centre as the 'Weekend Use' facility in the area.

Background Papers

East Leeds Community Centres – Draft Pricing & Lettings Policy : Report to Outer East Area Committee 10th July 2007

East Leeds Community Centres – Draft Pricing & Lettings Policy : Report to Outer East Area Committee 26th February 2008

East Leeds Community Centres – Draft Pricing & Lettings Policy : Report to Outer East Area Committee 28th October 2008

East Leeds Community Centres – Draft Pricing & Lettings Policy : Report to Outer East Area Committee 24th March 2009