

Finance and Resources Committee

10:00am, Thursday, 26 September 2019

Cameron House Community Centre budget allocation

Executive/routine

Wards

Council Commitments

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 Committee is requested to agree whether to (i) allocate a reduced budget to Cameron House in 2019/20 proportionately in line with the overall reductions in the tertiary budget (Option A); or (ii) preserve the 17/18 budget level for Cameron House for 19/20 (Option B); both options in the period up until the next local government election and, if Option B is chosen, where this funding should come from.
- 1.2 That all future meetings between council officials and the Management Committee be minuted and circulated to the local councillors. The minute taker to be agreed by both parties.

Andrew Kerr

Chief Executive

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Report

Cameron House Community Centre budget allocation

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 A motion was approved at Finance and Resources Committee on 23 May 2019. This report fulfils the motion and sets out the position with regard to the budget for Cameron House Community Centre (“Cameron House”) and seeks Committee’s decision with regard to the budget allocation for 2019/20 and beyond.

3. Background

- 3.1 On 23 May 2019, a Motion was approved by the Finance and Resources Committee in the following terms:

“In relation to the running of the Cameron House Community Centre, the Finance and Resources Committee;

- 1) Notes that Southside-Newington ward councillors are requesting that:*
 - i) The budget held by the Children’s and Families for Cameron House Community Centre be transferred to the South East Localities account;*
 - ii) That this budget be maintained at the 2017 level for the duration of this Council term;*
 - iii) That all future meetings between council officials and the Management Committee be minuted and circulated to the local councillors. The minute taker to be agreed by both parties.*
- 2) Therefore, calls for a report on these issues, including detailing the background to the reason for these requests”*

- 3.2 Cameron House is a well-used community centre in the South East of the city. It is a well-run and valued community resource.
- 3.3 Since its construction on its current site, the building has suffered from multiple construction related issues, including significant flooding. The Council has had to spend significant sums of money on repairing and maintaining the building.
- 3.4 The issues with the construction and management of the building of Cameron House, as well as issues relating to allegations raised in relation to inappropriate behaviour of Council officers, have previously been reported in detail to both

Education, Children and Families Committee and Governance Risk and Best Value Committee.

- 3.5 Further significant detail relating to the history of these matters is contained within the following reports (links are provided further below for A-agenda reports):
- 3.5.1 The report to Education, Children and Families Committee in December 2014 in relation to the review of Cameron House project delivery by Turner and Townsend;
 - 3.5.2 The report to Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee in March 2015 which further considered the report presented to Education, Children and Families Committee in December 2014;
 - 3.5.3 The reports to Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee in October and November 2015 (B-agenda reports considered in private)) which considered the allegations of misconduct by Council officers involved in the Cameron House project; and
 - 3.5.4 The report to Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee in August 2016 which considered a report providing an update on the Action Plan agreed with Cameron House Management Committee.
- 3.6 These reports set out details of failings by the Council and an apology was issued to Cameron House Management Committee by the Council.
- 3.7 In 2016, a decision was taken by the Chief Executive, following discussions with the Monitoring Officer, to change the liaison/relationship between the Council and Cameron House from Communities and Families to Localities via the Place directorate.
- 3.8 At the same time, additional measures were also agreed in relation to the level of Community Learning and Development staffing at the centre.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Following the implementation of the matters detailed in 3.7 and 3.8 above, Cameron House has continued to operate successfully.

Budget allocation

- 4.2 A specific budget exists within the Communities and Families budget which relates to Life Long Learning to fund the employment of sessional workers to deliver learning and community development programmes across the city. This is referred to as the “tertiary budget”.
- 4.3 In 18/19 the total citywide tertiary budget for staff amounted to £467,514. This was a reduction on the previous annual budgets, which were £497,512 in 2017/18 and £522,166 in 2016/17. Any Management Committee of a Community Centre can bid in to this tertiary budget to secure funding for programmes they wish to run in Centres, but it is not exclusively to support activity based in Community Centres and can be used for other learning activity based on local priorities.

- 4.4 Management Committees are supported by Lifelong Learning Development Officers to develop programmes of activity and to “bid in” to the budget for funding based on local needs and priorities.
- 4.5 Each of the four Lifelong Learning teams within the Localities receives an allocation from the citywide tertiary budget. Cameron House Community Education Centre falls within the South East Locality. The total tertiary budget allocated to South East Locality in 2018/19 was £109,662. This was less than the budget allocated of £116,698 in 2017/18, a reduction of approximately 6%. The Council moved from the six Neighbourhood model to the four Locality model in 2016 and therefore the previous budgets were allocated on different boundaries.
- 4.6 Given the liaison move from Communities and Families to Localities via the Place Directorate, the budget that Cameron House received in 2016/17 was in practical terms carried forward into 2017/18 at the same level as the Centre had secured in 2016/17. This amount was £15,731.
- 4.7 This meant that Cameron House was simply allocated a budgeted amount, representing approximately 13.5% of the overall fund available for learning activity in South East locality. All other Centres and facilities would then have to bid in to be allocated some of the remaining funds available.
- 4.8 In addition, as part of the Life Long learning organisational review that concluded in 2017, the role of “CLD Worker” based at Community Centres was deleted from the structure and the new Lifelong Learning Service provides support to Management Committees from a team of Lifelong Learning Development Officers who work across the Locality with lead roles in certain areas of the service. The Centres have a link officer but do not have a full time dedicated CLD Worker in the way that most Centres did previously. Due to a decision taken by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Monitoring Officer in 2016, Cameron House has retained its full-time dedicated support.
- 4.9 Accordingly, in significant part in recognition of the issues suffered in relation to the Centre in the past, Cameron House presently benefits from both directly allocated budget and full-time dedicated support.
- 4.10 As part of the Council’s budget setting process for 18/19, the tertiary budget available to Life Long Learning was reduced by 6% and the amount allocated to South East Locality was accordingly reduced by the same percentage. The Locality Manager therefore decided that the budget allocated to Cameron House would see a proportionate reduction in keeping with the overall budget reduction of 6%, with the 2018/19 budget allocation therefore being set at £14,787.
- 4.11 It is understood that Cameron House Management Committee has requested, in view of the issues suffered historically as detailed above, that the budget for 2019/20, and for future years, should be maintained at the 2016/17 level of £15,731. If this were to be removed from the remainder of the Life Long Learning budget then this would mean that there would be a reduction in the funding available to other Centres across the Locality to support learning and development programmes. This is at a time when there is a move towards focussing resources in areas of greatest social inequality. In

South East these communities are in Dumbiedykes and a number of areas in the Liberton Gilmerton ward.

- 4.12 The 2019 Annual report for Cameron House notes that they have current assets on the balance sheet of £82,565.
- 4.13 Committee is asked to agree whether to (i) allocate a reduced budget to Cameron House in 2019/20 proportionately in line with the overall reductions in the tertiary budget (Option A); or (ii) preserve the 17/18 budget level for Cameron House for 19/20 (Option B); both options in the period up until the next local government election.
- 4.14 If Option B is approved, Committee is requested to agree whether the relevant additional funding should be allocated from the South East Localities Life Long Learning tertiary budget or, if not, where the budget should be allocated/transferred from.

Meetings

- 4.15 The Motion proposes that all future meetings between council officials and the Management Committee be minuted and circulated to the local councillors. The minute taker to be agreed by both parties. This is recommended for agreement.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Action will be taken as appropriate to implement the Committee's decision.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 There will be no overall additional cost to the Council. The issue for Committee relates to the source of the funding.

7. Stakeholder/Community Impact

- 7.1 Any impact will only become effective if Option B is the Committee's preferred option. Following a decision, consideration can be given to what, if any, notification of the effect of the decision is required.

8. Background reading/external references

- 8.1 [The report to Education, Children and Families Committee in December 2014 in relation to the review of Cameron House project delivery by Turner and Townsend](#)
- 8.2 [The report to Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee in March 2015 which further considered the report presented to Education, Children and Families Committee in December 2014](#)

- 8.3 [The B-agenda report to Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee in October 2015 which considered the allegations of misconduct by Council officers involved in the Cameron House project](#) (link to agenda, report available to Elected members from committee services)
- 8.4 [The B-agenda report to Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee in November 2015 which considered the allegations of misconduct by Council officers involved in the Cameron House project](#) (link to agenda, report available to Elected members from committee services)
- 8.5 [The report to Governance, Risk and Best Value Committee in August 2016 which considered a report providing an update on the Action Plan agreed with Cameron House Management Committee](#)

9. Appendices

- 9.1 None.