

Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 16 November 2021

Community Centres (update)

Executive/routine

Wards

Council Commitments [35](#)

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 The Culture and Communities Committee is asked to:
 - 1.1.1 Note that the majority of Council supported community centres are open
 - 1.1.2 Note the current Coronavirus (Covid 19) guidance as it applies to community centres
 - 1.1.3 Note positive progress on the phased approach to safely extend the use of community centres in line with Scottish Government guidelines.

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Report

Community Centres (update)

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report outlines the present adaptation and renewal arrangements in community centres.
- 2.2 It highlights the positive successes of reopening and the extensive efforts of officers and management committees to achieve this.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council has 35 community centres, offering a wide range of community learning, information and leisure opportunities, which are highly valued by citizens and community groups across the city.
- 3.2 On [6 August 2020](#) the Council Policy and Sustainability Committee approved a process to enable Management Committees of CEC Community Centres to access centres for essential services. These were the hosting of essential voluntary or urgent public support services, such as food banks, homeless services, blood donation sessions, regulated childcare, access to retrieve equipment for outdoor youth work. Policy and Sustainability Committee of [10 November 2020](#) approved the addition of youth work (as defined by YouthLink Scotland) and community services that support vulnerable people. Approval to reopen centres for these purposes was on the basis that no Council resources were required.
- 3.3 Following a report to full Council on [24 June 2021](#) on Youth Work in Community Centres and other locations, Officers were asked to accelerate the pace of community centre reopening. A Task Group was set up by the Interim Director of Communities and Families, to support this acceleration and to identify any additional resources required to underpin the necessary building and layout assessments, ventilation, space planning (to support social distancing), Health and Fire safety risk assessments and additional Coronavirus (Covid 19) related cleaning.

- 3.4 The national position regarding Coronavirus (Covid-19) continues to evolve. Therefore, any programme arrangements put in place need to have the flexibility to adapt to changing circumstances and Public Health Guidance.

4. Main report

- 4.1 The Community Centre Task Group comprises Lifelong Learning Service locality and strategic officers, colleagues from Resilience, Health and safety, Fire safety, Business Support, Facilities Management, Interior & Environmental Design, Technical Operations, Environmental Services and Communications. The Task group identified additional resources to enhance the capacity of service teams to undertake extensive site visits across the city, the detailed planning, space planning and Health and fire safety risk assessments and method statements, the ongoing dialogue and communications with Management Committees.

Lifelong Learning Services Managers have worked with Management Committees to address health and fire safety issues highlighted in Centre site visits. They have supported them to ensure appropriate paperwork is in place to allow groups to resume and have provided the information and support they need to address the specific health and safety aspects Management Committees are responsible for.

- 4.2 The rigorous, forensic approach to building and facilities assessment revealed some issues at centres around ventilation (which is critical for air change to minimise virus transmission) and the suitability of some fixtures and fittings. These have not prevented partial use of these buildings. The Task Group secured additional resources such as CO2 Monitors, to support safe day to day public, staff and volunteer use of the centres.
- 4.3 In August 2021 the previous Coronavirus (Covid 19) guidance for the Community Learning and Development sector was archived on the Scottish Government website. The new guidance, [Coronavirus \(Covid 19\): universities colleges and community learning and development providers](#) reflects the national framework guidance at beyond level 0. The Council adopted the recommended careful, cautious and sensible approach, including maintaining one metre distancing in centres. Officers worked with Management Committees to review and update risk assessments at centres to reflect the changes.
- 4.4 It is worth noting that the Scottish Government guidance [Coronavirus \(Covid 19\): safer businesses and workplaces](#) also applies to creating a safe working environment in community centres.
- 4.5 The pace of community centre reopening has picked up significant momentum since the Task Group was established and the majority of the Council supported community centres are now open.

These include Leith, Jack Kane, South Bridge, Royston Wardieburn, Ratho, Clovenstone, Pentland, Goodtrees, Cameron House, Carrickvale, Magdalene, Sandys, South Queensferry, West Pilton, Craigentenny, Gilmerton, Kirkliston,

South Side, Valley Park, Inch, Gorgie Memorial Hall, Northfield, Juniper Green, Braidwood, Wee Moredun, Balerno, St Brides, Portobello, Rannoch and Tollcross.

The Management Committee has re-started a programme of activity at St Bride's but an issue has been identified with the ventilation in the main hall which has limited the use of this part of the building. Officers are working with the Management Committee to actively explore what action can be taken to address the lack of ventilation as a priority, and a specialist contractor has been engaged to provide advice on the options available. In the meantime, the main hall is being used for smaller groups so that the Management Committee can achieve some use of this important space.

Gate 55 is currently being used as a Symptomatic Test Centre (STC). The Fort's Management Committee (MC) resigned during the pandemic and Lifelong Learning Officers have been assisting in a process of transition.

Officers are working alongside the Bingham Management Committee to support them in the reopening of the Centre. It is hoped that this will take place as soon as possible, recognising that the Centre was shut for a period of time pre Covid. A progress update briefing has been issued separately for local members.

The Task Group is reaching out to two centres (Munro Centre and Colinton Mains) who may want to link in with the Council guidance and support available to other centres in the Community Centre programme.

- 4.6 Some of the additional support for reopening and associated costs are set out below:

Interior and Environmental Design Planning - £20,000.00

Signage and Personal Protective Equipment - £6,850.00

Skips (for clearance in line with H&S recommendation) - £9,500.00

CO2 Monitors – £14,000.00

- 4.7 Most of the current leases to the Management Committees date back to 1994 and require modernisation, particularly in relation to items such as the insurance clause, sub-leasing provisions, compliance with statute and Council use of the facilities. On [10 October 2019](#), Finance and Resources committee approved a consultation on draft Heads of Terms for more modern, standard leases. This consultation has been delayed by Covid however preparation is underway to start this consultation in June 2022.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Work will continue to support the safe development of activity and group programmes in community centres.
- 5.2 Preparation is underway to start a consultation on leases in June 2022.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 Looking ahead, additional costs for the types of additional support highlighted in paragraph 4.6 above will be contained within existing budgets. However, wider

capital costs, such as those associated with mechanical ventilation, are likely to be significant and will be the subject of a further report to a future Finance and Resources Committee.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

7.1 The leases consultation will involve dialogue with Management Committees.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 Scotland's route map - <https://www.gov.scot/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-scotlands-route-map/>
- 8.2 Community Centre Guidance (21 December 2020) – **now archived by Scottish Government** <https://www.gov.scot/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-multi-purpose-community-facilities---guidance/>
- 8.3 Community Centre Guidance (August 2021) , [Coronavirus \(Covid 19\): universities colleges and community learning and development providers](#)
- 8.4 Safer workplace guidance (August 2021) [Coronavirus \(Covid 19\): safer businesses and workplaces](#)

9. Appendices
