
Report To: Education and Communities Committee Date: 7 May 2013

Report By: Head of Safer & Inclusive Communities Report No: EDUCOM/54/13/JA

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Subject: Letting Policy for Sport and Community Facilities

1.0 Purpose.

- 1.1 To inform members of a delay in the original timescale for reviewing the letting policy for sport and community facilities

2.0 Summary.

- 2.1 At its meeting of 22 January, 2013 the Committee agreed the approval, in principle, of a revision of the Council's letting policy to include registration of organisations and that a further report be brought to the next Committee, detailing the consultation response and recommending final amendments to the Council's letting policy.

- 2.2 Whilst work has continued on the revision of the letting policy, progress has been complicated by a number of factors:

- 1) The decision, in principle, by the Board of Inverclyde Leisure to consider taking over the management of all outdoor sports facilities in Inverclyde (target date September 2013).
- 2) The decision to reduce the budget (in 2014/15 and 2015/16) available for Grants to Voluntary Organisations as part of the budget process, and
- 3) The proposed development of new, self managed community facilities.

- 2.3 It is proposed that, in order to properly consider the impact on the above of a revised letting policy, a further report be delayed until after the summer recess in order that the final policy is properly informed.

3.0 Recommendations.

- 3.1 That the Committee note the current position with the review of the letting policy for sport and community facilities and approve the submission of a detailed report after the summer recess.

John Arthur, Head of Safer & Inclusive Communities

4.0 Background.

- 4.1 The Council's current letting policy allows a range of waivers to the letting charge for Council owned facilities, or in community halls and outdoor sports facilities operated by Inverclyde Leisure. Currently there is no requirement for organisations applying for these waivers to provide information about their activities, financial standing, constitution and aims, child protection policies or any other details which could reasonably be asked of organisations in receipt of public subsidy.
- 4.2 The lack of formal registration also inhibits communication with local organisations, in that it is not uncommon for various individuals to present themselves as representing a particular organisation when making bookings. A registration process would establish a more formal relationship with named individuals, thus aiding communication with that organisation regarding bookings, invoicing etc.
- 4.3 Formal registration would also allow a comprehensive view of all of the Council's support for any particular organisation – many of the organisations in receipt of waivers also receive grants from GTVO and other funds provided by the Council.
- 4.4 Formal registration, on an annual basis, also allows officers to collect information on participation numbers in organisations (this is particularly important where waivers are given to encourage the uptake of facilities and grow the number of participants in a particular age group), the quality of service, including coaching, provided and the participation of the organisation in governing body quality schemes, co-operation with other organisations, and participation in, for example, community sports hubs.
- 4.5 Formal registration also allows a more targeted approach to be taken to approving waivers, both generally and in relation to overall policy.

5.0 Proposed Transfer of outdoor leisure facilities to Inverclyde Leisure.

- 5.1 At its meeting of 21st January 2013, the Board of Inverclyde Leisure agreed, in principle, to taking on the management of the Council's outdoor sports facilities. The target date for this transfer is September 2013.
- 5.2 Inverclyde Leisure currently manage all bookings and collection of income for the Council's outdoor sports facilities. Any change to the waivers to let policy at this stage could have a significant impact on the financial aspects of the transfer proposal. It is considered prudent to delay any change until a draft transfer agreement is in place and ready for Committee approval.

6.0 Relationship with Grants to Voluntary Organisations.

- 6.1 There is a significant overlap of organisations receiving waivers to let and grants from GTVO. As the Council has agreed to reduce the budget for GTVO by £100,000 by 2015/16 it is important to consider any proposed review of the letting policy in that context, to ensure that the impact on any one organisation or group is limited.

7.0 Relationship with the proposed new, and existing, self managed community facilities.

- 7.1 The letting policy, and associated waivers to let, applies only to Council facilities, including schools, and to community facilities and synthetic pitches managed by Inverclyde Leisure. It does not apply to the existing self managed facilities in Inverclyde who depend on letting income to support the activities there. These facilities are supported by the Council through a number of funding streams, including the Regeneration Fund (formerly the Fairer Scotland Fund), GTVO, indirectly through the management fee paid to Inverclyde Leisure and, in some cases, directly in the form of annual grant and deficit funding agreements.
- 7.2 The proposed development of self managed community facilities at Woodhall, Gibshell,

Broomhill and Inverkip will increase, significantly, the number of such facilities in Inverclyde. All such facilities depend on rental income from the communities and organisations using them. In respect of the new facilities, the Council has provided a total of £75,000 to support the relevant business plans from 2014 onward.

- 7.3 Any review of the Council's letting policy must consider the effect on demand for, and therefore sustainability of, the self managed facilities.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial. None at this time.

5.2 Legal. None

5.3 Personnel. None

5.4 Equalities. When delivering services to our customers, full cognisance is taken of equality and diversity processes and procedures.

5.5 Repopulation. High quality, accessible leisure facilities pay a key part in attracting and retaining residents. A transparent and supportive letting and waivers policy will support this aim.