

<b>Committee(s):</b> Community and Health Committee	<b>Date:</b> 13 September 2021
<b>Subject:</b> Community Halls	<b>Wards Affected:</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Kim Anderson	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report Author/s:</b> Name: Kim Anderson Telephone: 01277 312634 E-mail: kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk	<b>For Decision</b>

### Summary

The Council's community halls went out to tender on 2 August and the responses have been received. Due to the limited response the Council is looking at the future options available to them and ask members to agree the recommendations.

### Recommendation(s)

**Members are asked to:**

- R1. Delegate authority to the Director of Environment and Community to liaise with the Leisure Strategy Working Group and the Chair of Community and Health Committee to review options for the Community Halls and agree the next steps.**
- R2. To identify the costs to manage the Halls directly as an interim arrangement**
- R2. To bring a report back to a future Community and Health Committee with recommendations for consideration.**

### Main Report

#### **Introduction and Background**

1. At the 20 November 2018 Policy, Projects and Resources Committee, members agreed that officers prepare documents and commence a compliant procurement exercise for the management of the Community Halls; and that at the conclusion of the exercise that delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of Policy, Projects and Resources Committee to negotiate and subject to viability agree new leases for the management of the Community Halls.

2. This exercise was postponed while essential building works were completed on the Halls.
3. The Community Halls were managed by Brentwood Leisure Trust until they went into administration in November 2020. At that point the Halls came back under direct Council control.
4. Due to the Covid pandemic there has been limited opening of the Halls during 2020 and the early part of 2021. There are two nurseries that continued to operate during this period and after 17 May 2021 non-essential services were allowed to operate.
5. On 2 August 2021 a tender exercise was launched for the management of the Community Halls which includes Bishops Hall, Nightingale Centre, Hutton Poplars Hall, Hutton Poplars Lodge and Merrymeade House. Applicants could either bid for all five halls or just one if they wished.
6. The tender exercise closed on 27 August and the Council received a total of two responses, one of which was later withdrawn.
7. One of reasons with the withdrawn response was the financial uncertainty due to COVID which the Council believes reflects the national picture especially in relation to leisure activities and clubs.
8. It is proposed that due to the poor response the Council needs to determine the future of the Community Halls. In the short term the Council could manage these halls directly but there would be a requirement to take the bookings, any payments and ensure the halls are open to use for the hirers and regular cleaning and planned maintenance is undertaken.
9. The Council needs to determine other opportunities for the Halls which could entail asset transfer, development or third-party operator and officers will work with the Leisure Strategy Working Group to agree the best options going forward. The cross-party Leisure Strategy Working Group was established to work with officers to analyze options and support the delivery of the desired outcomes for the Leisure Strategy.

### **Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

10. Officers will work with the Leisure Strategy Working Group around the options available to the Council to identify what will deliver the best value for money and provides the best use of the Community Halls that will support local residents. A report will then be brought back to the Community & Health Committee on the recommendations and agreed next steps.

## **Reasons for Recommendation**

The Community Halls are a key asset for the Council and used by a variety of clubs and organisations, so the Council needs to ensure that they look at all options available to make an informed decision on the future of the Community Halls.

## **Consultation**

Consultation will be undertaken with the Leisure Strategy Working Group and other relevant stakeholders to present an options appraisal as part of the report that will come back to Members.

## **References to Corporate Plan**

The Community Halls sits under the Leisure Strategy built facility workstream and sits under the Developing our communities strand in the Corporate Plan.

## **Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

**Name/Title: Jacqueline Van Mellaerts, Corporate Director (Finance & Resources) and S151 Officer**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312500/jacqueline.vanmellaerts@brentwood.gov.uk**

One of the key drivers for the Leisure Strategy is to reduce the Council's current revenue and capital costs on its leisure facilities and ensure that they are affordable, sustainable and fit for purpose to meet future requirements.

The Council needs to ensure that all costs and income are identified and agreed at all stages of the delivery of the Leisure Strategy and that the appropriate procurement processes are adhered to.

Recent investment has been undertaken to improve the quality standards of the halls. Due to the poor response of the procurement tender, In the short term the Council could manage these halls directly but there would be a requirement to take the bookings, payments and ensure the halls are open to use for the hirers and regular cleaning and planned maintenance is undertaken. Costs will need to be identified and options presented to the Leisure Strategy Working group.

### **Legal Implications**

**Name & Title: Amanda Julian, Corporate Director (Law & Governance) and Monitoring Officer**

**Tel & Email: 01277 312500/amanda.julian@brentwood.gov.uk**

After a compliant tender process to which there was one bidder for one hall, Officers will need to liaise with the Leisure Strategy Working Group. At this stage there are no direct implications.

### **Economic Implications**

**Name/Title: Phil Drane, Corporate Director (Planning & Economy)**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312500/philip.drane@brentwood.gov.uk**

Improving the health and wellbeing those living, working and visiting the borough can benefit the local economy in a multitude of ways.

### **Equality and Diversity Implications**

**Name/Title: Kim Anderson, Partnerships, Leisure & Funding Manager**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312500/kim.anderson@brentwood.gov.uk**

The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc. on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).

The proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic.

### **Health & Wellbeing Implications**

**Name/Title: Jo Cory, Corporate Health & Wellbeing Officer**

**Tel/Email: 01277 312688/jo.cory@brentwood.gov.uk**

The Community Halls area key asset to provide venues for the community to access to improve their Health and Wellbeing and encourage active and healthy lifestyles.

**Other Implications** (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

None.