

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE –11 APRIL 2002

REVIEW OF CHARGES IN THE LETTING POLICY FOR COMMUNITY USE

Report by Director of Educational and Social Services

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to seek Committee approval revised charges for accommodation use by community groups and to inform members about proposed review of the letting policy which will consider affording priority to out of school care groups

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A joint Letting Policy was agreed and has been in place since 1997 between Community Services and Education, standardising the charges and categories of subsidy agreed for the community use of schools and community services halls.
- 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.
- 2.3 Within Educational and Social Services, the Letting Policy takes account of the finite budget available to open schools outwith school hours to community groups, by the application of a letting plan across the Council Area.
- 2.4 The Letting Plan takes account of regular use of facilities and other facilities available locally. The plan endeavours to balance access, rationalise use of establishments and seeks to minimise the occasions when an establishment is open for only one user group.
- 2.5 The Council supports a large number of community groups through the letting of premises. In the last financial year in excess of 13,000 lets were processed by Support to Communities for educational establishments.

3. REPORT

- 3.1 The Letting Policy in East Ayrshire presently recognises 7 separate categories of lets which differentiate the level of subsidy offered to each group or organisation. The Letting policy, with proposed charges, is attached as Appendix 1.

3.2 As a Council we have invested heavily in public consultation. Leaflets with local information and accommodation availability have been produced and distributed through local offices and community groups.

3.3 The rate known as the economic rate takes account of the economic cost of the let. At present it is based on an average breakdown of costs across all educational establishments. The average breakdown is :

- £11 per janitor hour;
- £2.50 per cleaner hour;
- £17.50 per hour for property costs. Total £31 per hour.

3.4 It is proposed to increase the full economic rate by £1. This will result in an hourly increase of between 10p and 50p for the majority of user groups, depending on the subsidy which the group attracts:

	<u>2001/2002</u>	<u>2002/2003</u>
Large Unit (Games Hall etc)	£36 per hour	£37 per hour
Medium Unit (Gym, Dining Hall etc)	£30 per hour	£31 per hour
Small Unit (Classroom etc)	£25 per hour	£26 per hour

3.5 As part of the budget process for 2002/2003 there has been a general inflation of 3%.

3.6 It is proposed to implement this increase from 11 August 2002.

4. OUT OF SCHOOL CARE

4.1 East Ayrshire Council has supported a number of out of school care groups by offering subsidised access to establishments in conjunction with financial support through the voluntary sector grant scheme. Out of school care facilities offer quality care provision for children whose parents are returning to education or seeking or accessing employment.

4.2 National developments with regard to out of school care have resulted in an increased demand for access to school out with the usual school day including morning access and at the end of the school day. Support work has been carried out with both established and newly formed management committees to individually and collectively apply for New Opportunity Funding in order to develop existing and establish new out of school learning opportunities, with the aim of providing comprehensive services across the Council.

4.3 The letting policy, in its current form is not responsive enough to the changing use of establishments and one of the issues is the need to develop a more flexible service from Janitorial Service. On-Site services who provide the janitation service to schools have agreed to meet with the appropriate Trades Unions to discuss the cost implications of delivering this type of service and the outcome of

these discussions will be used to inform a further review of the letting policy of the Council.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1** The department has an income target which is directly affected by letting charges. Although difficult to predict, it is anticipated that approval of this proposed increase will increase the income for the department by £2000 which will be offset by increased costs.
- 5.2** The implications of out of school care use will be set out in further report to Committee following the review

6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS - Nil

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1** This review of charges is in line with the Council's policy of charging for services.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- (i) agree to the revised charges for the joint letting policy as detailed; and
- (ii) agree implementation of the revised charges from 11 August 2002; and
- (iii) ask the Director of Educational and Social Services to bring the outcome of the out of school care review back to Committee for their consideration; and
- (iv) note the content of the report.

John Mulgrew
Director of Educational and Social Services

JM/AJ/SB
25 March 2002

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Nil

Members wishing further information should contact Kay Gilmour, Head of Community Support, Tel: (01563) 576104, or Anne Jackson, Principal Community Education Officer, Tel: (01563) 576126.

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER: KAY GILMOUR

Category 1 - Special Commercial Events - Negotiated Rate

- Any Special Events run on a commercial basis; for example Commercial concerts or Commercial dances i.e. large scale events

Category 2 - Standard Commercial Events - Full Economic Rate (FER) plus 15%

- All commercial lets run for financial gain or profit by individuals or commercial organisations; for example Sales, exhibitions or fairs, fashion shows.

Category 3 - Fund-raising and Social Events - 50% of FER

- 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, 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 surgeries
- Councillors surgeries outwith the establishment's letting plan

Category 4 - Parents Groups fund-raising - 20% of FER

- Fund-raising events run by Parents Organisations in support of their school activities - a maximum of 2 per year per school.

Category 5 - Regular meetings - 10% of FER

Within the establishment's letting plan :

- Regular community group lets e.g. mother 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 trades unions

Category 6 - Priority Areas, as identified in Regeneration Strategy - 50% of Cat 5 Charge

- all groups named above in Category 5

Category 7 - 100% Remission of rate

- 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.

Charges

Large Units - including assembly halls, main halls dining halls, games halls, theatres, lecture halls and swimming pools.

- £36 per hour

Medium Units - including small halls, gymnasia and kitchens

- £30 per hour

Small Units - including classrooms, general purpose rooms, meeting rooms, workshops, dressing rooms and staff rooms

- £25 per hour

NB Any additional janitation/cleaning costs will require to be charged separately.