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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Education &amp; Communities Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>23 January 2018</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director Education, Communities &amp; OD</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>EDUCOM13/18/MM</b>
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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Community Facilities Service Review</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Education & Communities Committee on the detail of savings proposals in Community Facilities currently forming part of the 2018/20 budget public consultation exercise.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 The Members' Budget Working Group has considered savings proposals in a number of areas of community facilities provision. As part of the decision to put a savings proposals around the closure of a number Community facilities out to public consultation , the MBWG also agreed that an update report should go to the Education & Communities Committee to provide greater detail on the proposals.
- 2.2 The original savings proposal was based upon a review of community facilities provision in Inverclyde carried out by MAX Associates who were procured through Inverclyde Leisure to carry out this work. The savings proposed in that report totalled £194,000.
- 2.3 The review reported that there was clearly scope, based on occupancy, to reduce the number of community facilities across Inverclyde, and sufficient capacity within core facilities (town halls, IL centres, PPP schools and sustainable community centres) to accommodate the displaced lets.
- 2.4 This report updates the position following further discussion with users and the exploration of some additional options through various other work streams including early years. What is important to recognise however is that the position regarding both physical community centres and community schools, the funding models for the use of those facilities and the services provided from each one have evolved in a very piecemeal fashion and are ripe for a more fundamental review. This is required to ensure equity of provision against need across Inverclyde.
- 2.5 Appendix 1 shows the Community Facilities proposed for closure. The restriction on the use of Primary Schools will be to the PPP schools (Aileymill and All Saints) plus Wemyss Bay, Inverkip, Kilmacolm and Kings Oak Primaries. The exceptions to this will be the use of schools by uniformed organisations based upon the current pattern of use if the recommendation is accepted.

## 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee considers the contents of the review whilst noting that the proposals are currently out for Public Consultation as part of the 2018/20 Budget on which a final decision will be taken by the Council on 15 March, 2018.

**Martin McNab**  
**Head of Safer & Inclusive Communities**

## 4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Community facilities in Inverclyde fall into four main categories;-

- I. Town Halls managed by Inverclyde Leisure
- II. Community Centres managed by Inverclyde Leisure
- III. Tenant and Resident Halls supervised by Inverclyde Leisure
- IV. Self-managed community centres and tenants' and residents' halls.

In addition to the above, extensive use is made by the community of the school estate, particularly by sports organisations. A wide range of HSCP and Council Services is also provided through these facilities. In all cases lets are demand led, mostly by 'custom and practice'. Customers' wishes are accommodated to the point of specifically opening certain facilities, particularly primary schools and some community centres, for a single short let when alternative available capacity could be offered nearby. Access to all facilities, including the school estate but excluding self-managed halls, is via Inverclyde Leisure's booking office.

4.2 Funding models for community facilities in Inverclyde fall into three main categories

- I. IL managed (let income plus council management fee).
- II. Self-managed tenants'/ residents' halls (let income plus council subsidy/grant).
- III. Self-managed (let income plus council funding dependent on SLA).

Four centres (Auchmountain Resource Centre, Clune Park Resource Centre, Paton Street Community Centre and Boglestone Community Centre (part of the centre is operated by Boglestone Community Association) ) operate slightly outside these categories in that running and staffing costs are met by the Council and IL respectively, however a local management committee retain income and do not contribute directly to the core operating costs of the centre but which fund some of the activities provided there.

The Council has no sight of the income raised in these instances.

4.3 Information on events and courses held in self-managed tenants'/ residents' halls is not readily available; however it is clear that a number of these halls are struggling to be sustainable in terms of lets and volunteers willing to serve on the management group. In recent years Park Farm Hall has closed, albeit IL are using it on occasion and Strone/Maukinhill tenant's and resident's hall is currently occupied by the Auchmountain Volunteer Group. Upper Larkfield Tenant's hall is operating with the support of Larkfield Housing Association. Prior to the closure of Paton Street Community Centre following a fire, there was very low demand at Grieve Road and Kirn Drive has historically low occupancy.

4.4 The re-provisioning of social rented housing and the decline in overall population in Inverclyde has undoubtedly had a detrimental effect on the popularity and use of community halls generally. Looking beyond community facilities, sports and social clubs are also facing significant challenges in sustaining both membership and committee members willing to give up their time to keep these facilities open.

4.5 In parallel with the relative decline in use of community halls and centres, the Council's investment in the school estate has created a strong demand, particularly from sports clubs, for access to school facilities. Much of this demand has been driven by the generous support for pitch hire for team sports in general and football in particular. Changes in this support (a fixed and reduced budget providing grant support for all sports) were expected to depress demand for these facilities in the short to medium term following implementation in April 2017. At this stage we still do not know the effect of the reduction on lets in the School estate but it is expected that income will reduce. If the subsidy is removed entirely post 2018, a comprehensive review of letting policies and charges will be required across both the IL and Council estate in anticipation of a significant reduction pitch income.

4.6 The Council has invested in the provision of new community facilities at Gibshill, Broomhill

Community Gardens, Greenock and Inverkip Community Centre. In addition to capital and assets, the Council has also made agreed revenue support for these projects (in the case of Broomhill for the TARA using the facility). There is also an ongoing funding stream for Kilmacolm New Community Centre.

- 4.7 Funding is also provided for the provision of services at Branchton Community Centre and at Craigend. In the case of the latter a feasibility study is being carried out into the possibility of building a new facility. While there is currently no suggestion that capital funding will be required from the Council the possibility of Inverclyde Council fronting a RCGF bid on behalf of the project has been mooted.
- 4.8 The overall picture of community provision across Inverclyde is further complicated by provision of services in Larkfield by Youth Connections which is subject to a separate savings proposal, and to a varying extent in the Gourock, Greenock and Port Glasgow iYouth Zones, the future funding of which will be subject to the budget considerations.
- 4.9 The review started from the assumption that certain key facilities and schools would not be proposed for closure and used these as an initial 'framework' upon which provision could be mapped both in terms of geographical distribution and the nature of facilities offered. This core group of facilities includes town halls, PPP schools, non-PPP Secondary Schools, well established sustainable (with significant council support) community centres, and the new community centres provided by, or in partnership with, the Council.

## **5.0 PROPOSALS**

- 5.1 Following Committee approval the savings proposals detailed below will be progressed and prepared as far as is feasible, subject to the Council's consideration of this budget item and immediate steps will be taken to engage with relevant staff and stakeholders within appropriate timescales.
- 5.2 The review of community facilities concluded the following :-
  - There is scope to reduce the number of community facilities across Inverclyde and considerable occupancy capacity with core facilities to absorb the displacement of existing users.
  - In most cases alternative facilities are available within 1 mile of the existing venue.
  - Given the diverse nature of the estate and lack of detailed financial information, it has not been possible to estimate savings in details; however it is likely that these would accrue through savings in staffing, maintenance and utilities.
- 5.3 The review recommends that community use ceases in most (13) primary schools, with the exception of PPP primary schools (where we have front-loaded community access costs), non-PPP primaries in Wemyss Bay, Inverkip and Kilmacolm, and Kings Oak primary (due to the relative lack of alternative facilities in this area). The review further recommends the closure of a number of community centres/ tenants' halls throughout Inverclyde.
- 5.4 The potential revenue savings available (excluding utilities costs for the school estate which it has not been possible to identify) based on the proposals in Appendix 1 are implemented is £194,314.
- 5.5 Three of the premises suggested for closure have had outline dilapidation surveys done in the relatively recent past. Closing and demolishing these premises could avoid a further £291,000 in one off renovation costs for these premises.
- 5.6 Presuming demolition of disused premises, in addition to the savings identified in 5.3 there will also be savings in utilities, water and sewerage rates, and discretionary NDR support for premises where IL bear these costs (self-managed halls are responsible for these costs already).
- 5.7 The proposed exclusion of primary schools referred to in 5.2 from community lets also has

consequences for the use of those premises by uniformed organisations. Under the community waivers scheme uniformed organisations have for a number of years enjoyed free access to the school estate. The current value of those lets, if they were charged at the standard rate for the facilities they occupy is approximately £65K. The total withdrawal of that subsidy would prove difficult for a number of groups and there would probably also be issues with relocating them as such groups are usually geographically based. For this reason it is proposed that uniformed organisations could be charged a flat rate fee per evening for use of schools, this could be set at say £25 per group per night. This would then allow those schools to be kept available for uniformed organisations once any of the easier consolidation had been considered. The use of schools by uniformed organisations would not necessarily imply that the school would be available for all lets as the uniformed lets have the benefit of being regular and consistent. The flat rate of £25 would cover the cost of staffing and utilities in those schools which would not otherwise be open for bookings.

## **6.0 CONSEQUENTIAL ISSUES**

### **6.1 Future of closed halls**

6.1 It is critical that any decision to close facilities includes a clear strategy on their future use. Experience shows that an empty building will attract any number of good causes who could make use of it if given the money. It will be necessary to consider the buildings agreed for closure on a case by case basis. Simply leaving halls in situ will increase costs through liability for NDR, maintenance and vandalism costs.

### **6.2 Funding of Community Facilities**

6.2 The current variation in funding models for 'self-managed' community facilities is unsustainable in the longer term. The pattern of services and the differing levels of support across Inverclyde are probably ripe for review.

- Branchton, Craighends and Burns Square currently receive c£120,000 grant funding per year on the basis of an agreed SLA for service delivery. This level of funding has not been inflated for several years and does not include provision for payment of the Living Wage.
- KNCC receives deficit funding and employee costs totalling £66,000 on the basis of a business plan and funding agreement.
- Gibshill CC receives Grant funding of up to £32,000 per year for two years on the basis of a business case.
- Community Hubs (Auchmountain Halls, Paton Street and Clune Park Resource Centre) receive no grant but staff are employed by the Council and IL and some utilities are paid direct by the Council and IL.
- IAMH Broomhill Community Gardens receives £15K per year as let support for the Tenants' and Residents' Association.
- As discussed in 4.8 above some elements of community provision analogous to that provided in community hubs are currently delivered through iYouth Zones and Youth Connections.

6.3 In tandem with rationalising community facilities provision, it is recommended that the funding models are also rationalised around either a 3 year SLA or Business Plan which requires all centres to maximise income from lets. It may be necessary to include an element of funding for deprivation for some community centres.

6.4 There is a strong case for a shared resource being made available to self-managed centres to co-ordinate activities across a number of centres, particularly in the delivery of Council and HSCP services at those sites. A condition of grant should be considered requiring centres to participate in, and jointly fund, such a proposal.

## **7.0 IMPLICATIONS**

## Finance

### 7.1 Financial Implications:

#### One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

#### Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (if Applicable)	Other Comments
Close facilities listed in Appendix 1	Net costs	1/07/2018	(194)		
Allow continued access to Uniformed Organisation to the School Estate at a flat rate of £25 per night.	Net costs	1/04/2018	(5)		Estimated net saving taking into account total income & expenditure.

## Legal

- 7.2 Proposals for the closure of community facilities will require changes in the lease, licence to occupy and funding agreement with Inverclyde Leisure and some self-managed committees.

A number of the properties earmarked for closure were used as polling stations at the last election. Closure will require alternative sites to be identified.

## Human Resources

- 7.3 There will be reduction in 7 FTE posts of which 3.5 are Inverclyde Council Posts and 3.5 Inverclyde Leisure posts arising from the closure of community hubs and halls. The unions have been consulted on this saving.

## Equalities

- 7.4 Equality impact assessments have been carried out on a case by case basis for all the facilities where closure is proposed.

## Repopulation

- 7.5 N/A

## 8.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 8.1 The MBWG have considered the proposals and agreed that the saving should form part of the 2018/20 Budget Public Consultation on which final decisions will be taken by the Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2018.

Appendix 1

Saving No.	Details	Value of Saving
1.	Close Kirn Drive Community Hall	£28,055
2.	Close Fancy Farm Tenants Hall	£838
3.	Close Grieve Road Community Centre	£5,357
4.	Close Paton Street Community Hub	£83,937
5.	Close Crawfordsburn Community Centre	£25,214
6.	Close Clune Park Resource Centre	£36,245
7.	Close Meadowlark Community Centre.	N/A
8.	Close Strone Maukinhill Community Hall.	N/A
9.	Close Park Farm Tenants Hall.	N/A
10.	Remove a number of Primary Schools from Community Letting with lets generally being displaced to the secondary estate.	£14,668