

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 24 MARCH 2010

CHARGES FOR COMMUNITY USE OF COUNCIL PREMISES 2010/2011

Report by Executive Director of Educational and Social Services and Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** The purpose of the report is to seek approval for the revision of charges for the use of Council accommodation by Community Groups for financial year 2010/2011.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1** At its meeting of 17 June 2009, Cabinet approved the revised letting categories and charges for community use of Council premises. This reduced the number of letting categories within the letting policy from 7 to 4 and reviewed the consistency of arrangements across the Council with regards to letting. Let charges within Community Learning and Development are now increased in April each year in line with Neighbourhood Services and Neighbourhood Services have aligned the charges for community facilities with that of Community Learning and Development as of April 2010.
- 2.2** The letting policy identifies groups and organisations which the Council wishes to support in kind, through the offer of subsidised access to Council accommodation. The letting policy takes account of the finite budget available and in terms of out with hours use of schools, the cost associated with this. The limited resources are managed through the application of a letting plan across the Council area.
- 2.3** Educational Services operate a letting plan which takes account of regular use of facilities and other facilities available locally. The plan endeavours to balance access, maximise use of establishments and seeks to minimise the occasions where an establishment is open for only one user group. Officers will be conducting a review that will ensure maximum use of particular premises in local areas, and thereby to identify any scope to rationalise surplus accommodation. A future report on this matter will be brought forward for Cabinet consideration.
- 2.4** The Council supports a large number of community groups through the letting of its premises and the projected number of lets processed by staff in Community Learning and Development and Neighbourhood Services for 2009/10 is estimated to be approximately 18,507. This is a reduction of just over 3,000 lets processed last year and is a result of school facilities being unavailable due to repair work being carried out in areas such as games halls and swimming pools.

- 2.5** Leisure Services manage several Sports Halls, each is staffed throughout its opening hours and staff organising promote sports and leisure activities. Activities are offered on a 'pay and play' basis with a balance of individual bookings and regular club bookings throughout the programme. A separate report is being submitted to Cabinet on Charges for Leisure Services for 2010/11 which will include information on Grange and St Josephs Academies.
- 2.6** The Community Hall's managed by Leisure Services utilise the discounted rates in the letting policy, however, increasingly activities are promoted in these facilities (children's parties, fitness sessions etc) to ensure that facilities are well used and income is maximised.

3. REPORT

- 3.1** The letting policy in East Ayrshire recognises four separate categories of lets which differentiate the level of subsidy offered to each group or organisation. The letting policy is attached in Appendix 1. The table below gives an estimated breakdown of the percentage of lets within each of the letting categories. It also gives the income expected to be generated based on income targets set for Neighbourhood Services and Community Learning and Development in 2009/10 which is £103,290 and £195,970 respectively.

Letting Category	Approximate % of income generated in each category	Approximate income generated in each category based on 2009/10 income targets
A	0.5%	£1,496
B	11%	£32,919
C	80%	£239,408
D	8.5%	£25,437

These are indicative figures. Processes will be put in place for 2010/11 to accurately monitor income against each category.

- 3.2** The vast majority of lets administered are in receipt of the 90% subsidy on the rates and are charged Category C rate. On average these groups currently pay £4.74 per hour. It is proposed to increase this to £4.88 an increase of 3%.
- 3.3** The existing and proposed new full economic cost (FEC) rates are shown below

Unit Size	2009/2010	2010/2011
	FEC	FEC
Small	£39.20	£40.38
Medium	£47.40	£48.82
Large	£55.70	£57.38

- 3.4** As agreed by Cabinet on 17 June 2009 Neighbourhood Services will align the charges for their community facilities with that of Community Learning and Development as of April 2010. For a Category C let this will mean an increase of 34p for a small unit and 48p for a medium unit.

3.5 The all weather pitches at Cumnock Academy and Drongan Primary were lottery funded and require to generate income for their upkeep and to ensure extending opening beyond that of the letting plan for both facilities. Charges for the all weather pitches in these facilities will increase by 3% and increased charges are noted.

Size	2009/2010	2010/2011
	Charges Per Hour	Charges Per Hour
Small Pitch (over 16)	£26.50	£27.30
Small Pitch (under 16)	£13.25	£13.65
Large Pitch (over 16)	£52.85	£54.44
Large Pitch (under 16)	£26.50	£27.30

3.6 Benchmarking in relation to charges and categories of lets has been carried out with the Councils noted below:

- West Lothian
- North Ayrshire
- South Ayrshire
- Clackmannanshire
- Inverclyde
- East Renfrewshire

3.7 Charging structures are in place within each of the authorities but it is difficult to compare accurately due to different policies in relation to letting plans and categories in place. However, the table in Appendix 2 illustrates those which can be compared in relation to Category C (regular meetings - 10% of full economic rate) which is the main letting category for both Neighbourhood Services and Community Learning and Development. In comparison to the other authorities, East Ayrshire offers the lowest cost in relation to the charges for small, medium and large units.

3.8 Neighbourhood Services currently have a customer evaluation form which is sent to all lessees and Community Learning and Development will be introducing one for the new letting period. This new form will provide feedback on how lessees have found the booking process, the facilities and whether or not they find the letting charges value for money.

4. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Nil

5. COMMUNITY PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Actively promoting the access to, and use of, Council premises is a key objective within the Promoting Lifelong Learning theme of the Community Plan.

6. POLICY/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1** The review of letting categories and future charges are in line with the Council's policy in charging for services and should raise overall income by 3%.
- 6.2** The increase in charges seeks to balance the need to generate income and provide access to facilities at affordable prices.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** Lessees are advised of their responsibilities in their conditions of let and guidance notes.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1** It is recommended that Cabinet:
- (i) approve the recommendations noted in section 3 of the report;
 - (ii) request the Executive Directors of Educational and Social Services and Neighbourhood Services to bring forward a report to Cabinet on the levels of use of Council premises in local areas to ensure the effective use of premises; and
 - (iii) otherwise note the contents of the report.

Graham Short
Executive Director of Educational
& Social Services

William Stafford
Executive Director of
Neighbourhood Services

GRS/DG/KG
3 February 2010

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Review of letting categories and charges for community use of council premises 2009/2010 – Cabinet 17 June 2009

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Service: Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104 or John Griffiths, Head of Leisure Services, Tel: (01563) 578179.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICERS:

JOHN GRIFFITHS, HEAD OF LEISURE SERVICES

**DOT GRIEVE, PRINCIPAL OFFICER, COMMUNITY LEARNING &
DEVELOPMENT SERVICE**

East Ayrshire Council
Letting Policy
2010/2011

Category A	Commercial Events – Full Economic Cost plus 15% for small or medium units. Large units negotiated with lessee
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All commercial events run for commercial gain or profits; for example Commercial concerts, dances, sales exhibitions, fairs, fashion show. i.e. large scale events

Category B	Fund-raising and Social Events – 50% of FER
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community or private events run for social, not financial gain; for example weddings, birthday parties, organisation's social; events. • Fund-raising events run by youth, parent, voluntary, charitable and not for profit organisations. • Recreational commercial lets run on a regular basis targeting young people. • Departmental use outwith the letting plan. • MP and MSP Surgeries. • Lets which are outwith the establishment's letting plan. • Councillor's surgeries outwith the establishment's letting plan.

Category C	Regular Meetings – 10% of FER
	<p>Within the establishment's letting plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular community group lets e.g. mothers and toddlers, sports groups, school activities, youth groups, community councils, church groups and community group committee meetings; • Meetings of political groups (including business of political parties) and trade unions.

Category D	100% Remission of Rate
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departmental use of their own premises, within the letting plan; • Councillors surgeries within the establishment's letting plan.

Elections	In respect of the use of Council premises for all elections, charges will be set in accordance with National Provisions in force.
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NB – Any additional janitation/cleaning costs will require to be charged separately

APPENDIX 2

**Benchmarking in Relation to the
Letting of Council Premises 2010**

Authority	Small Unit Per Hour	Medium Unit Per Hour	Large Unit Per Hour
East Ayrshire Council	£3.92	£4.74	£5.57
West Lothian Council	£3.70	£7.40	£11.60
North Ayrshire Council	£4.50	N/A	£9.00
South Ayrshire Council	£4.20	N/A	£5.80
Clackmannanshire Council	£8.20	£16.40	£24.60
Inverclyde Council	£8.75	£11.00	£18.20
East Renfrewshire Council	£15.80	N/A	£26.40