

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education, Culture and Sport
DATE	18 November 2010
DIRECTOR	Annette Bruton
TITLE OF REPORT	Update on Community Learning Hub Options for Cults Associated School Group Learning Community
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/10/083

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report on viable medium to long-term options for a community learning hub for the Cults Associated School Group Learning Community, and the outcome of consultation with local communities, partners and learning stakeholders.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 2.1 To note the consultation outcomes.
- 2.2 To approve Cults Academy as the location of the community learning hub for the Cults learning community for the reasons given in this report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Officers have explored all options for a medium to long-term community learning hub with emphasis on a best value solution. The most cost-effective option identified and consulted upon is Cults Academy. There are financial benefits through the Council maximising use of Cults Academy which is a 3Rs school. ACC are contractually bound to pay a unitary charge for use of the building for the next 30 years. This charge includes building and facilities management services and provides for access to the building during core hours which are from 8am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, excluding school holidays. Use of the premises outside core hours will incur a cost of £16.50 per hour.

The contract provides the Council with first option on a bank of 10,000 out of core hours use of the community facilities across the city's ten 3Rs schools. This use forms a part of the unitary charge. A reduction in the unitary charge will result from hours not optioned and an additional charge will be made if the bank is overdrawn. When facilities are not in use they are available for the contractor to let. ACC will receive a return on the income generated as a reduction in the unitary charge.

The use of the Cults Academy as a community learning hub will maximise use of core hours by providing a learning venue and an office base out of which staff delivering learning in the wider community can operate. Outside core hours, the bank of hours can add value to the unitary charge by providing a venue for youth activity, community capacity building and adult learning in the Cults Learning Community. This means that the use of the venue is maximised at no extra cost to the Council.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Personnel – It is intended that the community learning hub for Cults Associated School Group Learning Community will provide an administrative base from which Council and partner staff will operate to deliver learning to the wider community.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

At the May 2010 meeting of the Education, Culture & Sport Committee, it was agreed that Cults Academy would be a short-term community learning hub and that officers would consult on medium to long-term options reporting outcomes back to committee.

The Cults Learning Community catchment houses a number of Education, Culture & Sport facilities. These are Cults 3Rs Academy, Culter, Milltimber and Cults Primary Schools, Culter Library and Cults Library and LearnDirect centre. The Community Learning and Development base is currently operating from one small office at Cults Primary School with administrative staff presence at Cults Academy.

The focus of work in the Cults Learning Community is:

- Development and administrative support to and facilitation of Cults Learning Partnership and Cults Lifelong Learning Association;
- Development and support to adult learning in the wider community;
- Support to parent, family and childcare groups CASPER and CASKET;
- Youth achievement and 16+ work focused on Cults Academy;
- Achievement through learning for adults;
- Achievement through learning for young people; and,
- Achievement through building community capacity.

Cults Learning Community hub requires an administrative base for learning partnership staff who will be operating in the area. Officers have been investigating opportunities for a community learning hub that could provide a medium to long-term learning partnership base preferably with opportunities for service co-location, providing best value use of the built estate. The location of Cults Academy, approved at May 2010 committee as short-term community learning hub, is not easily accessible by the public and does not provide expansion opportunities for housing other services. Learning activity in the Cults Learning Community will be co-ordinated through the hub making use of all suitable facilities within the area.

Officers have undertaken an options appraisal of alternatives and consulted on this in preparing this report. Consultation has taken place with service users, learning stakeholders, Cults Community Learning and Development Management Committee, Cults, Bieldside & Milltimber Community Council and Culter Community Council.

Options explored were as follows:

5.1 Use Cults CLD Centre within Cults Primary School as a community learning hub

Cults Primary School is developing a parent resource centre within the school using the space which had over many years been occupied by Community Learning and Development. Officers consider that the existing resource is no longer suitable because

- There is pressure from the primary school to further develop for school use the remaining office space
- The existing office space is too small for the full-time Principal Community Learning Worker, full-time Senior Support Assistant, part-time Adult Learning Co-ordinator and Youth Work programme support staff to use if they are all in at the same time.
- There are no other rooms available in the primary school for adult learning classes, youth groups or committees to meet.
- There is no space available for staff to meet with clients, partners or colleagues.

This option was consulted and the following views were expressed by Cults Community Learning & Development Centre Management Committee:

- The facilities at Cults Primary School are not easily accessible.

No comments were made about this option by Culter Community Council,

5.2 Utilisation of expanded space within Cults Academy itself.

Staff have investigated the possibility of using expanded accommodation within Cults Academy which might include office space within the school. This could free up further learning space within the community wing. Current accommodation at Cults Academy community wing provides:

- Reception area for the swimming pool.
- Learning space equipped with a bank of computers for adult learning .
- Office space. This is quite small and staff are investigating options for more space within the school itself.
- Classroom linked to sports centre and next to fitness studio suitable for evening classes outside school hours.
- Room adjacent to fitness suite?

This option was consulted and the following views were expressed by Cults Community Learning & Development Centre Management Committee:

- This is in line with what the community are expecting, have been told and foreseen.
- They support the idea of the fantastic facility being used to its full capacity.
- They are looking forward to supporting the development as the hub and there are positives about the new facility being the hub.
- Concerns about alternative locations for learning as the facilities at Cults Academy are not easily accessible.

This option was consulted and the following views were expressed by Culter Community Council:

- Residents were not impressed with the availability of accommodation for community groups at Cults Academy, some of whom now meet in a local church as the Cults Community Learning & Development Centre is not available any longer. (This is because of janitorial issues in the use of primary schools.)
- The Academy has two smallish rooms for community use and questions were asked about where the partner organisations' staff would go / be based. (This comment reflects the lack of understanding about the “touch down” nature of community learning hubs and the fact that delivery of learning in the wider community will take place from a range of venues within the community.)
- For local residents from Culter, transport and location of the Hub were key issues. Many do not drive and older people may not be able to climb the hill to the school. (This comment reflects the lack of understanding that the delivery of learning in the wider community will take place from a range of venues within the community.)
- Culter Community Council also sought assurance that local satellites would be in the Culter part of Lower Deeside.

Members should also note that officers are discussing the operation of the pool and sports facilities including the all-weather pitches with Sport Aberdeen.

5.3 Cults Library and LearnDirect Centre

This is a very compact building with minimal office space and only 5 parking bays outside. Officers consider that it provides insufficient space and facilities for a community learning hub.

This option was not commented upon by any consultees.

5.4 Expanded community facilities within a new build school

Officers in the Education, Culture & Sport Directorate were approached in late 2009 to discuss possibilities for a new school in the Cults ASG area linked to proposed housing development. Whilst this could also provide new community facilities, it is not likely to be deliverable in the near future

and officers consider that this is not a viable option in the foreseeable future.

This option was not commented upon by any consultees.

6. IMPACT

The links to the Community Plan, the Single Outcome Agreement and Vibrant, Dynamic & Forward Looking are as follows:

- Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking – The Liberal Democrat and SNP Programme for Aberdeen City Council - contains a commitment to establish a network of Community Learning Hubs across the city.
- Combined Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement – The development of Community Learning Hubs and review of community centres and community learning and development activity contribute to SOA Outcomes as follows:
 - People of all ages take an active part in their own learning to achieve their full potential.
 - Learning and training is appropriate and accessible to learner's needs
 - Children and young people access positive learning environments and develop their skills, confidence and self esteem to the fullest potential
 - Children, young people and their families/carers are involved in decisions that affect them. Their voices heard and they play an active and responsible role in their communities
 - Educational attainment in Aberdeen is continuously sustained and improved
 - School leavers enter positive destination of employment, training or further and higher education with a focus on and support for young people who require More Choices and More Chances
 - Children and young people actively participate in their communities and have optimum involvement in decision making
 - All children, young people and their families have access to high quality services when required and services provide timely, proportionate and appropriate response that meeting the needs of children and young people within Getting it Right for Every Child, (GIRFEC) requirements
 - Improve the quality of life in our most deprived areas
 - Citizens are increasingly more active in their communities regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic origin, where they live, disability or faith/religion/belief and contribute to 'active citizenship'
 - Develop pathways to participation which enhance the diversity of local representation at and engagement with regional, national and international arts, heritage and sporting events
 - Our public services are consistently high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs

Public Impact - This report will be of interest to stakeholders with an interest in current and future provision of public services to the Cults learning community. These will include current and potential community learning service users, the Cults Community Learning & Development

Management Committee and Community Councils covering the Cults ASG area.

The Equalities Impact Assessment undertaken for Community Learning Hubs identified that the introduction of the hubs will provide sustainable options for the future by identifying best use of the estate and maximising opportunities for co-location and optimum use of premises. The development work for community learning hubs identified options for making best use of space and this links directly to the recommended use of Cults Academy.

Community learning hubs will potentially provide a wider network of venues for learning in the wider community, concentrating on delivery to meet identified local needs. The introduction of distance learning through the future use of new technology together with the impact of the Curriculum for Excellence will also increase the opportunities for lifelong learning. The introduction of Learning Partnerships will open up wider opportunities to local communities through the more effective use of collective resources.

Monitoring and review of all community learning hubs will be undertaken through service self-assessment and monitoring of learning partnership key targets, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education inspections, user consultation and feedback and ongoing monitoring of use made of all learning services including where people travel from to use the services provided.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report ECS/010/050, Community Learning Hubs and Review of Learning in the Wider Community

Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment on Community Learning Hubs, May 2010

Outcomes of Cults Community Learning Hub Options Consultation, October 2010

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Jane Nicklen, Service Manager (Communities)



jnicklen@aberdeencity.gov.uk



(01224) 522424