

POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

1 APRIL 2021

HAWTONVILLE COMMUNITY CENTRE LONG TERM LEASE - REACH LEARNING DISABILITY

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To secure Policy and Finance Committee approval to grant Reach Learning Disability (RLD) a long term lease for the use of Hawtonville Community Centre for a period of 15 years with 5 year break clauses.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 RLD has been a tenant of the centre for 34 months and it has become an established part of the community. RLD began their 3 year tenancy in April 2018 and throughout this period, it has participated in many community events alongside community partners such as the District Council and the Prince's Trust. During this time it has built up the level of community use through hiring the facilities for such events as birthday and christening parties and regular bookings such as Yoga and children's dance classes.
- 2.2 In support of the proposal RLD has set out a number of benefits that would be achieved if the 15 year lease were to be granted which are outlined in **Appendix A** attached. As an organisation RLD was established in 1999 (originally as the Southwell Care Project) and celebrated its 20th Anniversary in 2019, its income to year end March 2020 was £2.577m generated and expenditure of £2,392m across its operational locations which are primarily Newark and Sherwood based.

3.0 Current Overview

- 3.1 RLD has now firmly established its operational base at the centre and is recognised as an integral part of the local community. The centre provides a safe, secure and inviting space for service users and the atmosphere at the centre during service user facing time (10.00 am to 12.00pm and 1.00pm to 3.00pm Monday to Friday) is vibrant. Friday nights are also popular with many service users regularly attending the social evenings, which run every Friday from 6.00pm to 8.00pm. This is a clear demonstration that service users see the centre as a place which they can associate with, feel safe and where they want to spend their social time. This is a real testimony to the relationship that exists between staff and volunteers and service users but equally because the building is perfect for such activities.
- 3.2 The ground floor of the centre is occupied by RLD Monday to Friday typically from 8.00am to 4.00pm and community access is available from 5.00pm to 10.00pm in the three communal areas during evenings and at weekends. The first floor rooms are now occupied by Reach Care following improvements including the installation of air conditioning, improved security, decoration and new carpeting funded by Reach Care.
- 3.3 Although RLD has reported a reduction in the levels of anti-social behaviour (asb) following a change in operating procedures and improved CCTV provision there are still some challenges with a small number of young people. However, RLD will continue to monitor the situation and liaise with the Council, its partners and the community to further reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour around the centre to maintain a safer environment for all.

- 3.4 The decision of the Council to enter into a short term (3 year) tenancy agreement with RLD served three purposes. In the first instance the tenancy provided RLD an improved base to run its services from which was fit for purpose, secondly it made better use of a community resource that was in need of a responsible and community focussed tenant and thirdly it presented an opportunity for both RLD and the Council to establish whether the use of the centre could work for both parties in the longer term.
- 3.5 Clearly the impact of RLD in the local community and the benefits to the Council of having a reliable tenant have proved to be very successful and accordingly RLD are now keen to secure a longer term relationship with the Council through a 15 year lease. Furthermore, if a 15 year lease is granted, RLD, as a registered charity, will be in a far stronger position to secure external grant funding to invest in and improve the facilities at the centre which will benefit service users and community groups alike.
- 3.6 In addition, the impact on Council staffing resources has reduced significantly through the tenancy relationship and the centre now operates smoothly and efficiently with little oversight or operational input from officers which has freed up capacity. Since RLD became the tenant annual costs to the Council have reduced as per the table below which highlights the utility costs and minor repairs prior to the tenancy commencing.

NSDC Costs at Hawtonville CC 2016/17 & 2017/18		
	2016/17	2017/18
Minor Repairs	414.95	3233.84
Electricity	2179.22	3012.15
Gas	3110.28	4710.83
Sewerage/Water	688.29	466.62
Total	6392.74	11423.44

4.0 Proposals

- 4.1 That a non-commercial long term lease be granted to RLD for a period of 15 years with effect from 1st April 2021 with associated 5 year break clauses that are deemed acceptable and appropriate to both parties.

5.0 Equalities Implications

- 5.1 This report seeks to extend an existing relationship and has no anticipated negative equalities impact in respect of the various protected characteristic groups. RLD is a quality assured and highly respected organisation that delivers services to adults with learning disabilities. As part of its existing agreement it also offers community access during evenings and at weekends to the wider community and it is anticipated that a new extended lease will further enhance this current arrangement.

6.0 Digital Implications

6.1 There are no significant digital implications in respect of this proposal. Where appropriate RLD will work closely with the Council to develop specific digital solutions as deemed necessary to ensure that systems and processes for sharing relevant data are in accordance with the Council's Digital Agenda and Local Digital Declaration.

7.0 Financial Implications FIN20-21/2719

7.1 The agreement passports all day to day running costs of the Centre on to RLD, but also allows them to generate the income made by the centre. The impact of this on the budget is zero in terms of the forfeited income against the reduced expenditure. The Council retains liability for the major repairs and renewals for which it currently has budget provision within its Medium Term Financial Plan. The current Repairs and Renewals Fund balance for the centre is £31K and there is annual provision each year through the revenue budget to maintain healthy balances for future schemes.

7.2 There is, within the current agreement, a clause relating to a split of the surplus income generated in respect of the community use element of the centre and this arrangement will continue throughout the new lease with surplus income split equally between the Council and RLD.

8.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

8.1 The proposal would make a significant contribution to the Council's Community Plan objectives primarily the 'Create vibrant and self-sufficient local communities where residents look out for each other and actively contribute to the local area' and 'Improve the health and wellbeing of the local residents'.

9.0 Leisure & Environment Committee

9.1 This report was considered and recommended for approval by the Leisure & Environment Committee at their meeting held on 16 March 2021.

10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:

- (a) Reach Learning Disability be granted a 15 year lease of Hawtonville Community Centre with 5 year break clauses;**
- (b) the Director of Housing, Health and Wellbeing, be given delegated authority to agree the terms of the lease including community access and use of the centre as is currently the situation; and**
- (c) officers work with Reach Learning Disability to explore opportunities to secure capital investment in the asset for the benefit of all.**

Reason for Recommendations

To ensure that the terms and conditions of the lease are appropriate and that the Council's asset is held in good order and continues to deliver positive community outcomes in accordance with the Council's Community Plan 2020 - 2023.

Background Papers

Nil.

For further information please contact Andy Hardy on Extension 5708.

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