

CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL
POLICY AND SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Item No 3

6 AUGUST 2020

DEPUTATION REQUESTS

Subject	Deputation
3.1 In relation to Item 6.4 on the agenda – Community Centres and Libraries Re-opening	Jack Kane Community Centre Management Committee



Jack Kane Community Centre Deputation

Convener, Vice Convenor and elected members of the Committee thank you for agreeing to hear this deputation from the Jack Kane Community Centre in respect of correspondence received.

We welcome the gentle easing of restrictions and the acknowledgement that charities such as ours who are carrying out essential services should be engaged with and a proposed way forward agreed. It was also refreshing to hear the positive contributions from all sides of the virtual chamber that recognised the valuable work which charities such as ours carry out in partnership with the CEC.

To this end we have four clear questions as laid out below:

- 1. There has been no timeline on decision making and as such we require a clear indication of the timescales involved whereby we will receive notification of our phased limited access opening request (we have now been waiting nearly 3 weeks not days)?**
- 2. That the CEC confirm that this is short term solution which will assist in alleviating potential pressure on other CEC departments?**
- 3. Provide assurances for this community centre that this arrangement will not be viewed as a long term ambition to reduce services and withdraw support from our services, community and this management community?**
- 4. Clarification of provisional dates, timelines and frameworks for further discussion and dialogue so that we can together chart a progressive partnership direction and meet our charitable and the CECs aims for service delivery?**

Community Centres Phased Re-Opening Document

Having explored the Community Centres phased approach to re/opening and access papers for the forthcoming P&S committee, in the lead up to this Alistair Gaw in a members briefing outlined a timeline:

'All management committees will be written to today to confirm that these centres can be accessed for the provision of emergency community support from tomorrow (23rd July), subject to necessary assurances that they can do so safely'. (Alistair Gaw)

Whilst we welcomed this ambitious turnaround proposed, unfortunately the reality is that process has to ground to a halt with no lead officer or communication. We submitted our request on the 23rd July and had confirmation that our initial request was supported on Tuesday 28th July, however as of the 5th August we have had no further communication and we are still e mailing our locality managers for an update?

Understandably, the CEC Approval Procedure form is quite detailed in the same way that schools will have to adhere to for a full opening, however you must be mindful and take in to consideration that that we are volunteers and as such the form and the associated papers are somewhat robust in its requirement for detail.



Jack Kane Community Centre Deputation

In the interim and as evidenced by the CEC Approval Procedure form, our charity notes

- **That all start-up costs including cleaning and any physical adjustments to the building associated with restricted access to the centre needs to be met fully by this charity.**
- **That the CEC will not provide any additional funds or resources to open the centre and that requests would be denied if the charity does not agree to this option.**

Arguably if any MC cannot adhere to these requirements and these financial pressures then permission would not be granted. Understandably it is our view that this does not shine a positive light on service recovery and partnership working!

Policy and Sustainability Committee Paper 6th August (Community Centres and Libraries reopening)

As buildings transition through this pandemic, in the interim we note that the CEC:

- **Are not making any investment either through staffing requirements such as FM, BS or LLL or for physical amendments to the fabric of the building.**
- **There is also no indication of timelines within the aforementioned paper or indeed draft dates of when CEC services may at least have some input in to the building and its functions.**

As a board and a partner, we would feel more comfortable if there was at least a draft timeline and an indication of budget requirements when there will be a compliment of CEC support staff in the building and we look forward to further immediate discussions?

Financial Pressures

Understanding the difficult financial pressures that are placed on all of us at this time, the board are also somewhat wary that there could be a cost cutting exercise on the back of this pandemic, we wish to reinforce that we are entering in to a short term understanding until such time where there is an arrangement for further easing, and look forward to further dialogue regarding this matter. The committee must be aware that this MC generates income through lets and reinvests any funds back in to our work with communities.

In conclusion

Our ambition is to continue to combat poverty, to increase our communities' health and well-being and grow our services which will be aligned with our localities needs. In order to do this, we would welcome and appreciate the support and assistance that the CEC has provided this charity over the years. With this in mind, we would hope as a vital partner that the CEC do not expect or see this agreement as a long-term ambition to reduce services and withdraw support.

By working together in an open and transparent fashion it will only bring benefits as we recover and renew our services for the benefit of the people in our communities.

John Witherspoon
Chairperson
5 August 2020

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