

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 12 May 2014

Portfolio:	Leisure and Community
Subject:	Genesis Young Peoples Centre – Proposed New Management Arrangements
Report of:	Director of Community
Strategy/Policy:	To build strong and inclusive communities
Corporate Objective	Leisure opportunities for health and for fun

Purpose:

This report seeks to provide members of the Executive with details of the proposed new management arrangements for the Genesis Young People's Centre in Locks Health.

Executive summary:

Genesis is a Youth Centre for young people in the Western Wards. The Centre opened in 1997. It was developed and is owned by Fareham Borough but since opening seventeen years ago, has been operated under a joint management agreement with Hampshire County Council. Under the terms of the agreement, Fareham Borough Council is responsible for the maintenance of the building, whilst Hampshire County Council has responsibility for managing and operating the Centre on a day-to-day basis and offering youth activities from the building for local young people.

This report provides information on how, by releasing Hampshire County Council from the existing Management Agreement, the proposed changes seek to enhance the operation of the centre, whilst creating greater opportunities for young people in the Western Wards of the Borough.

Recommendation/Recommended Option:

That the Executive:

- (a) notes that Hampshire County Council has agreed to terminate the Management Agreement in relation to Genesis and return the building to Fareham Borough Council, with effect from 31 May 2014;
- (b) agrees to grant Y-Services a tenancy at will (for up to two years) in return for developing and promoting a programme of youth activities from the centre;
- (c) requests the Leisure and Community Panel to review the proposed arrangements after 12 months of operation; and

(d) agrees that Fareham Borough Council holds the funds for the Genesis Management Committee, pending a review of their constitution, enabling them to hold funds in their own right.

Reason:

It is anticipated that the new management arrangements proposed for Genesis will enable the Centre to operate more effectively for the local community, creating greater opportunities for local young people to access.

Cost of proposals:

The options outlined in this report should not require any additional funding and can be accommodated within existing resources.

Appendices:

Background papers:

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Executive Briefing Paper

Date: 12 May 2014

Subject: Genesis Centre – New proposed management arrangements

Briefing by: Director of Community

Portfolio: Leisure and Community

INTRODUCTION

1. This report provides members with an update on the proposed new management arrangements for Genesis Youth Centre in Locks Heath.
2. As well as providing some historical background to the establishment of the building, this report also provides information on how, by releasing Hampshire County Council from the existing Management Agreement, the proposed changes should enhance the operation and sustainability of youth work in the area. The proposals also seek to strengthen the role of the facility for young people in the Western Wards of the Borough.

THE PROVISION OF YOUTH FACILITIES

3. Although there is no statutory duty for the Borough Council to provide community buildings, it is recognised that the provision of local recreational facilities provides many opportunities to encourage local people to become involved in community activities and gain a sense of belonging to the area around them.
4. It is acknowledged that the provision of dedicated youth facilities provides young people with an accessible place in which to meet and socialise, whilst being in a safe and supervised environment. Many young people benefit from the vast array of activities offered at the Borough's Youth Centres, helping young people on the path to responsible citizenship and progression into adult life.
5. Additionally, the provision of youth centres also enables local young people to undertake a variety of opportunities and activities, which they may otherwise be unable to access. It is acknowledged that the network of voluntary youth projects across the Borough are a valuable resource; local charities and community associations now provide these much needed services with the support of grants and contributions, in place of the traditional youth services once provided by Hampshire County Council. As well as recreational opportunities, youth work also provides help, support and guidance for young people, being of particular benefit to those without supportive family networks or who do not thrive in a school environment.

BACKGROUND TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF GENESIS

6. In the early 1990's, with a growing population in Locks Heath and the surrounding wards, it was acknowledged that limited recreational facilities existed to meet the needs of residents living in these areas. In particular, the absence of a place where young people could meet and socialise in a safe environment was recognised to be of key importance to the local community.
7. The Council commissioned a piece of research to determine the real needs of young people living within the Western Wards of the Borough. The results of the research suggested that the many of the needs could be met through the development of a new, purpose-built youth facility, which would be easily reachable by local young people.
8. Following a report to the Policy and Resources Committee on 22 September 1992, the proposed development of a new youth facility within the Western Wards was approved by the Council. In order to ensure that the new centre was innovative and met the perceived needs of local young people, it was agreed that a partnership approach would be most effective in developing the facility.

FUNDING CONTRIBUTIONS

9. The proposed cost of developing the new youth facility was estimated to be in the region of £320,000. Funding of £200,000 was set aside from the Western Wards Social Infrastructure Fund. The remaining costs were funded through grants from other agencies and a further sum of £50,000 was allocated towards the new youth facility by the Policy and Resources Committee.
10. As their contribution to the partnership, Hampshire County Council agreed to support the Council's financial investment by committing revenue funding to staff and manage the facility as a local base for youth work. This commitment was underpinned by a joint Management Agreement, which was reviewed in 2007 and is not due to expire until 2017.
11. Originally the centre was open on a daily basis and was operated by a full-time Youth Worker, supported by up to ten members of part time staff and numerous volunteers. The management of the Centre was overseen by a voluntary Management Committee, which still exists and takes an active role in guiding the direction of the facility, with the support of each local authority.

LACK OF SUPPORT FROM PARTNERS

12. However, following a number of staff changes, a prolonged period of closure and more lately, severe budget cuts to Youth Support Services which have drastically reduced funding for services; Hampshire County Council has struggled to maintain a regular programme of activity at Genesis. Unfortunately this has had a detrimental consequence on young people in the community as well as negative effects on perceived anti-social behaviour and ramifications for the wider community.
13. In February 2012, it was considered by both Fareham Borough Council and Genesis Management Committee (GMC) that Hampshire County Council was in breach of the Management Agreement and it was decided that action would be taken by Fareham Borough Council. It was agreed that it was in everyone's interests to reach an acceptable dissolution to the partnership, whilst leaving a legacy for this important facility to continue. The Council's Community Development Manager has been working closely with Genesis Management Committee to identify external partners to manage

the Centre, in order to protect the facility for local young people.

Y SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

14. Y- Services for Young People is a local youth work charity, which currently operates a variety of sessions around the Borough. Several of these opportunities are operated with funding from Hampshire County Council, among other supporters and funders to provide 'commissioned' youth services. As a relatively young charity, Y Services is hoping to strengthen its identity within the Borough and is keen to secure a local 'base' from which to co-ordinate activities.
15. Towards the end of last year, Y Services approached the Director of Community to enquire about the possibility of utilising available youth accommodation within the Borough, with a view to establishing a local base. As the main provider of commissioned activities in the Western Wards, Y Services already operates from the Genesis Centre and is an active member of GMC.
16. Following negotiations with the Chairman of Genesis Management Committee, Director of Community and the Community Development Manager, a formal proposal has been received from Y-Services.

PROPOSED NEW MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

17. In summary, the new, proposed management arrangements will see permission granted by Fareham Borough Council to Y Services to occupy the Genesis Centre under a two year 'Tenancy at Will' agreement. Hampshire County Council will be released from the existing arrangements altogether. In return, Y Services agrees to pay a peppercorn rent for the term and 'manage' the building on behalf of the Council. Management duties will consist of :
 - General caretaking duties, liaison with hirers
 - Manage centre bookings on behalf of Genesis Management Committee
 - Supporting Genesis Management Committee with meetings and further development opportunities
 - Act as the responsible person for the health & safety of the building
 - Pay all utility costs (Gas, Electricity, Water charges, Sewerage charges)
 - Operate the recording studio and maximise income in this area

In addition to the duties proposed, all parties are keen to see the Centre flourish and strengthen under these new arrangements. Therefore Y Services has also submitted a Development Plan for building the capacity of the Centre, maximising income streams with a focus of creating more youth opportunities at the facility.

RELEASING HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL FROM THE AGREEMENT

18. The County Council has been informed of Fareham Borough Council's intention to bring the agreement to an end with effect from 31st May 2014. In doing so, the Community Development Manager has recently met with officers and members from Hampshire County Council to agree an acceptable dissolution to the partnership and a clear way forward.

19. So that future management for the building can commence on a positive basis, Hampshire County Council has agreed that all of its existing responsibilities and liabilities in relation to the building will be fully discharged by the termination date. Hampshire County Council has also agreed that:
- All hiring revenue be transferred in its entirety to Fareham Borough Council (to be held on behalf of the Genesis Management Committee) until the new arrangements are in place.
 - All equipment, fixtures and fittings should remain at the centre as they were purchased in good faith for the benefit of young people in Western Wards.
 - To undertake remedial action to ensure the building in a good state of repair and in sound decorative order, as it would have been when the County's occupation commenced. This includes redecoration throughout to the inside of the Centre and all carpeted areas are professionally cleaned.

CONCLUSION

20. This report provides members with an overview of the Genesis Youth Centre in Locks Heath. Having considered the historical background to the establishment of the building, as well as the Council's responsibilities in relation to the operation of the building, it is hoped that members support this development to strengthen and maintain the provision of a specially dedicated resource for young people.
21. It is recognised that the Genesis Centre has greatly suffered in the last eight years from a lack of resources, minimal staff co-ordination and the absence of on-site management. This has resulted in the gradual decline of this valuable resource.
22. It is hoped that now a satisfactory dissolution of the partnership with Hampshire County Council has been reached, the operation of the building will significantly improve. If agreed, new arrangements with Y Services will signal a change in the direction of local opportunities for young people and support a host of new partnerships and initiatives being co-ordinated from the Centre.

Reference Papers:

Reports to Policy and Resources Committee - 'Genesis Youth Project';

- 1 November 1994
- 10 April 1997

Reports to Leisure Services Committee - 'Genesis Youth Facility';

- 24 October 1995
- 3 September 1996
- 25 March 1997

Special Meeting of the Leisure Overview Panel - 'Genesis Youth Centre'

- 5 September 2002