

To: Cabinet
Date: 09 July 2025
Report of: Jane Winfield Director of Property and Assets
Title of Report: Community Lettings Policy

Summary and recommendations	
Decision being taken:	To agree the Community Lettings Policy.
Key decision:	No
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Ed Turner, Cabinet member for Finance and Asset management
Corporate Priority:	Well run Council
Policy Framework:	Asset Management Strategy

Recommendation(s): That Cabinet resolves to:
1. Approve the Community Lettings Policy in Appendix 1

Information Exempt From Publication
N/A – no exempt documents

Appendix No.	Appendix Title	Exempt from Publication
Appendix 1	Community Lettings Policy	No
Appendix 2	Risk Register	No
Appendix 3	Equalities Impact Assessment	No
Appendix 4	Financial Implications	Yes

Introduction and background

1. The purpose of this policy is to establish a consistent approach to the rental charges for community lettings within community centres directly managed by the Council. Currently rents within Community Centres vary and some benefit from subsidy. By implementing market rent for community lettings charges and encouraging and supporting community groups to seek grant funding, either from the Council or third parties, the Council aims to ensure transparency and equity in the support provided to community groups.
2. This approach is set out in the Asset Management Strategy approved by Cabinet on 14th June 2022.
1. The Council operates and manages Rose Hill Community Centre, East Oxford Community Centre, Blackbird Leys Community Centre. In addition to this the Council owns a further 12 community centres, with these sites being operated and managed by community associations.

Community Lettings Policy

3. The policy, which can be found in full at Appendix 1, is intended to apply only to those Community Centres directly managed by the Council. Its intention is to create a transparent and fair rent policy relating to these centres as there is significant discrepancy on a tenant-by-tenant basis. Currently, some tenants are benefitting from additional subsidy through either paying a peppercorn rent or paying a reduced rent.
4. The policy would introduce three tiers for tenants within the centres and rent would be based on turnover. The tiered rent structure with two additional categories beyond the commercial tier has been introduced after conducting sensitivity analysis and discussions with the communities' team.

Tier	Definition	Rent per sqft
1 - Commercial	A lease to a commercial operator	£19.50-£24
2 - Medium-sized charities and non-profits	Medium-sized charities or non-profits with an income over £100,000 per annum, averaged over three years.	£10
3 - Small charities and non-profits	A small charity or non-profit with an income under £100,000 per annum, averaged over three years.	£6

5. This three-tier structure enables fairness and transparency in community centre lettings. The first tier, designated for commercial lettings, will pay a market rent for a commercial letting. The second two tiers set market rents which are lower and appropriate for this particular type of occupier, which is essential to be able to accommodate smaller, localised charities. Charities and non-profit companies will be classified under the Council's definition of Community Letting. The two categories within the Community Letting section are designed to support local

charities by offering them a market rent which reflects the nature of the different occupiers. The rents have been sensitivity tested, and expectations for tenant placement are detailed in the attached Excel sheet.

6. The policy is intended to be implemented incrementally through new tenancies and via rent reviews and lease renewals for existing tenants. This will phase the introduction at Rose Hill over circa 5 years in line with existing lease events. Blackbird Leys and East Oxford will see the introduction of the policy upon opening of each of the centres.

Financial implications

2. Moved to non-disclosed information in the appendix.

Legal issues

3. There are no legal implications.

Level of risk

4. A Risk Register is shown in Appendix 2.

Equalities impact

7. The Equalities Impact Assessment is shown in Appendix 3.

Carbon and environmental considerations

5. Not required, as for key decisions only.

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Background Papers:

None

