

PUBLIC ROOM BOOKING IN HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND CIVIC CENTRE

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre became fully operational for all Council Services in November 2015, however the facility offers not only office accommodation for Council services but also public rooms that are bookable for classes, community use, events and functions. The charges applied for the use of these rooms were developed based on estimated operational costs, and it was agreed that the rates would be reviewed after the building had been operational for some time. This report sets out new proposals for a revised charging structure following the benchmarking of similar properties in the Helensburgh and Lomond area.
- 1.2 As part of the Catering and Cleaning Innovation Project, the service has been developing opportunities to generate income from events, which has led to the creation of an Events Management post based at Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre.
- 1.3 The Trainee Events Manager has conducted a benchmarking exercise, comparing the chargeable room rates at Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre with other community facilities in Helensburgh including the Victoria Halls and church and community halls. . The main findings of the exercise were:
1. Most facilities offer a two tier rate structure, one for community and charity groups and another for commercial and business groups.
 2. The rates applied at Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre are higher than community/charity groups would pay for similar facilities elsewhere in the Helensburgh and Lomond area.

There is scope to introduce a higher charge rate for use of rooms later in the evening or at weekends to account for the additional staff time required to facilitate these lets.

- 1.4 The Policy and Resources Committee is asked to approve:
1. The revised charges for booking each of the public rooms, with separate rates for:
 - a. Community Use
 - b. Commercial Use
 2. The introduction of different charges for day time use, and for evening

and weekend use

3. The ability to offer Annex Room 2 at a discount to users when booking Annex 1.
-
- 1.5 If approved, these rates will be used to develop the charge rates for overall events packages for corporate events and for weddings, which will incorporate the development of catering and drinks packages, tailored to suit the needs of individual customers.
 - 1.6 It is anticipated that, should these be approved, the new charging structure will be applied from 1 August 2018.

PUBLIC ROOM BOOKING IN HELENSBURGH AND LOMOND CIVIC CENTRE

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre became fully operational for all Council Services in November 2015, however the facility offers not only office accommodation for Council services but also public rooms that are bookable for classes, community use, events and functions. The charges applied for the use of these rooms were developed based on estimated operational costs, and it was agreed that these rates would be reviewed after the building had been operational for some time.
- 2.2 This report sets out new proposals for a revised charging structure following the benchmarking of similar properties in the Helensburgh and Lomond area.
- 2.3 In developing the Fees and Charges for 2018/19 the Council noted that the proposals for charge rates at this property would be developed as part of the Council's Transformation Programme.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Policy and Resources Committee is asked to approve:
1. The revised charges for booking each of the public rooms, with separate rates for:
 - a. Community Use
 - b. Commercial Use
 2. The introduction of different charges for day time use, and for evening and weekend use
 3. The ability to offer Annex Room 2 at a discount to users when booking Annex 1.

If approved, these rates will be used to develop the charge rates for overall events packages for corporate events and for weddings, which will incorporate the development of catering and drinks packages, tailored to suit the needs of individual customers.

4. DETAIL

4.1 Background

4.1.1 As part of the Council's office rationalisation project, the Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre was built to house the majority of Council Services delivered throughout the Helensburgh and Lomond area. This project was part funded by Anderson family who agreed that money from the sale of the old Templeton Library could be used for the community annexe in the new building. As a result of this, there are dedicated spaces which can be booked exclusively by members of the public.

4.1.2 Booking charges were initially developed to ensure that the operational costs for room hire were met, and these rates took into account staff costs, cleaning, utilities and on-going maintenance.

4.2 Events Management

4.2.1 Since the establishment of these original charges, the Catering and Cleaning Service has developed its Innovation Project, which has included the development of various options to change how the service is delivered. There has been a focus on developing opportunities for income generation, specifically by using the facilities available at the Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre.

4.2.2 In line with this, a Trainee Events Manager has been appointed and the successful candidate took up their post in January 2018. Since then, they have been carrying out preparatory work to launch Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre as an events venue by developing a marketing and brand identity strategy as well as developing relationships with vendors and suppliers in the Helensburgh and Lomond area. The Trainee Events Manager must ensure that the services offered at Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre cover all operational costs, with a break even position expected at the end of 2018/19.

4.2.3 The Trainee Events Manager has conducted a benchmarking exercise, comparing the chargeable room rates at Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre with other community facilities in Helensburgh including the Victoria Halls and other church and community halls. The main findings of the exercise were:

1. Most facilities offer a two tier rate structure, one for community and charity groups and another for commercial and business groups.
2. The rates applied at Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre are higher than community/charity groups would pay for similar facilities elsewhere in the Helensburgh and Lomond area.
3. There is scope to introduce a higher charge rate for use of rooms later in the evening or at weekends to account for the additional staff time required to facilitate these lets.

4.3 Booking Charges

4.3.1 Following this benchmarking review, it is proposed that the pricing structure is reviewed to account for the two distinct markets, as follows:

Room Name	Concession rate per hour			
	Mo - Fri 09:00 - 20:00		Sat - Sun & Mo - Fri after 20:00	
	ex VAT	inc VAT	ex VAT	inc VAT
Annex Room 1	£16.25	£19.50	£21.25	£25.50
Annex Room 2	£12.92	£15.50	£17.92	£21.50
Assembly Hall	£25.00	£30.00	£30.00	£36.00
Community Room	£17.92	£21.50	£22.92	£27.50
Marriage Suite / Function Room	£22.50	£27.00	£27.50	£33.00

The concession rates outlined in the table above would be applied to community groups and charities, and offer a reduction on the current charge rates. This should assist in attracting more local community groups who have shown an interest in the facilities but have been unable to pay the charge rates applied at present. The higher rates for late evening and weekend use reflect the additional staff requirements for opening and closing the facilities to accommodate the user groups out with normal operational hours.

Room Name	Commercial rate per hour			
	Mo - Fri 09:00 - 20:00		Sat - Sun & Mo - Fri after 20:00	
	ex VAT	inc VAT	ex VAT	inc VAT
Annex Room 1	£21.13	£25.35	£27.63	£33.15
Annex Room 2	£16.79	£20.15	£23.29	£27.95
Assembly Hall	£32.50	£39.00	£39.00	£46.80
Community Room	£23.29	£27.95	£29.79	£35.75
Marriage Suite / Function Room	£29.25	£35.10	£35.75	£42.90

The commercial rates outlined in the table above would be applied to businesses and other commercial groups and profit making events, and the charges for day time use are in line with the current charge rates. The higher rates for evening and weekend use are an increase on the existing charge rates.

4.3.2 To accommodate the current use of the building, the Assembly Hall and Gallery will only be available for public lets after 4pm on weekdays and all day at the weekend, as it is in use by the café Monday to Friday.

4.3.3 In order to increase the number of bookings in Annex Room 2, it is also

proposed that the room be discounted to half price is being booked in combination with Annex Room 1.

4.3.4 The charge rate for the Marriage Suite/Function Room is for room hire only, and not the rate for a wedding. The existing charge for a wedding remains as detailed in the Fees and Charges Schedule.

4.3.5 The breakeven point for room booking usage to cover the Events Manager post would be as follows:

A minimum of 35 hours of concession bookings per week, or

A minimum of 27 hours of corporate bookings per week, or

A minimum of 25 evening/weekend corporate events or weddings per year, plus room bookings remaining at 2016/17 levels

A combination of concession and corporate bookings are anticipated.

Any bookings over the minimum levels above would result in additional income being generated. This would, in the first instance, be used to repay the Innovation Funding of £15,000 which has been secured for the initial outlay costs for events management.

4.3.6 This basic pricing structure will allow the Events Manager to develop bespoke pricing packages for larger events and activities such as corporate events and weddings. This may include the application of additional charges for services such as:

1. vendor pitch fees, sales percentages and box office split
2. the use of additional equipment such as flipcharts, projector with screen and link speakers

4.3.7 The requirement for these will be monitored over the coming year, and any changes to the proposed charge rates as a result of this will be brought to a future Transformation Board meeting for consideration.

The public rooms will become bookable through the Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre website. The public will also be able to make direct enquiries to the HLCCEvents@argyll-bute.gov.uk inbox. This inbox will be advertised for public room bookings and event enquiries within the Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre.

It is anticipated that the revised rates will apply from 1 August 2018 to ensure that any changes are advised to existing user groups in advance. These revised rates and their impact will be closely monitored during 2018/19 to ensure that they are appropriate, and any future changes will be proposed as part of the Fees and Charges review.

5 CONCLUSION

5.1 In order to compete with the surrounding area and generate more business a

new pricing structure has been developed for the rooms bookable by the public in the Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre.

By creating two pricing structures, one for commercial lets and one for concessions, smaller community groups will be able to hire the rooms at a reduced rate. This will encourage more community engagement with the Helensburgh and Lomond Civic Centre and will raise its profile in the local area.

- 5.2 It is anticipated that, should these be approved, the new charging structure will be applied from 1 August 2018.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Policy – None
- 6.2 Financial – The likely costs associated by this will be offset by income generated by the lets
- 6.3 Legal – none
- 6.4 HR – none
- 6.5 Equalities – none
- 6.6 Risk – none
- 6.7 Customer Service – none

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director for Customer Services

Policy Lead for Corporate Services
Councillor Rory Colville

For further information contact:

Jayne Jones
Commercial Manager, Facility Services
01546 604681
jayne.jones@argyll-bute.gov.uk