



<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Community Centre Charges</b>
<b>Committee Report Submitted To:</b>	The Leisure & Development Committee
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	17 January 2023
<b>For Decision or For Information</b>	For Decision

<b>Linkage to Council Strategy (2021-25)</b>	
Strategic Theme	Healthy and Engaged Communities
Outcome	Citizens will have access to a range of leisure, recreational, green and play environments which support better physical and mental health and wellbeing
Lead Officer	Head of Sport & Wellbeing

<b>Budgetary Considerations</b>	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	<b>YES/NO</b>
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	
Staffing Costs	Officer time

<b>Screening Requirements</b>	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

## **1.0 Purpose of Report**

**To agree the principles of pricing and standardisation of charges for use of Council owned and operated Community Centres in Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council.**

## **2.0 Background**

The purpose of this report is to set out the overarching principles of pricing for hire of Council's community centres that it operates directly, with the aims of:

- a) Ensuring a consistent, transparent, and fair approach to all Community Centre pricing within Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council through agreement on a single pricing structure.
- b) Providing Value for Money for money to all seeking to use Council Community Centres.
- c) Reducing the level of subsidy that Council provides to Council operated Community Centres.
- d) Highlighting mitigation measures and support opportunities that are in place for community organisations using council facilities.
- e) Ensuring pricing is comparable with other Community Operated Centres providing similar facilities within the Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council area.

Council owns 18 community centres/portacabins in the Borough\*, 6 of which are operated by community groups, and the remaining 12 are operated directly by Council. These centres are located in the legacy Council areas of Ballymoney, Coleraine and Moyle. (From research carried out by Blue Zebra Consulting in March 2015, there are at least a further 73 centres across the Borough of varying sizes operated by the Community Sector directly). In addition, there are an approximate 200+ church halls, sports clubs etc that provide facilities for community use in areas where there isn't a community centre, or in many cases in addition to community centres.

***\* Sheskburn Civic building hires rooms to local community groups however it is not part of the Sport & Wellbeing portfolio therefore is not included in the Community Centre category.***

### **2.1 Community Facility Audit**

An Audit of Community Centres and Halls carried out in March 2015 highlighted that there are disparities in pricing policies and in approaches in operating Council's community centres. Also, some centre users have long term agreements with Councils in regard of the charges to use the centres based on previous ownership issues. A recommendation of the audit report and Council's subsequent Community Development Strategy (2015-18) was that Council should review its charging policies for community centres and that it takes a more proactive developmental approach to support local communities increase usage of halls and widen the variety of activities and functions of Community Centres / Halls.

The centres vary in size and are in various states of repair with a range of utilisation rates.

The centres provide a vital role in the communities they are located in with a range of activities and services being offered in the centres including playgroups, older people's activities, youth clubs, recreation classes etc.

Issues of rurality and levels of deprivation also varied greatly from centre to centre. Four centres are location in rural areas; three of the centres are located in Neighbourhood Renewal areas (i.e., top 10% of areas of multiple deprivation)

Other than an approved inflationary increase (2022/23), the rates of hire for Council's community centres have not changed since the Council merger.

The net cost of operating Councils community centres has increased each year from £378,314 in 2015-16 to the current net budget position for 2022-23 of £506,837.

### 3.0 Current Position

The tables below set out the variation in charges across the Council operated facilities along with a comparison to similar facilities within and outside of the Borough.

**Table 1 – Current Charges in Council Community Centres**

Name of Centre	Main Hall	Minor hall/ committee or other smaller room	Kitchen
<b>Ballysally</b>	£6.90	£8.10	£5.90
<b>Balnamore</b>	£10.60	N/A	
<b>Bushmills</b>	£4.35 Daytime £7.60 Evening	£3.80 Daytime £5.40 Evening/Weekend	£2.60
<b>Coleraine West</b>	£6.90	£3.45 - £6.60	
<b>Harpur's Hill</b>	£6.90	£3.70	N/A
<b>Millburn</b>	£6.90	£3.70	N/A
<b>Mosside</b>	£3.70	£3.70	£3.50
<b>Peter Thompson Hall</b>	£6.90	£3.70- £6.80 Committee Room	N/A
<b>Portballintrae</b>	£6.90	£5.30	N/A
<b>Sheskburn</b>	£10.60	N/A	N/A
<b>Windyhall</b>	£6.90	£3.70	N/A
<b>Dervock</b>	£10.60	N/A	N/A

**Table 2 – Charges for Community Playgroups operating in Council Community Centres**

Coleraine West	£12.75 per morning session (5.25hrs) & £6.60 per afternoon (2.75hrs)	£19.65 per day
Millburn	Lease Arrangement in place – playgroup billed for their utilities only – no charge	N/A
Mosside	£18.55 per day (5hrs)	
Peter Thompson Hall	£12 per session morning & additional £6 per afternoon	£18 per day
Sheskburn	£5.84 per hour	£14.60 per day

**Table 3 - Charges in Comparable Facilities across the Borough and Neighbouring Council Areas**

Council Owned Community Managed Centres, Stranocum, Ballybogey, Rasharkin, Articlave, Magilligan	£12 per hour
Derry City and Strabane District Council	Small Room £8 Medium Room £10 Studio Type Room £12 Commercial Rate – Profit Share
Mid and East Antrim	£5.40 - £9.15
Causeway Coast and Glens Town Halls (including Sheskburn Civic building)	Coleraine/Portrush £12.50 per hour plus £8 kitchen £20.50 Sheskburn £12.50 per hour
Causeway Coast and Glens Leisure Facilities	Large sports hall (6 court size) is £60/hr 3 court size hall is £30/hr. Small-medium meeting room is £25/hr Small meeting room is £17/hr.
Roe Valley Arts and Cultural Centre	Kenaught Meeting Room £22.50 p/h (£55 – 3hrs) Classroom £20 p/h (£50 – 3hrs) Auditorium £57 p/h plus additional £17 if set up/chair etc required (£180 – 3 hours)
Church Hall Bushmills	£20 per hour
Gortnaghey Community Centre	Meeting Room £10 per hour Hall £15 per hour
Loughgiel Community Association	£15-£20 per hour

Vale Centre	£15 p/h Meeting Room £22 p/h Hall
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#### 4.0 **Proposal**

In order to meet the purpose of this report (as noted in 2.0 above) and to address issues raised in Council's Audit (2.1), it is proposed that charges in Council owned, and operated community centres are standardised as follows.

- a) Raise all main hall rates to Ballymoney level and then increase as per any Council approved annual inflationary increase.

	<b>Ballymoney</b>	<b>Coleraine</b>	<b>Bushmills</b>	<b>Mosside *</b>
Current rate	£10.60	£6.90	£7.60	£3.70
Proposed rate	£10.60	£10.60	£10.60	£10.60

\* Mosside Community Centre 'barn' hall is being refurbished and as a result the standard of provision will be much improved.

- b) Remove off-peak variations from Bushmills CC (only centre where this was in place).
- c) Birthday party rate of £18 per hour introduced (min 2 hr booking).  
(Birthday parties are usually Saturday and Sundays where staffing costs are x1.5 or double time)
- d) All minor hall/ large room (50+ capacity) rates increase to £8 per hour.
- e) All committee room rates increase to £6 per hour.
- f) Kitchen use provided free of charge.
- g) Playgroups – raise to Coleraine level over 2 years, starting from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023.  
Year 1 increase to £10 morning session and £5 afternoon session.  
Year 2 increase to Coleraine rate of £12.70 morning session and £6.40 afternoon session.
- h) Commercial charges applied as follows.
- Local – x 1.5 e.g., dance / aerobic type classes.
  - Regional – x 2 e.g., statutory agencies.
  - National x 3 e.g., national organisations.

#### 5.0 **Mitigation Measures**

In acknowledging that the proposed charges may increase pressure on user groups in some locations if a blanket approach is taken, the following mitigation measures may be of value.

- Community Development Support Grant is available for Community Groups without their own premises in the amount of £1,250 and can be used towards premises rental.
- Social Inclusion Grant is available for single issue groups, e.g., older people's groups, women's groups and can be used towards premises rental.
- One to One Funding Support is available via Community Development Team to support groups to secure funding.
- Use a Freeze and Catch Up process to mitigate impact of price increase for community centres user groups and playgroups.

#### 6.0 **Recommendation**

Members are asked to note the content of this report and direct officers on how to proceed based on the following two options.

- **Option 1**

Approve and apply the proposed standardisation of charges from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 (September 2023 for Play groups).

- **Option 2**

Approve the proposed standardisation of charges with a “freeze and catch up” approach over a two year period to mitigate the impact for community centre user groups and playgroups.

Thereafter, and in line with Council decisions on inflationary increases, charges to increase on an annual basis.