

For publication

Consideration of the Customer, Community and Organisational Scrutiny Committee report on Community Rooms

Meeting: Cabinet

Date: 22 October, 2019

Cabinet portfolio: Housing

Report by: Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

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1.0 Purpose of report

1.1 To present for consideration by Cabinet the report and recommendations of the Customers, Community and Organisational Scrutiny Committee on the community rooms, particularly focussing on their usage, viability and attractiveness to potential hirers.

1.2 The report also provides the statutory written notice that must be given by the Customers, Community and Organisational Scrutiny Committee to Cabinet to take required action as at Section 3.2 below.

2.0 Recommendations

That Cabinet consider the recommendations of the Customer, Community and Organisational Scrutiny Committee as set out below:

- 2.1 That the Cabinet Member for Housing initiates conversations with the Chesterfield Care Group regarding the hiring of community rooms.
- 2.2 The project group recommends the following future plans for the community rooms:
 - a) That the refurbishment and retention of Bonsall Court as a community room be supported.
 - b) That the arrangements to lease Burns Close to the Umbrellas Cosy Group on a five year lease be noted and endorsed.
 - c) That alternative uses be explored for Monkwood Road in line with the Council's health and wellbeing priorities.
- 2.3 That the website be updated and amended to include a central location for finding room hire information for all venues across the Council including the Community Rooms.
- 2.4 That a dedicated phone line for community room enquiries be established within the Careline and Support Service with a voicemail facility.
- 2.5 That the call centre staff be provided with up to date information on the hire of community rooms.
- 2.6 That the promotion of community rooms on the Council's website be improved, making the rooms more obvious to potential hirers.
- 2.7 That a new leaflet be produced that includes details on all the community rooms.

- 2.8 That a promotional drive take place to coincide with the completion of the work to the sheltered schemes.
- 2.9 That a booklet be produced that incorporates terms and conditions for the community rooms along with how to use the facilities in the rooms.
- 2.10 That the door entry system that has been installed to Wimborne Crescent and Winster Court be kept under review to understand if this is the most effective way for hirers to gain access.

3.0 **Report details**

- 3.1 As part of the 2018/19 scrutiny work programme, the Customer, Community and Organisational Scrutiny Committee appointed a Scrutiny Project Group to:
- a) identify any changes that are required to enhance the offer and accessibility of the community rooms;
 - b) analyse usage compared with expenditure to identify ways of making the rooms financially self-sufficient;
 - c) review the process for booking and managing the community rooms and suggest ways to make it more user friendly and streamlined.
- 3.2 Statutory Scrutiny Committees are required to provide written statutory notice to Cabinet requiring action in response to its scrutiny report and recommendations. These actions require Cabinet to:
- a) consider the attached report and recommendations;
 - b) indicate the actions it proposes to take if any; and
 - c) publish its response within 2 months of the receipt of the report.

With regard to a) and b) above, the Council's Constitution provides for Cabinet to consider the report at the earliest practicable opportunity.

4.0 **Scrutiny Project Group report**

4.1 The report of the Scrutiny Project Group was considered and its recommendations approved by the Customers, Community and Organisational Scrutiny Committee on 26 September, 2019.

5.0 **Risk considerations**

5.1 Risks relating to the review and its recommendations, as well as mitigating actions are shown below:

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
Improved promotion and new publicity for the rooms will increase the number of booking enquiries received by the Careline service, this will place additional pressure on the Careline service as the volume of calls will rise.	M	H	Installing a dedicated phone line for community room enquiries will allow the Careline staff to prioritise which calls are answered and respond to booking queries when time allows.	L	L
Refurbishing two community rooms will require additional funding to be set aside in the Housing Revenue Account. In addition, the cost of the refurbishment is uncertain and depends on surveys carried out on the	H	H	The refurbishment programme has sufficient budget to complete the refurbishment to Bonsall Court. Better promotion will help attract new hirers and increase the income to the rooms. The five year lease of Burns Close	M	M

rooms to determine the level of works required.			transfers the responsibility for all repairs, maintenance and improvements to the building to the leaseholder, reducing the costs to the council.		
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6.0 **Alternative options and reasons for rejection**

6.1 The alternative option is to do nothing, this would have the following impacts and has, therefore, been rejected:

- a) by not improving the promotion and accessibility of information on the community rooms, they would continue to be underused, reducing the value that the room has on the community and relying continually on funding from the housing revenue account to stay open.
- b) if measures are not put in place to find alternative users for Burns Close and Monkwood Road, there is a risk that these two rooms may be lost as community assets.

7.0 **Considerations**

7.1 A preliminary equality impact assessment (EIA) has been carried out to understand any positive or negative impacts of implementing the recommendations. No negative impacts were identified and it is expected that the review recommendations will have a positive outcome because the community rooms will continue to provide sustainable room hire at an affordable rate.

7.2 As the rooms are largely used by support groups, charities and community groups; current users will also benefit due to the improved standards of facilities, and be able to continue to offer their services in the areas.

7.3 Officers have been consulted on the proposals and the project group have been mindful to develop recommendations that support the Council Plan's priorities and can be delivered within existing resources across the Council.

8.0 **Recommendations**

That Cabinet consider the recommendations of the Customer, Community and Organisational Scrutiny Committee as set out below:

8.1 That the Cabinet Member for Housing initiates conversations with the Chesterfield Care Group regarding the hiring of community rooms.

8.2 The project group recommends the following future plans for the community rooms:

- a) That the refurbishment and retention of Bonsall Court as a community room be supported.
- b) That the arrangements to lease Burns Close to the Umbrellas Cosy Group on a five year lease be noted and endorsed.
- c) That alternative uses be explored for Monkwood Road in line with the Council's health and wellbeing priorities.

8.3 That the website be updated and amended to include a central location for finding room hire information for all venues across the Council including the Community Rooms.

8.4 That a dedicated phone line for community room enquiries be established within the Careline and Support Service with a voicemail facility.

8.5 That the call centre staff be provided with up to date information on the hire of community rooms.

- 8.6 That the promotion of community rooms on the Council's website be improved, making the rooms more obvious to potential hirers.
- 8.7 That a new leaflet be produced that includes details on all the community rooms.
- 8.8 That a promotional drive take place to coincide with the completion of the work to the sheltered schemes.
- 8.9 That a booklet be produced that incorporates terms and conditions for the community rooms along with how to use the facilities in the rooms.
- 8.10 That the door entry system that has been installed to Wimborne Crescent and Winster Court be kept under review to understand if this is the most effective way for hirers to gain access.

9.0 **Reasons for recommendations**

- 9.1 To increase the usage of the community rooms by improving awareness of the facilities, reaching new potential hirers and consolidating information on all the Council's venues for hire into a central place.
- 9.2 To have a clear and transparent process for managing the rooms, ensuring the rooms are used by all hirers under the same terms and conditions and that the accounts show a true reflection of the income and expenditure costs.

Decision information

Key decision number	Non-key 154
Wards affected	All wards
Links to Council Plan priorities	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. to improve the quality of life for local people, and;2. to provide value for money services.

Document information

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Background documents These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.	
<i>This must be made available to the public for up to 4 years.</i>	
Appendices to the report	
Appendix A	Scrutiny Project Group report on Community Rooms
Appendix B	Bookings from June and July 2018
Appendix C	Preliminary Equalities Impact Assessment