

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| SUBJECT: | KEY HOLDING PROGRESS REPORT |
| DIRECTORATE: | COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT |
| REPORT AUTHOR: | STEVE LOCKWOOD, SPORT, LEISURE AND CITY SERVICES MANAGER |

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To seek the views of Policy Scrutiny Committee on the progress and success of the City Council's community centre key holding system which was launched at all the City Council's community centres on the 4th July 2016.
- 1.2 On the 28th March and 28th November 2017 the Policy Scrutiny Committee were presented with reports on the impact of the Key holding system. Officers were asked for a further update in two years' time (2019).

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The introduction of the key holding system was successfully implemented in 2016, the salient impacts reported to the Policy Scrutiny Committee on the 28th March and 28th November 2017. The Policy Scrutiny Committee asked that the contents of this report be noted and brought back for review in 2 years time.
- 2.2 In the two years since the last Policy Scrutiny Report, usage at the Community Centres has grown from 42 regular block bookings to over 60 per week.
- 2.3 Through key holder engagement and assistance the number of groups that still require support has reduced to two, Club 87 (disability group) at Bud Robinson CC and The Tuesday Club (50 plus group) at Sudbrooke Drive CC.
- 2.4 The ongoing savings generated by this key holding system has been in excess of the original target saving of £60,000 per year. In the first full year it was £61,700. An additional £5,000 savings (per annum) was found above and beyond the £61,700 already achieved. This additional saving was added to the TOFS targets from 2017/18.
- 2.5 Since the start of the key holding scheme a total of over 160 hirers have been key holder trained plus eight City Council staff, four County Council staff and 20 contractors.

3. Background

- 3.1 Before the introduction of the City Councils new key holding system, all community centre bookings required a paid caretaker to be in attendance at all times the centre was in use. This came at a significant cost to the City Council. The caretaker was required for 30 minutes in advance of and after the booking in order to open and then secure the premises.
- 3.2 Officers undertook a consultation with community centre users and trialled a successful key holding pilot scheme at the Grandstand Community Centre and West Common Pavilion. The consultation and trials were closely used to guide the principals of this new key holding approach. The capital cost of introducing the key holding system at all Community Centres was budgeted at £25,000. This was funded from the invest to save reserve from savings made within the first operational year. The actual cost of the system was £20,190 meaning a reduction of £4,810.
- 3.3 It was proposed that all future community centre bookings taken by the City Council from April 1st 2016 would require the user to key hold, alternatively, hirers would have the option to pay a service charge for a caretaker to be provided if they preferred. The 'key' came in the form of an access fob and this system would turn off/on intruder alarms and give bespoke access to the group in line with their bookings
- 3.4 The service charge for a Caretaker would be applied at cost.
- 3.5 Those groups who considered themselves unable to key hold, for example, if they considered themselves not physically capable, would be given the opportunity to apply to the portfolio holder (Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion) for financial support. An initial budget of £18,000 was set aside for this purpose. Given the limited demand for this support. This budget has been reduced over time and is currently £6,070 for 2019/20 with an expectation that this will reduce further in 2020/21 to support the TFS programme.
- 3.6 These new changes and expenditure savings were planned to enable the City Council to meet its savings target of £60,000 per annum. In the year prior to the introduction of the key holding system the City Council spent £78,000 on external agencies to provide the Councils community centre caretaking service. £78,000 less the £18,000 set aside for the portfolio Holders financial support budget left an annual savings target of £60,000 per annum.
- 3.7 In the first year of the key holding systems introduction, all existing Community Centre charges were frozen (in 2016/17) meaning there would be no inflationary increases. Since 2017, Community Centre prices have risen in line with inflation.
- 3.8 To further supplement this new service, all hirers were fully trained and supported to enable them to key hold safely and be comfortable doing so. Key holders were given the telephone numbers of the Recreation Officers to contact if they had any group or building related issues occurring during a booking within office hours. Additionally, to counter any key-holder problems or concerns with alarms (fire alarms/intruder alarms) or the Paxton system, occurring outside normal Monday to Friday core hours, key holders were supplied with the telephone number of the Councils' twenty-four-hour seven-day-a-week support team to deal with those issues arising out of hours.

3.9 The introduction of the Key holding system was successfully implemented in 2016, the salient impacts reported to the Policy and Scrutiny Committee on the 28th March and 28th November 2017 were as follows:

Positive Impacts:

- The prices paid by key holders for the use of the City Councils community centres was frozen for 2016/17 at 2015/16 rates.
- There was an increase in the number of regular hirers using the City Councils community centres since the introduction of the key holding system from 42 to 58. Regular hirer numbers currently stand at 69
- Initially two user groups with special needs were 'gifted' the cost of caretaker cover by the Portfolio holder. The two user groups are still receiving this support.
- The financial saving to the City Council in its operation of the community centres in the year 2016 to 2017 was £39,000. In the first full year of operation the saving was £61,700. In 2017/18 the saving was in excess of £67,000.
- The change to the key holding system was carefully and sympathetically implemented with minimal disruption to the day to day operation of the service.
- The Recreation Service review the event history on the Paxton system. This enables staff to monitor and audit access.

Records are maintained on any hirer issues to identify and deal with any repetitive issues or competencies.

3.10 Negative Impacts:

- Two regular hirers from a total of 42, cancelled all future community centre bookings when the introduction of the Key holding system was proposed.
- The cleanliness of some of the community centres became an issue late in 2016 (but the introduction of contract cleaners in February 2017 for 20 hours per week has improved this situation).
- Key holder training is not currently offered to a person or group wanting to book a community centre for a one off event as the training is time consuming and there is a cost implication in having additional sets of keys prepared.
- The roll out of the Paxton System and the training of users to key hold took longer than initially expected to complete.

3.11 Issues arising since the date of the last Policy Scrutiny report 28th March 2017

- Over the last year, there has been an escalation in the number of key holders that have been trained across our portfolio of community centres. A continuing trend of groups taking ownership is proving to be successful. A recent satisfaction survey was under taken to determine the key-holders views on the process and overall the feedback was highly positive.
- Through key holder engagement and assistance the number of groups that still require support has reduced to two, Club 87 (disability group) at Bud Robinson and The Tuesday Club (50 plus group) at Sudbrooke Drive Community Centre . Voluntary support is still being explored with Partner Organisations with the aim of moving all remaining groups to key-holding.

- On the date the Key holding system was introduced the five community centres had a total of 42 regular bookings. This number has increased to over 60.

Issues arising from the Policy scrutiny Report 28th November 2017

Question – How were the cleaning issues resolved?

Response – A private contractor had been employed to clean the community centres on a 4 hours per centre, per week basis which had resolved the issues.

Question – What would happen to the underspend on the £6,000 budget?

Response – The support budget of £6,000 per annum would remain, however, money that was not spent would not be rolled over to the next year.

Question – Would the Neighbourhood Boards be charged to use the Community Centres?

Response – Each Neighbourhood board has an allocation of free time to book the centres for their use.

Question – Would the community centres be redecorated?

Response – Major works are undertaken by Property Services where identified through condition surveys. Recreation Officers carry out minor works where feasible.

Question – Would the Paxton system be extended to the internal doors?

Response – The system has been amended slightly. It would compromise fire safety to extend to all doors. Recently a gate has been added to improve security and safety for key holders at Sudbrooke Drive Community Centre.

4. Main Body of Report

- 4.1 A report compiled during the first month of the key holding system being launched in July 2016 evidenced that the Paxton system had now been interfaced at all 5 community centres. This installation process was a complex operation involving a system build for the Paxton software and interfacing the Paxton system with City of Lincoln Council fire alarm and intruder alarm systems. Compatibility issues which were not anticipated were encountered in relation to some intruder and fire alarms. In some cases the alarm panels had failed and needed to be replaced. These problems were quickly resolved and the Paxton system was launched successfully
- 4.2 Initially during the first month of this service being introduced the majority of hirers opted to key-hold. Of the 42 regular hirers at the time, six indicated that they were unable or unwilling to be trained as key holders.
- 4.3 There are now over 60 regular hirers using the community centres.
- 4.4 There were a number of issues and concerns regarding the initial move to the key holding system, particularly in the very early stages. The anticipated roll-out of key holding across the centres was initially delayed because of complications with the new Paxton software and the difficulties in training hirers. The training of hirers proved to be a more difficult and time consuming undertaking than initially expected for the Recreation Officers and the Bookings team. The City Councils two recreation officers undertook all of the key holder training, this included the training of City Council and Lincolnshire County Council staff, contractors as well as the

many nominated hirers. Many of the hirers consisted of groups with multiple staff members who required training. As a consequence staff were engaged in almost full time training sessions over a period of 6 successive weeks. The need to train new groups in addition to those existing hirers that had already been trained continues to be a high priority and is still a significant part of the Recreation Officers role. Since the start of the key holding scheme a total of over 160 hirers have been key holder trained plus eight City Council staff, four County Council staff and 20 contractors.

- 4.5 Key holders are given additional time pre and post their booked time to enable them to carry out the responsibilities of being a key holder. Initially, some key holders overran their times but this has now been mostly resolved by key holders managing their time more effectively
- 4.6 The Recreation Service at City Hall regularly review the use of the community centres by monitoring the events history on the Paxton system. This enables staff to identify any problems with access, doors not locking and hirers trying to gain entry outside of time zones.
- 4.7 Other issues arising as a consequence of the introduction of the key holding system include;
- Inadequate cleaning,
 - lights being left on overnight,
 - doors not being secured,
 - there has also been some issues with some hirers not always carrying out all the necessary checks they are required to.

These are all picked up with the individual hirers. Records are maintained in order to identify trends, give assistance and if necessary review key-holding status of hirers.

- 4.8 Officers believe that the current satisfaction levels for hirers of our community facilities is high. Staff have worked hard to keep a positive relationship with key holders, the flexibility of the key holding system has been particularly appreciated by users. To aid our staff, key holders are encouraged to notify officers of any issues with regard to repairs, cleanliness or any other concerns with regard to the centres operation in general.

5. Strategic Priorities

5.1 Let's drive economic growth

The proposed savings to the operation of this service will ensure the City Council's Community Centre offer becomes more sustainable in the future.

5.2 Let's reduce inequality

Protecting the poorest people in Lincoln

The existing low tariffs paid by users of the City Councils community Centres will remain in place to support the most vulnerable in our communities.

There were no price increase in 2016/17. There was an inflationary price increase in 2017/18.

6. Organisational Impacts

6.1 Finance (including whole life costs where applicable)

Since 2017/18 all identified TOFS savings have been delivered in full.

Contract cleaning budgets have been implemented across all sites via existing budgets, most notably from the original £18,000 Community Support Fund.

There is still a remaining £5,000 Community Support Fund budget of which only 50% continues to be allocated to community groups specified above.

Across all sites income targets are achieving to budget and compensating for any cost of agency that is required.

The current and next MTFs assumes no further pressure within the operational running of the community centres and the key holding progress report can continue to be considered a success from a financial perspective.

6.2 Legal Implications including Procurement Rules

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

6.3 Land, property and accommodation

6.4 Human Resources

6.5 Equality, Diversity & Human Rights

This was considered as part of the original proposal, the community support fund has been used to help those groups requiring additional support.

7. Risk Implications

7.1 (i) Options Explored – Cancel the Key Holding System

To cancel the key holding system and return to the previous caretaking system would have a detrimental financial impact on the operation of this service and the City Councils medium term financial strategy. Users would no longer enjoy the current flexibility of the booking service the Paxton system allows. The pressure to raise prices for the use of our Community Centres be unavoidable.

7.2 (ii) Key risks associated with the preferred approach

8. Recommendation

8.1 Policy Scrutiny Committee are asked to note the report and make comment on the attached Key Holder scheme.

Is this a key decision? No

Do the exempt information categories apply? No

Does Rule 15 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules (call-in and urgency) apply? No

How many appendices does the report contain? None

List of Background Papers: None

Lead Officer: Steve Lockwood
Sports Leisure and City Services Manager
Telephone (01522) 873520