

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Strategic Lead for Communications, Culture, Communities and Facilities****Corporate Services Committee: 13 November 2019**

Subject: Review of Community Facilities**1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to provide members with a proposal on how to deliver the savings allocated in the 2018/19 Council budget to a review of Community Facilities in West Dunbartonshire.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that members:

- note the engagement activity with the community which has taken place to date;
- note the £5m planned investment by the Council in its Community Centres in the coming years;
- agree Option C which would see West Dunbarton Leisure Trust (WDLT) undertake a review of service delivery in Community Facilities to make efficiencies worth £130,000 in 2020/21;
- agree that the opening hours at Glenhead Community Centre are amended primarily around those of Duntocher Library to deliver an additional £57,000 saving in 2020/21; and that work is undertaken to support existing bookings to transition to new arrangements either staying at Glenhead, or other nearby venues such as Duntocher Village Hall and Antonine Sports Centre
- agree that the Strategic Lead for CCCF and Assets Co-ordinator are given delegated authority to enter into discussions aimed at transferring responsibility for the West Dunbartonshire Activity Centre in Brucehill to the West Dunbartonshire Gymnastics Club, if they are willing, either by way of asset transfer or lease;
- agree that the Strategic Lead for CCCF and Assets Co-ordinator are given delegated authority to enter into discussions with the local Bowling group, if they are willing, to become key-holders for Bowling Hall;
- agree that that the Strategic Lead for CCCF leads continuous engagement with Community Centre users to encourage asset transfer and other forms of community empowerment.

3. Background

3.1 The Council currently owns the following Community Centres in West Dunbartonshire:

Venue	Facilities	Distance to nearest alternative facility (not including Church Halls)
Alexandria Community Centre	Large multi-purpose centre offering a varied programme of activities and facilities to the community. Also main office for WDLT	St Mary's PS (0.4mi) Christie Park PS (0.4mi) Vale of Leven Academy (0.7 mi)
Bonhill Community Centre	Medium-sized centre offering a sports hall and meeting rooms	St Ronan's PS (0 mi) Lennox PS (0.7mi) Bonhill PS (0.9mi)
Bowling Village Hall	A small centre offering meeting space to the local community	Gavinburn PS (4mi)
Clydebank East Community Centre	Small centre offering sports hall and meeting rooms	Centre 81 (0.3mi) OHR PS (0.3mi) Whitcrook PS (0.5mi) Linnvale PS (0.7mi) Clydebank Leisure Centre (1mi) SPTA (1.7mi) St Eunan's PS (1.8 mi)
Concord Community Centre	Medium-sized centre offering a sports hall and meeting rooms suitable for 4-30 people	Meadow Leisure Centre (0.4 mi) Knoxland PS (0.5mi) Braehead PS (0.6mi) Dumbarton Academy (0.7mi)
Dalmuir Community Centre	A large centre offering a sports hall and rooms capable of holding up to 100 people	St Stephens PS (0.4mi) Our Lady of Loretto (0.5mi) Clydemuir PS (0.7mi)
Denny Civic Theatre	Large facility that can serve as a theatre, concert hall or conference venue	Meadow Leisure Centre (0.4 mi) Knoxland PS (0.5mi) Braehead PS (0.7mi) Dumbarton Academy (0.7mi)
West Dumbarton Activity Centre	The facility offers state of the art gymnastics activity and equipment.	St Michael's PS (0.3mi) Dalreoch PS (0.6mi)

Glenhead Community Centre	A small venue with sports hall and rooms suitable for small functions.	Duntocher Village Hall (0.2mi) St Mary's PS (0.2mi) Antonine Sports Centre (0.3mi) Carleith PS (0.6mi) Skypoint Centre (1mi)
Hub Community Centre	A large facility offering a sports hall and rooms capable of holding up to 100 people	Kilbowie PS (0.2mi) St Eunan's PS (0.3mi) SPTA (0.3mi) Clydebank Leisure Centre (1.3mi)
Napier Hall	A medium sized facility with function rooms capable of holding up to 160 people.	Gavinburn PS (0.3m)
Skypoint	Skypoint is a large venue with a hall – including stage - suitable for up to 150 people and parking for 40 vehicles.	Edinbarnet PS (0.2mi) St Josephs PS (0.5mi) Antonine Sports Centre (0.9mi) SPTA (1.3mi)
Dalmonach	Opening in Winter 2019	Bonhill Community Centre (0.7mi) Alexandria Community Centre (0.7mi) Bonhill Primary School (0.7mi) St Ronan's Primary School (0.7mi)

3.2 At Appendix 1 a geographical illustration of the Community Centres can be seen. This shows that the Community Centres are split into wards as follows:

Location	Number
Ward 1 (Lomond)	0
Ward 2 (Leven)	2
Ward 3 (Dumbarton)	4
Ward 4 (Kilpatrick)	2
Ward 5 (Clydebank Central)	1
Ward 6 (Clydebank Waterfront)	3

3.3 All community centres are managed on the Council's behalf by WDLT. Each community centre generates the following income levels per year:

Venue	Income in 2018/19	Hours open per week	Average Income per hour
Alexandria Community Centre	£39,572	69	£11.47
Bonhill Community Centre	£9,991	46.5	£4.30
Bowling Village Hall	£1,780	<i>Only opened when a booking made</i>	N/A
Clydebank East Community Centre	£17,022	55	£6.19
Concord Community Centre	£38,630	69	£11.20
Dalmuir Community Centre	£52,243	70	£14.93
Denny Civic Theatre	£36,207	<i>Only opened when a booking made</i>	N/A
West Dumbarton Activity Centre	£15,726	70	£4.49
Glenhead Community Centre	£14,064	58	£4.85
Hub Community Centre	£33,225	69	£9.63
Napier Hall	£17,537	60	£5.85
Skypoint	£131,505	67.5	£38.96
Total	£407,503	634 hrs	£12.85

- 3.4 It is not possible to provide a breakdown of the cost of operating each Community Centre because the staffing team services the entire network rather than each venue. For example, if there are no bookings in a venue then WDLT Facilities Assistants can be deployed elsewhere to fill gaps. The following table provide an illustration of the overall cost of delivering these venues in their current model:

Type of Community Facility expenditure	2018/19
Employee costs (1 FTE Community Facilities Officer, 3 Duty Officers, 22 FTE Facilities Assistants & 4.3 FTE General Operatives)	£908,125
Property costs	£252,979
Central Repairs Allocation	£12,615
Total costs	£1,173,719
Total income	£407,503
Net loss	£766,216

- 3.5 The Council has an ongoing building upgrades plan which will help to improve the Community Centres in the coming years. The following table outlines the investment that is planned:

Venue	Spend planned 2019/20 to 2022/23
Alexandria Community Centre	£691,000
Bonhill Community Centre	£230,180
Bowling Village Hall	£162,680
Clydebank East Community Centre	£118,190
Concord Community Centre	£745,330
Dalmuir Community Centre	£1,009,240
Denny Civic Theatre	£708,680
West Dumbarton Activity Centre	£74,860
Glenhead Community Centre	£193,460
Hub Community Centre	£572,100
Napier Hall	£208,324
Skypoint	£689,820
Totals	£5,403,864

- 3.6 In March 2018, as part of 2018/19 budget setting meeting, Council agreed a £130k saving should come following a review of community facilities. The Administration comment outlined: “The leisure trust will conduct a review to determine which community facilities are being under utilised and are suitable for closure. We will encourage groups in these communities to take ownership of these centres, using the Community Empowerment Act to enable asset transfers, supported by our Community Empowerment Team.”
- 3.7 In practice WDLT only operate the Community Centres on the Council’s behalf, and so it was more appropriate for this activity to be led by Council officers with information supplied by the Leisure Trust.

4. Main Issues

August 2018 Engagement Sessions

- 4.1 Initial engagement sessions were held in August 2018 to gather the views of existing users of the Community Centres. It was hoped this would give an insight into the strengths and weakness of community facilities from the perspective of current users. The sessions were advertised by WDLT using their existing contact list, along with posters in community facilities and social media advertising.
- 4.2 In total 105 attendees from 44 separate organisations took part in sessions across 10 community facilities. In addition, 168 people responded to an online survey which sought to gather information on usage of community facilities and methods of travel to the facilities.

- 4.3** Users reported that the current community facilities were in a good location, and that they felt they provided a facility/venue that would otherwise not be available to them. Many users also highlighted the benefit of having childcare and out-of-school clubs in these local facilities. In addition users highlighted that the community facilities provide a central venue for groups to meet and their multi-use for foodbanks and support groups was added value to the community.
- 4.4** However, user groups also highlighted the poor state of repair of their local facility, the poor signage and often complicated booking and pricing system as a challenge to making best use of the facilities. The lack of Wi-Fi and poor internal layout and facilities were also highlighted as less-than-ideal and given as examples of why the facilities were not better used by a wider audience.
- 4.5** During these engagement sessions the user groups also highlighted a range of more general points about how the facilities could be better used – suggesting that more should be done by WDLT to promote the facilities and services available within them. Users felt that a published timetable of ‘what’s on’ in each facility would raise the profile of the facilities and also help groups identify opportunities for sharing space and joining up more. A summary of all feedback was published on the [Council website](#).

October / November 2018 Engagement Sessions

- 4.6** Following review of this feedback a second round of engagement events took place in October and November 2018. These sessions focused on outlining broad options for discussion, and gathering additional views from those in attendance.
- 4.7** Seven sessions were held at various locations and times to ensure they were as accessible as possible to anyone who wanted to participate. In total 76 individuals, representing 29 community organisations, took part in the sessions. In addition the same options were presented through an online survey, which attracted 55 responses.
- 4.8** The feedback was that those who currently use community facilities see ensuring broad coverage across the authority was more important than maintaining the total number of community facilities. The issue was that while each session shared this view, no group believed the reduction in community centres should happen in their location. It was highlighted that should any closures take place it was important for WDLT to work with communities groups to find alternative accommodation.
- 4.9** Participants also stated that asset transfer of facilities was a viable option as long as this was sustainable and accountable. However some felt that there was pressure to progress asset transfer before this was in place and that this presented a risk of facilities being lost to the local community.

4.10 Participants had little to add about how to reduce the current financial operating costs/increase the income generated by community facilities. They felt that investment should be made now to improve the longer-term prospects of the facilities. On reflection more could have been done to promote the fact to residents that the Council already has plans in place to invest more than £5m over 4 years to improve Community Centres.

Consideration of Financial Data

4.11 It is clear from 3.4 that operating the existing Community Centre estate is a considerable cost to the Council per annum. Furthermore while usage of the venues could certainly increase the fact remains that existing letting prices often do not cover employee costs and so additional lets, unless they take place at the same time as other bookings, will often cost more to facilitate than is brought in. In effect the model currently in operation is that the Council chooses to run these venues for community benefit rather than for commercial benefit. As a result a significant subsidy will always be required.

Next steps

4.12 In order to deliver the £130k savings agreed at Council the following three options were considered as part of an options appraisal.

Option A

4.13 Using criteria for closure of Community Centres based on least occupancy/income then the following venues would be proposed in order to meet the savings target.

Community Centre	2018/19 Income	2018/19 Property costs	Staff saving	Overall saving
Bowling	£1,780	£3,687	£138,000 (this proposal would allow for the deletion of approx. 6 FTE)	
Bonhill	£9,991	£8,710		
Glenhead	£14,064	£16,632		
Clydebank East	£17,022	£8,565		
Totals	£42,857	£37,594	£138,000	£133,000

A review of the allocation of the Central Repairs Account would be carried out following implementation of the closures to generate further efficiencies to the Council.

4.14 These sites would present a number of issues for closure. Bowling Village Hall is the only hall available for the community of Bowling to hire and the nearest alternative is four miles away. Residents in Bonhill, which is one of the most deprived locations in Scotland, would have to travel 0.5 miles to their nearest alternative community centre. It is also acknowledged that there are public transport challenges in the Bonhill area. Glenhead hosts the Duntocher Library service so disposing of this building would effectively close the library. No consultation has been undertaken on the closure of the library and there is no local Council building that could deliver this service as an alternative.

Option B

4.15 An alternative criteria considered was to review the Community Centres based on the best return from disposal. The Council has an approved criteria for assessing its buildings for disposal based on the expenditure cost of operating the facility, maintenance investment required for facilities, the likely capital receipt from sale or transfer of facilities, and the income generated by the facility.

4.16 WDC Corporate Asset Management assessed all 12 community facilities against approved criteria, and using only these criteria the following facilities would be prioritised for closure and disposal to deliver the saving. It should be noted that there would also be capital receipts from the sale of these sites that would be in excess of the £130k revenue saving:

Community Centre	2018/19 Income	2018/19 Property Costs	Staff saving	Overall saving
Bowling	£1,780	£3,687	£150,000 (this proposal would allow for the deletion of approx. 6.5 FTE)	
Bonhill	£9,991	£8,710		
Glenhead	£14,064	£16,632		
Alexandria	£39,572	£28,194		
Totals	£65,407	£57,223	£150,000	£142,000

A review of the allocation of the Central Repairs Account would be carried out following implementation of the closures to generate further efficiencies.

4.17 These sites would present a number of issues for closure. Bowling Village Hall, Bonhill and Glenhead are addressed at 4.14. Alexandria Community Centre is the headquarters for WDLT and its closure would require alternative accommodation to be found for 29 employees as well as storage. There would be a consequential one-off cost in this relocation and infrastructure

changes. Alexandria is also one of the busier and higher income generating Community Centres in West Dunbartonshire, and so this closure would run contrary to the Council's decision in April 2018, and have a high-impact on service users.

Option C

- 4.18** The Strategic Lead for Communications, Culture, Communities and Facilities took over responsibility for monitoring WDLT on behalf of the Council on 5 August 2019. This new expanded role also included leading the delivery of the £130k saving from Community Centres agreed in March 2018.
- 4.19** WDLT currently employs 22 FTE Facilities Assistants, 9 FTE Pavillion Assistants, and 4.3 FTE General Operatives to deliver its Community Facilities service. Given the low levels of occupancy, WDLT Management has agreed with the Council assessment that this 35.3 FTE represents an overprovision of staffing and that there is scope to undertake a review to deliver a more efficient service. This review could be undertaken to deliver the £130k savings in 2020/21 via a reduction in the management fee paid to WDLT. The review would include streamlining working practises to create a more flexible and efficient staffing model. Opening hours of centres will also be reviewed with consideration given to bespoke solutions for some centres including community keyholders. The annual review of service charges and the concessionary schemes would also be undertaken. Staff savings will be achieved in line with redeployment and VER, and thereafter a review of the remaining community facility workforce will be undertaken with a view to introducing more fit for purpose work practices. Flexible workforce options such as term time & seasonal contracts, annualised hours and peripatetic working will be considered to ensure maximum efficiency of the staffing resource.
- 4.20** Bringing WDLT under the monitoring of the Strategic Lead for CCCF has also facilitated a new discussion about how best to operate the Glenhead Community Centre in Duntocher. As previously stated, this centre generates only £14,000 per year in income and suffers from low levels of occupancy. A significant contributing factor in this is that it competes with the popular community-run Duntocher Village Hall – or White Hall – which is just 350 meters away. This situation is not ideal for either party and leads to situations where WDLT is taking bookings away from the Village Hall to meet its own income targets. This activity, while entirely appropriate, deprives a community-run venue of income which runs completely against the Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) and Council strategic objective to create active and empowered citizens. The most significant service at Glenhead is Duntocher Library which attracts 14,000 visitors per year. Advanced discussions have taken place with WDLT and Library management and an opportunity exists for Glenhead to transition its opening hours around those of the library (illustrated below) from April 2020 onwards.

	Duntocher Library Opening Times	Glenhead Opening Times
Monday	2-5pm	9am – 9pm
Tuesday	2-7pm	9pm – 8pm
Wednesday	9.30am – 1pm	9am – 9pm
Thursday	9.30am – 1pm	9am – 9pm
Friday	2-5pm	9am – 6pm

If the opening times were more broadly harmonised then Library staff could assist with opening and closing Glenhead on behalf of the WDLT, and dependant on the exact bookings allow community groups access to the hall during some of the hours. WDLT would have discussions with user groups to explore alternative arrangements for access to the building outside of these hours such as keyholding responsibilities which would limit the staffing requirements from WDLT. Support would also be provided to community groups to use alternative venues in the nearby area, if required. Likely beneficiaries would be the Village Hall and the charitable Antonine Sports Centre which the Council currently supports with a £50,000 grant per year. This change would further free up capacity within WDLT and help them deliver a more efficient service to the Council. If this option was agreed then an additional saving of £57,000 per year could be made on the management fee to WDLT in 2020/21 on top of the £130k saving at 4.19. This would come from a further review of the staffing model required to support the Community Facilities operated by WDLT. This additional saving would assist the Council to meet its budget position in coming years.

- 4.21** In addition the Council's Corporate Asset Management team believe there is an opportunity for some sort of community asset transfer of the West Dunbartonshire Activity Centre in Brucehill. The West Dunbartonshire Gymnastics Club is the main user of the venue and if they had an appetite then they could take on responsibility for the Centre either as part of a Community Asset transfer or on a direct lease with the Council. This would give the group leadership of the venue and allow it to grow and develop in line with the community's aspirations. Such a move would also open up new funding streams to the group that are not currently available while it is owned by the Council and operated by the Leisure Trust. A further benefit would be that WDLT would no longer have to provide staffing at the centre when bookings are made or have costs in respect of maintenance, allowing them to further reduce their costs and allocation from WDC. While WDLT would have to spend money on bookings for school-age activities at the centre this expenditure would be far outweighed by the reduction in costs from no longer staffing and maintaining the centre. If Committee agreed then Asset Management could lead on this action, and allocate an Estate Surveyor to lead negotiations going forward with the Club.
- 4.22** Corporate Asset Management team also believe there is an opportunity for some sort of community arrangement with the Friends of Bowling Village Hall for the use of Bowling Village Hall. Previous discussions have suggested there may be a willingness to take on key-holding responsibilities for the

venue. This would give the Friends easy access to the site whenever they want and remove the requirement for WDLT to send a Facilities Assistant to open the building when a booking is made. The Council would continue to own the site and maintain the building for the benefit of the local community. The financial saving would be limited but it would assist WDLT to operate more efficiently, and could assist the Friends to feel more empowered over the use and future of the Hall.

4.23 Further consideration also needs to be made of wider asset transfer in West Dunbartonshire. The Scottish Government wants to see a Scotland where community-led action is celebrated and community ownership is desirable and viable. It is their view that ownership or control of land and buildings is a powerful tool for communities to drive change and achieve their own goals. In the first place it provides a base for activities and services that might not otherwise be accessible to members of a particular community, and can provide jobs, training and bring income to the local area. More widely, it can provide stability and sustainability for the community organisation, allowing them to develop new initiatives and support other developing groups, and it can create a stronger sense of community identity, cohesion and involvement.

4.24 The Council supports this aspiration in its Strategic Plan with a vision to create nurtured, active and empowered citizens. To date Community Asset Transfers in various forms have been limited in West Dunbartonshire but there are several success stories that illustrate the potential – most notably the Phoenix Centre, the West Of Scotland Autism & Aspergers Centre and the sports pitches used by Renton Craigandro FC. Further engagement with local Community Centre users and the broader community must continue as a priority to encourage asset transfer or other forms of community empowerment. Key sites would be Community Centres and Pavillion and pitches. The Council’s planned investment highlighted at (3.5) should assist in reassuring groups that they would be taking on assets in a reasonable condition. The Strategic Lead for CCCF plans to lead this consultation activity and report back to a future Committee.

4.25 If all these aspects were approved then the following savings could be made from option C:

Activity	Saving
WDLT review of Community Facilities Services	£130,000
Aligning Glenhead Community Centre with the Duntocher Library provision and make local arrangements with existing users	£57,000
Total	£187,000

Options Appraisal

4.26 Officers took these three options and a do nothing alternative into an options appraisal to determine the best way forward. The options appraisal tested the

various options based on a number of different criteria including disruption to service users, savings generated, and whether it fulfilled the Council's ambitions on Community Asset transfer. The results were as follows:

Option	Score
Option A (low occupancy closures)	23
Option B (asset disposal criteria)	26
Option C (review of WDLT Facilities Service)	53
Option D (Do nothing)	26

4.27 As the table clearly illustrates Option C scored highest and is therefore the recommended option to Committee. If this was agreed then the Strategic Lead for CCCF would begin an action plan to deliver this in time for delivery in 2020/21.

4.28 A further review of the allocation of the Central Repairs Account to WDLT will be carried out following implementation of the recommendations of this report.

5. Options Appraisal

5.1 As outlined in 4.26 above, a scoring criteria was used to assess each of the options available and determine the most suitable to progress.

6. People Implications

6.1 There are no direct people implications for the Council resulting from this report. However there will be staffing implications for WDLT as a number of posts – minimum 6 FTE - will be affected by the recommendations. It is expected that these will be deleted following a voluntary early retirement exercise or through internal redeployment within WDLT.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

7.1 This report recommends Option C for achieving a savings target of £130,000 in 2020/21 as agreed in the 2018/19 Council budget. This would be removed via a reduction in the management fee paid to WDLT in 2020/21.

7.2 Option C also recommends the change in opening hours at Glenhead Community Centre and if agreed this would deliver a further saving of £57,000. This would be removed via a reduction in the management fee paid to WDLT in 2020/21.

7.3 Option C could also result in additional savings/income to the Council in relation to the West Dumbarton Activity Centre. Since these will not be agreed at the time of the Committee there is no additional financial implication to report on at this time.

7.4 There are no procurement implications associated with this report.

8. Risk Analysis

- 8.1** A commitment was made in the 2018/19 budget to undertake a review of community facilities, and a savings target assigned to this. If a decision is not made on this review then the saving will not be realised by 2020/21.
- 8.2** There is a risk that the new more efficient model of delivery for facilities operated by WDLT could prove disruptive to existing users. This has been mitigated by WDLT confirming that they would tailor their changes around the needs of users as much as possible. Senior Council officers will also continue to have regular monthly monitoring meetings with WDLT to ensure that service delivery meets the requirements of the Council and local residents.
- 8.3** There is a risk that changes to the opening hours at Glenhead Community Centre have a disruptive impact on existing users. This will be mitigated by officers working closely with existing lets to identify alternative slots, alternative approaches to accessing the building, or alternative venues in the local area that meet their needs.

9. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

- 9.1** An equality impact screening has been carried out and identified the requirement to undertake a full impact assessment. The impact assessment, attached at Appendix 2, did not highlight any issues with progressing the proposal.

10. Consultation

- 10.1** Engagement on the review has taken place with users of the current facilities and the wider resident group. This has informed the recommendation on next steps made in this paper. Consultation has also taken place with Asset Management, Library Services, Performance and Strategy, WDLT management, Finance, Procurement and Legal.
- 10.2** The proposed review of Community Facilities staffing still requires to be approved by the WDLT Board. Given that staffing overprovision in this area has been identified by both the Council and WDLT Management it is hoped that the Board would approve such a review. It is recognised that the Board is fully empowered to reject such a review, and the consequence of that would be the WDLT Management would need to consider alternative proposals to their Board to fund any reduction in management fee agreed by Committee. These proposals would then come back to the Corporate Services Committee for approval when WDLT present their 2020/21 Business Plan in February 2020.

11. Strategic Assessment

- 11.1** This report supports the following Strategic Plan objectives:

- Meaningful community engagement with active empowered and informed citizens who feel safe and engaged
- Efficient and effective frontline services that improve the everyday lives of residents

Malcolm Bennie

Strategic Lead – Communications, Culture, Communities and Facilities

Date: 5 November 2019

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Appendices: Appendix 1 – Geographic map of Community Centres in West Dunbartonshire
Appendix 2 – EIA on the Review of Community Facilities

Background Papers: Approved minutes of meeting (Council, 5 Mar 2018)

Wards Affected: All