

**Decision Session - Executive Member for
Culture, Leisure and Communities**

28 August 2020

Report of the Assistant Director (Communities and Culture)

Consultation on the future of the 68 Centre

Summary

1. This report seeks permission to start a public consultation on the future of the 68 centre in Heworth.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is asked to approve:
 - The proposed public consultation as set out in the report
 - Note the short term use of the building

Reason: To ensure local residents influence the future use of the 68 centre and site.

Background

3. The 68 Centre was originally built as a youth centre, but in recent years has become the home to Choose 2 Youth and a handful of community user groups.
4. Choose 2 Youth are a non-for profit organisation who deliver essential educational and social care for young people with learning and physical disabilities and use the centre 5 days a week 8-5pm. A feasibility in 2019 concluded that Choose 2 Youth would move to Moor Lane Youth Centre, which was agreed in consultation with the directors and the parents of the children.
5. The move of Choose 2 Youth into Moor Lane in August 2020, leaves the 68 Centre vacant with the local community groups being relocated to alternative facilities, as the age and condition of the centre is limiting safe use for groups to return.

6. The 68 Centre was forced to close in March 2020 due to COVID-19 and since the government allowed community centres to re-open, the demand like many community centres has been low.
7. In the short term (estimated as the next 12 months) officers have identified an alternative use to allow Housing Services to use the 68 Centre as a compound to support a scheme to renovate local Council houses. Due to COVID-19, the building contractor needs a local welfare facility for their staff and provide a base for residents to be able to choose styles of kitchen and bathrooms.

Consultation

8. The Council has had engaged over the last year with all existing users, representatives of the local residents association, invited voluntary and third sector organisations to look around the centre and finally local councillors have held a ward team meeting inviting local residents engagement, with the outcomes so far being:
 - No interest from a single organisation to consider a community asset transfer (Like Tang Hall Community Centre)
 - No interest from local residents or existing user groups to take on the management of centre (Like Bell Farm Social Hall)
 - Many suggestions for potential community activities
9. The proposal is to start a formal public consultation over the future of the 68 Centre and site. A commitment has already been made by the Council to maintain community use on the site, so the consultation is important to understand local need.
10. The consultation format will be multifaceted to be as inclusive as possible and will involve:
 - Information leaflet/survey
 - Online survey
 - Local resident drop in sessions
 - Workshops to develop ideas and feedback on options

Options and Analysis

11. The Executive Member is invited to agree the basis for the consultation with an immediate start with the expectation that the results will be reported back within the next 6 months. In addition, note the alternative short term use of the 68 Centre to support the renovation of local Council houses.

Implications

12. **Financial** - The alternative use of the 68 Centre by the building contractor who is renovating Council homes will pay a nominal hire fee, which will be used to off-set the income previously taken. Financial support is being offered (where needed) to those relocated user groups whose hire fees have been affected.
13. **Equalities** – A community impact assessment will be carried out alongside the findings of the consultation. The consultation will be as accessible as possible.
14. The report has no additional, HR, Legal, Information Technology, Property or other implications beyond those highlighted in the report.

Council Plan

15. The proposals in this paper further a number of the Council Plan themes, notably *Safe Communities and Culture for all* and *An Open and Effective Council*.

Risk Management

16. In compliance with the Council's risk management strategy the main risks that have been identified associated with the proposals contained in this report are those which could lead to the inability to engage effectively due to COVID-19, leading to a longer consultation period. The level of risk is assessed as "Low". This is acceptable but means that regular monitoring is required.

Contact Details

Authors:

Andy Laslett
Strategic Services Manager
(Communities & Culture)

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Charlie Croft
Assistant Director of Communities &
Culture

Report
Approved



Date: 17 Aug 2020

Specialist Implications Officer(s):

Wards Affected: Heworth

All

For further information please contact the author of the report