

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	19 May 2015
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Community Centre Compliance Monitoring
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/15/155
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report provides an update of the compliance monitoring process being undertaken with the Management Committees of leased community centres in relation to the Management Agreement with Aberdeen City Council.

The report also seeks approval to implement a number of actions resulting from this initial monitoring process.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) Notes the position of the Management Committees of leased community centres in relation to their obligations within the Management Agreement
- b) Approve the development of the compliance monitoring process as identified in section 5.15 of this report.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations contained within this report.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

The relationship between the Council and the Associations operating leased community centres is set out in a Lease and Management Agreement.

Resource Implications

The Community Centre Liaison Officer is responsible for supporting leased community centres to comply with the Lease and Management Agreement.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Of the 24 Management Committees of leased community centres 19 have signed up to the terms of the new style lease and management agreement, while 5 have yet to sign.

5.2 The new style management agreement requires Management Committees to participate in the monitoring process which is intended to be supportive in nature, and support has been offered to all 24 management committees (including those which have not yet signed up to the new agreements).

5.3 Details of the compliance monitoring process is attached as appendix A.

5.4 As participation in the process was intended to assist Management Committees it helped highlight any issues relating to:

- the community centre premises,
- the operation and governance of the association and management committee;
- financial matters;
- activities carried out by the management committee or taking place within the premises;
- policy and regulation affecting the management committee;
- compliance with the management agreement.

5.5 The process was amended slightly following a medium risk identified in the Internal Audit Report on Community Centres considered by the Audit and Risk Committee on 26 June 2014.

5.6 This report recommended that this medium risk be addressed by the following actions:

- The Council should ensure that all leased community centres are subject to some form of monitoring on an annual basis.
- In addition, sample checks should be performed on the answers given by management committees in the health check monitoring framework to verify their accuracy. This should include, for example, obtaining documents to support answers given.

- The Council should include a section to document issues relating to PVG on the monitoring form.

5.7 The process was amended by the addition of a final checklist to record the presence of key documents either being shown or provided to the Council, including PVG information.

5.8 Of the 24 Management Committees, 7 did not appear to be in breach of the management agreement, 11 were in breach, in a minor way, and 6 have not participated in the compliance monitoring process. The breaches were primarily due to required policies not being in place. Generally the Management Committees have been willing to develop the required policies. Some Management Committees appear to be unaware of the implications of these requirements, despite the requirements being detailed within the signed management agreements. Details of the outcome for all 24 Management Committees is shown in appendix B.

5.9 Through this monitoring process it has become apparent that every Management Committee is unique and has different challenges. This ranges from some established Management Committees having required policies already in place along with a regular review cycle to some Management Committees that did not have any of the required written policies in place.

5.10 Some of the strong points identified by the monitoring include:

- Certain Management Committees have developed working practices which reflect recognised good practice even though there is no requirement to do so;
- several Management Committees are developing activities elsewhere within their communities, not just within the community centre premises;
- many Management Committees are willing to share their experience and expertise with others.

5.11 Some of the weaker points identified by the monitoring include:

- not all Management Committees are aware of the contents of the Management Agreement despite signing the document and many key policies were not in place leaving Management Committee members vulnerable;
- several Management Committees struggle to recruit Management Committee members and other volunteers and often this puts excessive pressure on a few key individuals;
- The support and supervision of staff, including volunteer staff, is not particularly robust.

5.12 Many of the long established community centre management committees have not been provided with adequate support and challenge from the Council over a number of years and this has resulted in some working practices developing that are no longer considered good practice.

5.13 The Management Agreement seeks to address this by ensuring that key policies reflecting good practice are developed for every Management Committee. Model policies for these have been provided to Management Committees to assist with this and most of the Management Committees have developed their policies based on these models.

5.14 It is possible that many Management Committees have adapted these model policies simply to have a written policy in place and that the content of the policy is not fully appreciated or implemented by the Management Committee.

5.15 To help address these shortcomings it is intended that the Compliance Monitoring process is developed as follows:

- a) Audit visits will be made to Management Committees on a random basis to check the robustness, and the understanding, of certain policies. This would be similar to the recent child protection audits that were carried out at the community centres which were operating under the old style lease.
- b) Management Committees should be required to have at least one training session per year, to be attended by all Committee Members. This training session would be delivered or arranged by Council Officers and relate to the operation of the community centre, and tailored to meet the needs of each centre[?]. It would include matters such as committee governance, good practice, policy development etc. Given the extensive experience within the Management Committees across the city it is anticipated that detail of this training should be developed with input from Management Committees. This will allow the good practice that takes place to be shared across the city.

6. IMPACT

Corporate – This report relates to ‘Aberdeen – the Smarter City’

- We will work with our partners to seek to reduce the levels of inequality in the city.
- We will enhance the physical and emotional wellbeing of all our citizens by offering support and activities which promote independence, resilience, confidence and self-esteem.
- We will provide a high quality education service within our schools and communities which will improve attainment and life chances of our children and young people to achieve their full potential in education, employment or training.
- Working with our third, public and private sector partners, we will provide opportunities for lifelong learning which will develop

knowledge, skills and attributes of our citizens to enable them to meet the changing demands of the 21st century.

- We will aim to have a workforce across the city which has the skills and knowledge to sustain, grow and diversify the cultural economy.
- We will embrace the distinctive pride the people of Aberdeen take in their city and work with them to enhance the sense of well-being here, building strong communities which look out for, and look after one another.

This report also relates to the Combined Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement as follows:

- Protecting children and vulnerable adults
- 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
- 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 - This report will be of interest to the media and community of Aberdeen.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

The purpose of compliance monitoring seeks to reduce the risks involved in the operation of volunteer operated Community Centres.

The proposed amendments to the Compliance Monitoring process seek to further reduce known and potential risks.

Consideration of risk management at community centres is an ongoing operational consideration.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13/1/15 Communities, Housing and Infrastructure, Community Centres
26/6/14 Audit and Risk Committee, Community Centres
30/5/13 Education, Culture and Sport Committee, Community Centres
22/11/12 Education, Culture and Sport Committee, Community Centres
20/9/12 Education, Culture and Sport Committee, Community Centres
6/7/12 Education, Culture and Sport Committee, Community Centres
28/3/12 Special Education, Culture and Sport Committee, Community Centres
23/2/12 Education, Culture & Sport Committee, Community Centres
24/11/11 Education, Culture & Sport Committee, Community Centres
24/3/11 Education, Culture & Sport Committee, Implementation of Budget Decision – Reduce Communities Team

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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