

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

---

COMMITTEE:	<b>Education, Culture and Sport</b>
DATE:	<b>23 February 2012</b>
DIRECTOR:	<b>Annette Bruton</b>
TITLE OF REPORT:	<b>Bookings and Lettings Review: Progress Report</b>
REPORT NUMBER:	<b>ECS/12/008</b>

---

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

The report provides an update on progress with the implementation of the bookings lettings review, and presents proposals for revised lettings charges for implementation from August 2012.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the committee:

- a) Notes the progress being made in implementing the bookings and lettings review.
- b) Approves the revisions to the letting process and requirements for users of City Council buildings in relation to Protection Vulnerable Groups legislation and protocols.
- c) Approves the proposed increases in charges for lets for educational establishments to reflect increasing costs.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The review sought to improve the quality of the service provided from a customer perspective, while ensuring improvements in delivery, therefore achieving revenue budgetary efficiencies.

The total Janitorial budget in relation to Education, Culture and Sport properties for 2011/12 is £2.054 million. Whereas in the past, this budget was held by the Service, this was transferred to Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure this year, as they provide the janitorial service. This was in the interest of reducing the need for budgetary transfers between services, though

the provision of the service will be governed by a Service Level Agreement. This will set out Education, Culture and Sport's requirements in relation to janitorial services, including the need to support lettings during evenings and weekends.

The total budget for income from lettings within educational establishments for 2011/12 is £311K, which includes approximately £85K, which is funded from the corporate lettings budget, managed by Corporate Governance.

It is estimated that the proposed use of Facility Support Assistants for evening and weekend lets, would generate a full year saving of approximately £100K. This could significantly reduce the current shortfall within the janitorial budget, and reduce the reliance on staff being paid at enhanced overtime rates.

Based on increasing charges for non-corporate lets by an average of 4.2%, it is estimated that this should generate approximately £9K additional income, which would contribute towards meeting increasing costs, and reducing the current shortfall within the janitorial budget.

#### **4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None.

#### **5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES**

##### **Background**

At their February 2010 meeting, the Education, Culture and Sport Committee agreed to the implementation of a new Policy and Procedures for Bookings and Lettings across City Council Sports and Educational establishments.

The Committee requested Officers to provide updates to subsequent Committee meetings on the progress with the implementation of the bookings and lettings policy.

##### **Update on Implementation**

- Learning from some of the problems experienced during 2010, earlier application deadlines were set for 2011, in order to ensure that all lets were processed in time for the new lettings period. This change was fairly successful, and in the majority of cases meant that lets were processed in time for the new lettings period, starting in August 2011.
- Applications for internal City Council lets, (including those from schools), were invited during February and March 2011, with the intention that these would be allocated in advance of applications for community lets being processed.

- Applications for community lets were then invited during April and May 2011.
- Electronic application forms, rather than paper ones were introduced in late 2010, and these have significantly improved the efficiency and secure delivery of letting applications. This method is now used by the vast majority of applicants for lets, though the option is still available for paper applications.
- Given the positive experience of this process during 2011, it is proposed that a very similar timetable is followed in 2012, with applications for community lets being invited during April and May 2012.

### **Review of management of lets on site**

- As part of a wider staffing review, Facilities Management have been developing a number of options for providing cover for evening and weekend lets.
- Whilst Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure have not yet concluded this process, one of the preferred staffing arrangements options for evening and weekend lets would be the use of Facility Support Assistants, who would be paid on a basic hourly rate, rather than Janitors, who are paid on overtime.
- Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure are currently in discussion with staff and trade unions, with the intention of new structures being in place later in 2012.
- Officers from Education, Culture and Sport are engaging in these discussions, to ensure that the eventual staffing arrangements meet the requirements and available budgets for lets within Education, Culture and Sport establishments.

### **Supervision of Lets**

- Internal discussions are ongoing about the level of supervision and inductions for groups which use Education, Culture and Sport buildings via the lettings system.
- As a result, work is underway to ensure that there is greater consistency across all areas and Council buildings.
- Now that both the staffing and budgets, to cover the Janitorial service sit within Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure, there is a need to ensure that all the requirements in relation to the supervision of lets are clearly set out with detailed Service Level Agreements. Work is ongoing on the development of a Facilities Management Service Level Agreement to cover these issues.

### **Buildings available for let**

- A key element of the original review of lets in 2009/ 2010 was to rationalise the number of Council buildings that are used for regular lets. The aim was to move from a position where over 90 different buildings were being used during any given week, to one where lets were directed to our larger and more flexible buildings.

- In particular, priority was to be given to maximising the use of the new 3Rs facilities and the remaining ten academies. The aim was reduce the inefficient use of primary schools wherever possible. The intention was that primaries would only be used where local academies and 3Rs facilities could not cope with the demand for community use, and any such demand would be directed to one of the larger and better equipped Primaries in each Associated School Group.
- Over the last two years this process has been relatively successful, though recently it has been noted that there has been some reverting back to groups using smaller schools, which needs to be tackled.
- With the ongoing pressures on budgets, and janitorial staff, particularly now that the Janitorial service sits within Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure, there is a renewed need to reinforce the above policy, to ensure consistency and clarity for all users of Education, Culture and Sport buildings.
- For this reason, it is proposed that in advance of inviting applications for lets for the 2012/ 2013 session, a complete list of available buildings and a lets timetable is provided to all applicants. This would mean that groups will only be able apply for lets for a range of Council buildings, in the knowledge that these can be staffed, and will be available, other than in exceptional circumstances. This would help avoid the delays which have been experienced in the past, where lets cannot be approved until confirmation of janitorial cover is obtained.

### **Impact of Community Centres transferring to Leased Status**

There are a number of booking and letting issues arising from the transfer of Community Learning Centres to leased status, which require to be resolved as part of the ongoing discussion in advance of the proposed transfer in April 2012. These include:

- The withdrawal of janitorial cover from Community Learning Centres, and the implications for staff within Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure;
- The potential pressure on school buildings, where newly constituted leased centres are no longer willing to accommodate community lets;
- The possible need for protocols for redirecting requests for lets to leased centres;
- The potential competition, and loss of income by the City Council, where commercial lets move to leased centres.

### **Protection of Children and Vulnerable Groups**

The introduction of the new Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) registration raises the issue of how the City Council ensures that groups who use our buildings via the lettings process are complying with child protection/ PVG guidance. Discussions have taken place between officers from Education, Culture and Sport and Human Resources, and it is proposed that the Council adopts the following approach to this issue:

- That any user of an Education, Culture and Sport building, which the City Council owns or has an interest in, is required to comply with current Protection of Vulnerable Groups legislation and protocols, (or equivalent). This would include undertaking an assessment as to whether regulated work is involved, and if so, that all of the relevant staff or volunteers are registered under the Protection of Vulnerable Groups scheme.
- That this requirement for applicants for lets would be administered by Sport Aberdeen, as part of normal process for let applications.
- Where appropriate, the City Council or Sport Aberdeen may require to undertake spot-checks to ensure that groups are complying the above legislation and protocols, in relation to the Protection of Vulnerable Groups.

### **Annual review of charges for lets**

- In line with normal good practice, it has previously been agreed that charges should be increased by an amount each year, in line with inflation, rather than increasing them less frequently by larger margins.
- This also means that income should increase incrementally, in order to help cover increased costs of providing lets, including energy, cleaning and janitorial costs.
- The prevailing Consumer Price Index, based on December 2011 is 4.2%, whereas the Retail Price Index is approximately 4.8%. Given the recognition of the impact of increased charges on our customers, is therefore proposed that charges be increased by an average of the lower figure of 4.2% from August 2012, to reflect a point between these two indices.
- New proposed charges are set out in the enclosed Appendix 1.
- Core Charges would continue to be discounted, as appropriate to reflect particular user groups, (e.g. 50% reduction for junior groups).

## **6. IMPACT**

The report relates to the arts, heritage and sport strand of the community plan, specifically in relation to the sports, leisure and recreation vision of developing Aberdeen as an “Active City” and in relation to ensuring that our community has ‘access to services of a high quality that meet their needs.’ under the ‘We value our people’ strand and Single Outcome Agreement Outcomes 6, ‘We live longer, healthier lives’ and 13, ‘We take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity.’

The report also links to Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking through culture, arts and sport:

- Increase participation in sport, provide support for athletes and reward excellence
- Ensure high quality, well managed sports facilities in Aberdeen

- Recognise the contribution of sport, culture and arts to promoting the area as a tourist destination
- Recognise the role of sport and arts in tackling anti-social behaviour

The report relates to *Fit for the Future: a Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Aberdeen City 2009-2015*, which has 5 key objectives:

- Promote and increase opportunities for participation in sport and physical activity for everyone in Aberdeen
- Provide a comprehensive and high quality range of sports facilities in Aberdeen City Council
- Maximise the social, educational, health and economic benefits of sport and physical activity in Aberdeen city
- Develop and sustain pathways which nurture local, regional and national sporting people to reach their potential
- Raise the profile of sport in Aberdeen

The report also links to the *Vibrant Aberdeen: the Cultural Strategy for Aberdeen*, the draft *Learning Strategy* and the *Aberdeen City Council Out of School Care Policy 2008*.

## 7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Sports Transformation Programme – approved at Council 13 Feb 2008
- Digest of Charges for Sports Facilities; Scotland 2008/2009- A research study by SportScotland
- 'The Challenge of Charging' – Accounts Commission 1999
- 'Fit for the Future': A Sport and Physical Activity Strategy for Aberdeen City
- 'Vibrant Aberdeen': A Cultural Strategy for Aberdeen
- Aberdeen City Council Learning Strategy
- Out of School Care Policy 2008 Aberdeen Early Years and Childcare Partnership
- '2006 Accord for the Protection of Children in Scottish Sport' – Children 1<sup>st</sup> & SportScotland
- Henderson Loggie External Audit Report on School Lets (2006/07)
- Report & minutes of Education, Culture & Sport Committee of 18 February 2010 (ECS/10/15 – Bookings and Lettings Review).

## 8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

David Wright  
 Service Manager (Assets & Finance)  
[dwright@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:dwright@aberdeencity.gov.uk)  
 01224 523042

**APPENDIX 1**

**Proposed Revised Core Lettings Charges – 2012/13**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Current Core Charges (per hour) 2011/12 (Net of VAT)</b>	<b>Proposed Core Charges (per hour) 2012/13 (Net of VAT)</b>	<b>Notes</b>
<b>Group 1 (Classrooms/ GP rooms)</b>	<b>£9.20</b>	<b>£9.58</b>	
<b>Group 2 (1 Badminton Court sized facility)</b>	<b>£11.10</b>	<b>£11.56</b>	
<b>Group 3 (2 Badminton Court sized facility)</b>	<b>£22.20</b>	<b>£23.12</b>	
<b>Group 4 (3 Badminton Court sized facility) (Multi Use Games Area)</b>	<b>£33.30 £33.30</b>	<b>£34.68 £34.68</b>	<b>Inc Floodlights</b>
<b>Group 5 (4 Badminton Court sized facility)</b>	<b>£44.40</b>	<b>£46.24</b>	
<b>Group 6 (Full Size All Weather Pitch)</b>	<b>£66.60</b>	<b>£69.36</b>	<b>Per Game (ie. 1.5 hours), Inc Floodlights</b>
<b>Group 7 (Swimming Pools – based on 4 lanes)</b>	<b>£44.40</b>	<b>£46.24</b>	<b>£10 per hour reduction for unsupervised Pools</b>