

FOR PUBLICATION

AGENDA ITEM

COMMUNITY REST ROOMS REVIEW
R320

MEETING: 1. CABINET
 2. EXECUTIVE MEMBER - LEADER

DATE: 1. 21ST OCTOBER 2014
 2. 13TH OCTOBER 2014

REPORT BY: PROJECT ACADEMY OFFICER

COMMUNITY ASSEMBLY: EAST

KEY DECISION NUMBER 437

1.0 PURPOSE OF PAPER

- 1.1 To update Members on the rest rooms and how they are managed and financed.
- 1.2 To agree on the future of the four rest rooms that are no longer used by the local community.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Rest-a-While and Golden Age Rest Rooms should be put on the open market by Kier Asset Management.
- 2.2 That the Welcome Centre should be appropriated into the Housing Revenue Account for conversion into a single storey dwelling, subject to an agreed valuation.

- 2.3 That Sunnycroft Rest Room should be retained by the Council until the Council's future requirements for recreational playing fields has been determined.
- 2.4 That the five remaining rest rooms, which continue to operate under the direction of their respective Management Committees, are kept under review.

3.0 **BACKGROUND**

3.1 Within the Regeneration portfolio there are nine rest rooms:

- Even Tide Rest Room, Cherry Tree Grove, Mastin Moor
- Golden Age Rest Room, Middlecroft Road, Staveley
- Manor Rest Room, 63 Manor Road, Brimington Common
- New Haven Rest Room, 8 Station Road, Barrow Hill
- Rest-a-While Rest Room, Staveley Road, Poolsbrook, Staveley
- The Elders, Laburnam Street, Hollingwood
- The Hollies, Sutton Crescent, Inkersall Green
- Sunnycroft Rest Room, Lowgates, Staveley
- Welcome Centre, 27 Duckmanton Road, Duckmanton

A location map of these rest rooms is attached as Appendix A.

- 3.2 These nine buildings were originally provided and managed by the former Staveley Urban District Council to serve as a dawn to dusk refuge for the elders of the mining communities. Unlike the Housing Revenue Account community rooms, these rest rooms have no direct relationship with warden controlled residential premises and are available for use by the general public.
- 3.3 The buildings were transferred to Chesterfield Borough Council in 1974 as part of the local government reorganisation and their method of operation and use has continued to the present day. No legal agreement or formal management arrangement exists between the Committees and the Council for any of the above nine properties. A loose understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Committee has, however, developed over the years.
- 3.4 They are all single storey buildings, each with a meeting room holding 20-30 people, a small kitchen and toilets. Originally each rest room had a Management Committee that organised a programme of community

activities and was responsible for the day to day operation of the building.

- 3.5 The Council retains the responsibility for the maintenance, repairs and decoration of these buildings. It is also responsible for insuring the building against fire and theft. It carries out fire risk assessments and asbestos surveys, and it tests firefighting equipment and the electrical installations and samples for legionella annually.
- 3.6 The Management Committee owns and maintains all fixtures and fittings and is responsible for the testing of all portable electrical equipment. It arranges public liability insurance for the use of the building. It ensures that the building is kept secure at all times and complies with the Fire Risk Assessment, including ensuring that emergency escape route are kept clear, visual inspections of the fire fighting equipment are carried out and organise regular fire drills. The Committee is also responsible for carrying out and recording regular legionella risk minimisation checks.

4.0 **CURRENT SITUATION**

- 4.1 The role of the nine rest rooms has changed over the years and the importance that these facilities have in the local community is not as great as it used to be. Generally the number of local residents using the facilities has declined but in some cases new Management Committees have resulted in new users being attracted to the rooms.

Even Tide Rest Room

- 4.2 The Even Tide Rest Room has an active Management Committee which promotes the room as a community facility and is well used by a wide range of groups. It is also used as a polling station.

Golden Age Rest Room

- 4.3 Because of declining numbers Golden Age Rest Room has closed.

Manor Rest Room

- 4.4 The Management Committee of the Manor Rest Room actively promote the rest room to the local community and have a number of regular users. The centre is also used as a polling station.

New Haven Rest Room

- 4.5 New Haven Rest Room organises bingo and dominoes sessions at least four times per week. The room is let to a small number of regular hirers. It is also used as a polling station.

Rest- a- While Rest Room

- 4.6 Rest- a- While is also closed due to a lack of community support.

The Elders Rest Room

- 4.7 The Elders Rest Room is used five days per week for bingo, dominoes and other social events. The rest room is also used as a polling station.

The Hollies Rest Room

- 4.8 The Hollies Rest Room is used at least two days per week for bingo and dominoes and for competitions one day per week in the summer.

Sunnycroft Rest Room

- 4.9 This rest room closed in 2013 because of falling numbers.

Welcome Centre

- 4.10 The Welcome Centre at Duckmanton closed a few years ago because of falling numbers and the inability of the remaining members to pay the utility bills associated with the building. The rest room is still, however, used as a polling station.

- 4.11 This report primarily deals with the four rest rooms that are no longer in use and have been closed due to lack of interest from the local community. Although these buildings are empty they continue to incur maintenance costs for which the Council are responsible.

- 4.12 However, the future of the remaining five rest rooms, which continue to operate under the direction of their respective Management Committees, will be kept under review. Although these Committees have responsibility for the day to day management of the buildings, the Council retains the responsibility for both the maintenance and the overall health and safety of the buildings.

5.0 PROPOSAL

- 5.1 It currently costs the Council around £11,300 a year to maintain Golden Age, Rest- a- While, Sunnycroft and the Welcome Centre, in order to keep the buildings safe and to stop them falling into a state of disrepair. Given the Council's current financial situation, is

unsustainable and a decision on the future of these buildings is therefore required.

- 5.2 The Council's Housing Service has been consulted about their possible interest in converting these properties into housing. The only property that the Housing Revenue Account would be willing to appropriate from the General Fund is the Welcome Centre. None of the other buildings are located in sites where there is an unmet demand for single storey housing.
- 5.3 The Welcome Centre is attached to the Sheltered Housing Scheme in Duckmanton and lends itself to being converted into a two bedroomed, wheelchair accessible bungalow, of which there are none in the village. Given the Council's ambition to increase the supply of affordable housing (and in particular to increase the Council's own stock levels) it is proposed that this particular building is 'appropriated' into the Housing Revenue Account for conversion. There will be revenue saving to the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account will pick up the conversion costs. The property would be retained as social housing in perpetuity.
- 5.4 To the rear of the Sunnycroft Rest Room there is an area of Council owned land that could potentially be used for development. The only access to this land at present is via Sunny Croft so there is a concern that by selling the rest room at this stage the land to the rear of the building would become land locked and of little value.
- 5.5 Leisure Services are currently developing a strategy which is reviewing the Council's future requirements for recreational playing fields within the Borough. The land at the rear of Sunnycroft is part of this review. If the resultant strategy identifies that this land is surplus to requirements, there may be a possibility that the field could be developed. It is therefore proposed that the Council should retain Sunnycroft Rest Room at present until all options of redeveloping the land at the rear of the building are exhausted. If redevelopment of this land is identified as not possible then it is proposed that the rest room should be sold.
- 5.6 Rest- a-While and Golden Age Rest Rooms were closed because of a lack of interest in managing the buildings and there is therefore no need for the services that they provide. In addition the Council does not have any use for either of these buildings and they are surplus to requirements. After consultation with Kier Asset Management it is

proposed that both these buildings should be placed on the open market for sale.

- 5.7 It should be noted that both the Welcome Centre and Golden Age are used as polling stations. The Democratic Services Manager has been consulted about the selling of these two buildings and has secured alternative venues for these polling stations.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council incurred the following costs on the nine premises managed by Culture and Visitor Services in 2013/14:

▪ Water Charges	£69
▪ Gas	£58
▪ Electricity	£137
▪ Fire Insurance	£610
▪ Premises Repairs	£28,020
▪ Sewerage Charges	£40
▪ Internal Charges	£3,045
▪ Capital Financial Costs	£17,746
▪ Total	£49,725

- 6.2 As stated earlier in this report, it costs the Council to maintain the rest rooms whilst they are closed. By selling Rest-a-While and Golden Age and appropriating the Welcome Centre to Housing Services, the Council would save approximately:

• Welcome Centre Rest Room	£4,500
• Rest-a-While Rest Room	£3,500
• Golden Age Rest Room	£3,300
• Total	£11,300

- 6.3 It is estimated that the buildings, which are proposed to be put on the open market, are valued at:

• Rest-a-While Rest Room	£25,000 - £30,000
• Golden Age Rest Room	£25,000 - £30,000
• Total	£50,000 - £60,000

These valuations are estimates and potentially could be higher once exposed to the open market.

- 6.4 Appropriation of the Welcome Centre to the Housing Revenue Account for conversion would result in an adjustment to the General Fund of between £35,000 and £40,000.
- 6.5 If all the recommendations made in this report are accepted, the Council could potentially benefit by between £96,300 to £111,300 - £50,000 to £60,000 in capital receipts, £11,300 saving from the General Fund and between £35,000 and £40,000 reduction in the General Fund debt by the appropriation of on the Welcome Centre to the Housing Revenue Account.

7.0 RISK MANAGEMENT

Description of Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating Action	Resultant Likelihood	Resultant Impact
Reputation of the Council could be damaged by selling the rest rooms.	Low	Low	No action to be taken as there are currently no community groups and a lack of interest from the community to re-open these buildings	Low	Low
Selling Sunnycroft Rest Room could result in land locking a potential development site.	High	High	Recommend not to sell the land and carry out a separate review/product on Sunnycroft which will explore all options.	Low	Low
Failure to sell closed rest rooms will result in annual on-going costs to the Council.	High	High	Sell the currently closed rest rooms for capital receipt which will result in a reduction in annual on-going costs.	Low	Low
Negative impact on the community	Low	Low	No action to be taken as there are currently no community groups and a lack of	Low	Low

			interest from the community to re-open these buildings		
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8.0 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 A preliminary EIA has been carried out on the proposals for the four closed rooms and because there are no negative impacts on any of the equality groups, a full EIA is not necessary.

9.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 The option of doing nothing was considered and disregarded as the Council would continue to incur on-going maintenance costs of approximately £15,000 per annum, which is not sustainable. The buildings no longer provide a service to the members of the local community and they are surplus to the Council' requirements.

9.2 The Council could invest money to convert the properties for residential use, at an estimated cost of between £95,000 to £115,000. It could then the resale the properties at value of approximately £295,000. The conversion costs are very high in this option and there is no guarantee that they could be sold sell for market value. Because of the risks involved converting the properties is not considered a viable option.

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That Rest-a-While and Golden Age Rest Rooms should be put on the open market by Kier Asset Management .

10.2 That the Welcome Centre should be appropriated into the Housing Revenue Account for conversion into a single storey dwelling, subject to an agreed valuation.

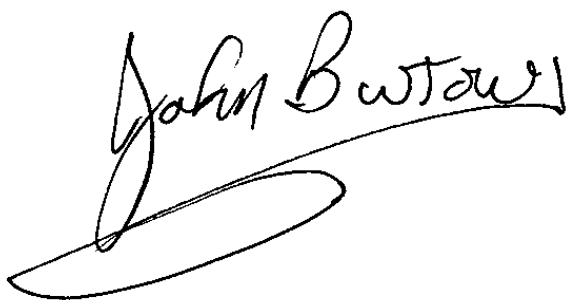
10.3 That Sunnycroft Rest Room should be retained by the Council until the Council's future requirements for recreational playing fields has been determined.

10.4 That the five remaining rest rooms, which continue to operate under the direction of their respective Management Committees, are kept under review.

11.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 These four rest rooms are no longer used or needed by the local community and they are surplus to the Council's requirements. Maintaining the rooms, given the Council's current financial situation, is unsustainable. The proposed course of action will potentially benefit the Council's General Fund by between £96,300 and £131,300.

Officer recommendation supported

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Burtow". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a large, horizontal, oval-shaped scribble.

Signed

Executive Member

Date 13.10.14

Consultee Executive Member/Assistant Executive Member comments (if applicable)/declaration of interests

You can get more information about this report from Bernadette Wainwright (5779) or James Wild (5902).

APPENDIX A

