



## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PROJECT

### 1. Project Start Report (PSR)

(Incorporates justification, business case and approval stages).

<b>Scrutiny Project Group (SPG) Name:</b>	Review of council owned community rooms
<b>Date of PSR:</b>	July, 2018
<b>Person completing PSR:</b>	Rachel Appleyard and Lead Member, Councillor Kate Caulfield
<b>Service Manager</b>	Martyn Hudson, Careline and Support Service Manager
<b>Sponsor</b>	Rachel Appleyard, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

#### 1.0 Opportunity / Idea and Background

- 1.1 There is an opportunity for scrutiny to input into the review of council owned community rooms currently being undertaken by the Careline and Support Service.
- 1.2 In previous years, the community rooms have been under used and poorly promoted, they are also in need of refurbishment in order to bring them up to an attractable standard for users.
- 1.3 The council owns 6 community rooms; three of these rooms had been refurbished by the end of 2017/18. In addition, new posts within the Careline and Support Service have resulted in improved publicity of the rooms and better engagement with the community to diversify the range of activities taking place. The remaining three rooms will undergo an appraisal to understand the level of usage and potential.

#### 2.0 Project Aims / Objectives

- 2.1 This project aims to identify any changes that are required to enhance the offer and accessibility of the community rooms, improving the quality of the space for users.



- 2.3 The project group will analyse the usage of the rooms compared with the expenditure to identify ways of making the rooms financially self-sufficient. The group will also consider what the community room offer is in the area to understand the local demand.
- 2.4 The group will also look at the process for booking and managing the community rooms including who the main contacts at the council are, the procedures for gaining access to the rooms, the application and checking process including insurance and health and safety requirements, heating arrangements and emergency procedures.

### **3.0 Proposed / Expected Benefits**

- 3.1 This project supports two of the council's priorities: to improve the quality of life for local people and to provide value for money services.
- 3.2 Within these priorities, the project group will focus on the following objectives:
  - to increase the quality of public space for which the council has responsibility through targeted improvement programmes;
  - to become financially self-sufficient by 2020, so we can continue to deliver the services our communities need.
- 3.3 To support the delivery of these objectives, the project group will review the work being carried out by the Careline and Support Service to appraise the rooms and improve the usage and publicity. By analysing the expenditure against the income, the project group will look to identify ways to make the rooms financially self-sufficient so they can continue to be available for the community.
- 3.4 Where alternate options for the rooms are proposed, the group will examine the decision process to make sure it is in line with council priorities and the community's need.
- 3.5 The community rooms are often used by groups that improve the health and wellbeing of the local area and this usage is encouraged by the Careline and Support Service. Benefits of this project are expected to include improving the booking procedure and accessibility to enable more community groups to access the rooms which will further support the council's health and wellbeing priorities.

### **4.0 Scope**



4.1 This project group will be reviewing the community rooms owned and maintained by the Housing Service, which are:

1. Winster Court, Newland Dale
2. Wimborne Crescent, Newbold
3. Edensor Court, Middlecroft
4. Bonsall Court, Newbold
5. Monkwood Road, Dunston
6. Burns Close, Grangewood

4.2 The following points will be reviewed:

- Usage, frequency and users
- Income and expenditure
- Promotion and available information (including website)
- Booking process
- Management
- Accessibility
- Repairs and maintenance
- Location and local offer
- Terms and conditions
- Rates
- Health and safety/emergency procedures

## **5.0 Project Analysis**

5.1 Options appraisals and refurbishments have already been carried out on the 3 rooms where the usage was the highest. These are Winster Court, Wimborne Crescent and Edensor Court.

5.2 Concerns have been voiced amongst residents which have included the potential closure of community rooms and the effect this will have on the community, and also the access and facilities at the rooms.

## **6.0 Options**

6.1 Scrutinising the income and expenditure of the rooms could identify incorrect charges or missing funding which would improve the financial viability of the rooms.

6.2 A more streamlined approach to the booking process with easier to access information could increase the number of bookings of the rooms



which would both help to meet the running costs and contribute to the diversity of events in the community.

- 6.3 Improving the accessibility and facilities available in the rooms will increase their appeal to potential users and increase the usage.

## **7.0 Work Schedule and Method**

- 7.1 An initial meeting was held with the Lead Member of the group and the Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer on 4<sup>th</sup> July, 2018 to agree the first steps of the project.
- 7.2 Following this, the project group met to discuss what information was required to inform the project group's aims and objectives.
- 7.3 The project group then met with the Careline and Support Service Manager to carry out an initial information gathering session to inform the scope of the project.

<b>SPG project start date :</b>	4 July, 2018
<b>Final SPG report completion date :</b>	November, 2018
<b>SPG report to O&amp;S Management Team:</b>	November, 2018
<b>SPG report to OSC on :</b>	27 November, 2018
<b>OSC report to (ie) Cabinet on :</b>	18 December, 2018

## **8.0 Financial Appraisal**

- 8.1 The project group will require project management support from the Democratic and Scrutiny team. This resource is already provided for within the Democratic and Scrutiny budget.
- 8.2 The group will require input from the Careline and Support Service Manager and Cabinet Member for Homes and Customers as well as other officers who are involved in the hiring of community rooms. The group will also speak with the friends of group for the community room at Wimbourne Crescent to understand their role in promoting the room.
- 8.3 As part of the review, the income and expenditure of the rooms will be analysed and the project group will look to identify ways to make the rooms financially self-sufficient so they can continue to be available for the community. This could have a positive impact on reducing the level



of subsidy the community rooms receive from the Housing Revenue Account.

## **9.0 Key Risks and Actions**

- 9.1 During this review, it may be identified that there is a need for significant change or closure of one or more community rooms. The appraisal of the community rooms is already being carried out by the Careline and Support Service therefore the involvement of scrutiny in the process will act as a critical friend to ensure the most appropriate outcome is reached taking into consideration all the relevant factors.
- 9.2 The risks of not carrying out this review include the sustained pressure on the council's finances by continuing to subsidise the rooms which could be further exacerbated if the rooms continue to be under utilised.

## **10.0 Recommendations**

- 10.1 Recommendations will be made by the Scrutiny Project Group to the Community, Customer and Organisational Scrutiny Committee at the end of the scrutiny project.
- 10.2 The Community, Customer and Organisational Committee will consider the work undertaken by the scrutiny project group as well as the content of the report, and agree any recommendations to be made to Cabinet and/or other decision making body(ies) of the Council.

## **11.0 Project Team Structure**

- 11.1 The Lead Member for the scrutiny project group is Councillor Kate Caulfield.
- 11.2 The support officer for the scrutiny project is Rachel Appleyard, Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer.
- 11.3 The members of the scrutiny project are as follows:

*Councillor Kate Caulfield (Lead Members)*  
*Councillor Peter Innes*  
*Councillor Suzie Perkins*

## **12. Project Approval**



12.1 This project has been approved for addition to the Scrutiny Work Programme by the Overview and Performance Scrutiny Forum (see consent date below).

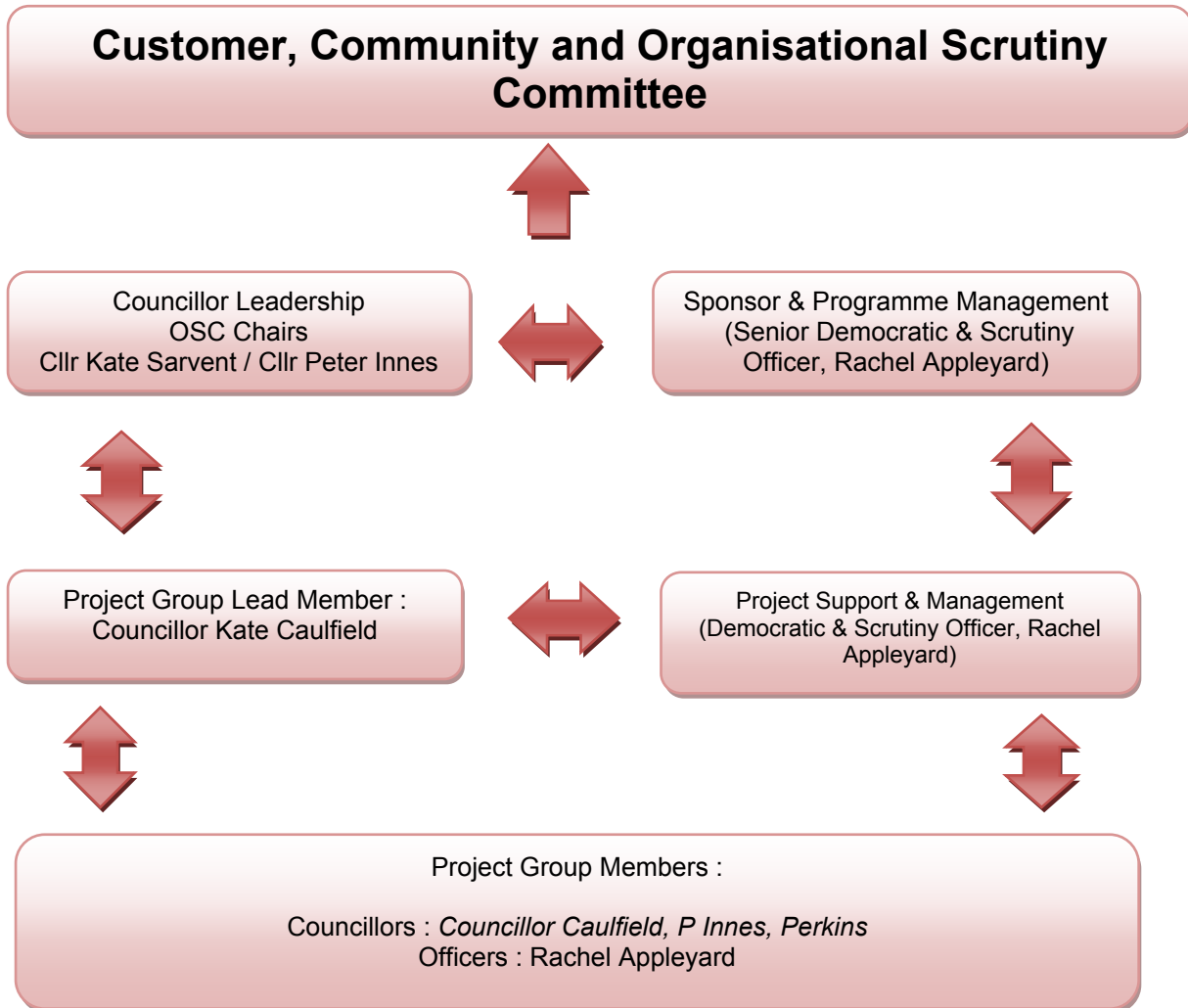
Cabinet members and the senior leadership team have been consulted on the scrutiny work programme.

Relevant cabinet members and service managers have been consulted on this PSR (see dates below).

<b>OSC Project Consent date :</b>	OSC & date : 8 May, 2018
<b>Relevant Cabinet Member &amp; SLT/CMT/Service Manager(s) PSR Consultation date :</b>	<i>Date consulted :</i> Martyn Hudson, Careline Support Service Manager – July 2018
<b>SPG PSR Approval date :</b>	<i>SPG Lead Member Approval :</i> July 2018
<b>PSR Checked date :</b>	Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer <i>checked :</i> July 2018
<b>PSR Approved for submission to OSC :</b>	<i>Date approved by relevant OSC Chair(s) :</i>  <b>Cllr Kate Sarvent :</b>  <b>Cllr Peter Innes :</b>
<b>corporate notification :</b>	<i>Date notified to programme management office / business transformation, for corporate register/record (as required):</i>



## 15. Project Team Structure



## 16. Role Descriptions

<b>OSC :</b>	Overall (statutory) approvals
<b>OSC Chairs :</b>	General leadership and support
<b>Project Sponsor :</b>	General leadership and support
<b>Project Lead Member :</b>	SPG leadership, direction and approvals (with SPG)
<b>Project Manager :</b>	Support and manage the project process