

Education, Children and Families Committee

10am, Tuesday, 21 May 2019

Primary and Special School Lets Update

**Executive/routine
All Wards
Council Commitments**

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Education, Children and Families Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 note the actions taken to improve the management and customer service experience
 - 1.1.2 note the work done to manage the impact of the Asset Management Works programme
 - 1.1.3 request that an update report is brought to the next committee when the activity during the summer will be known and able to be compared with 2018/19
 - 1.1.4 request a further report in October 2019 on the numbers of lets applied and any issues for organisations not getting lets.

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Primary and Special School Lets Update

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Business Support for supporting community access to primary and special school through school lets has faced several challenges in the last twelve months namely
- Staff turnover and workforce development and training
 - Implementation of 32 hours a year free access of community time in schools for HTs to deliver on statutory requirement for parental engagement and/or priority school activity e.g. parent council meetings.
 - The CEC Asset Management Work Programme (AMP) involving significant investment in large number of schools but with an impact on community use when works are carried out
- 2.2 This report details the progress made in dealing with these challenges and highlights new ones that are expected to emerge in the future.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Primary and Special School Lets Team support the access to over one hundred and twenty buildings in the city. There are over four thousand permits issued each year and the majority support school, PTA, Parent Council, Active Schools and Out of School Care bookings. There are over four hundred bookings that pay a fee and these support activities such as swimming lessons, Scouts, Brownies, Beavers and Guides. A significant proportion of bookings support under 18's activities.
- 3.2 The School Lets Team is located within Business Support Services with three staff in the team supported by line management. Lifelong Learning Services provide policy and strategic guidance to the service.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The failure of the booking software in 2018 led to a significant backlog of booking requests for the academic year 2018/19. This has been addressed through the

creation of a new booking system without incurring any costs to the Council. The system has been refined in readiness for 2019/20 bookings.

- 4.2 There is a new set of schools entering the AMW programme in summer 2019 which brings the total number of Primary and Special School buildings unavailable for community use in summer to 50. Let holders have been informed and discussions are underway to support the 12 applications that require relocated or discussions with AMW Project Managers. 15 applications can go ahead without disruption.
- 4.3 At the commencement of Term 1 2019/20, the Asset Management Works will see 49 schools still in the programme and unavailable for general community use. This figure is anticipated to drop throughout the year as work is completed. All let holders have been made aware of this as part of the re-booking e-mail which included a list of the unavailable schools. School Lets will be managing a waiting list to ensure that when schools are available again, the historic let holders will have first opportunity to request the space again.

Re-booking for academic year 2019/20 was planned in a way to avoid the backlog of last year. Applications will be sent in May and processed by June latest allowing a minimum of six weeks' notice to let holders about the outcome of their request.

- 4.4 Schools in the AMW programme will continue to support Out of School Care and statutory school events during term time. Other school bookings such as after school clubs, Active Schools and concerts/fundraisers will only go ahead if they do not delay the works programme. All other bookings will be unavailable and the School Lets Team will be ready to help identify alternative options.
- 4.5 There are also routine maintenance and inspections carried out on school buildings which can affect access for bookings. There are regular meetings with colleagues from Facilities Management, Amey and Mitie to improve coordination, communication and minimise the impact on customers.
- 4.5 The 32-hour policy was introduced for 2018/19 and the systems tracking the bookings has been refined for 2019/20. Statements of hours used will be issued to Parent Councils. PTA's and Schools at the end of each term.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Re-booking for academic year 2019/20 is underway and was planned in a way to avoid the backlog of last year. Customers will send in their bookings no later than May to allow them to be processed by June latest allowing a minimum of six weeks' notice to let holders about the outcome of their request.
- 5.2 A new scale of charges was approved at the full City of Edinburgh Council meeting on the 21st February 2019. This information was part of the re-booking e-mail sent to all let holders.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 All efforts will be made to relocate let holders and maintain the income from bookings that attract a fee. However, this will not always be possible and there will be a financial impact.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Senior school management have had regular communication with Project Managers including pre-start meetings if they are in the AMW programme.
- 7.2 All let holders have been made aware of the AMW programme including a list of the affected schools and their anticipated completion dates.
- 7.3 Let holders have been advised of the alternative options available to them within the CEC estate. These include other Primary and Special Schools, Secondary Schools and Community Centres.
- 7.4 Extra support is being made available for Out of Schools Care providers to find alternative accommodation in holiday periods. This includes supporting two providers to use the same school.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 The full meeting papers where the new scale of charges was approved can be found here:
http://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/meetings/meeting/4645/city_of_edinburgh_council

9. Appendices

None