

REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE - 9 MAY 2005

REPORT ON: PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

REPORT BY: HEAD OF COMMUNITIES

REPORT NUMBER: 208-2005

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the Committee's approval to grant a Licence to Occupy to the Local Management Groups of Ardler, Menzieshill, Charleston, Douglas, Kirkton and Finmill Centres, to use these centres, and to note that changes will be made to the Partnership Agreement with these groups, with corresponding changes to their Constitutions. (Examples of which have been placed in the Councillors' Lounge.)

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Committee:

- 2.1 remits the Head of Communities and Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) to negotiate and enter into a Licence to Occupy for each community centre.
- 2.2 notes that changes will be made to the Partnership Agreement, with corresponding changes to the Local Management Group Constitutions.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no additional budget implications for the Council in implementing the above.
- 3.2 Establishment of a twenty year Licence to Occupy has been accepted by the Big Lottery as satisfactory for the purpose of grant eligibility. This opens the possibility of local groups gaining access to external funding.

4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Agenda 21 emphasises the importance of decision making at a local level. The Department's support for the development of local management of community centres is consistent with this policy.

5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Enhancing of the role of local management groups will contribute towards the Council's aim of "building an informed, involved and active citizenship". The Licence to Occupy, the Constitution and the Partnership Agreements all commit the organisations involved to the promotion of equalities and social inclusion.

6.0 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 The Communities Committee approved, on 8 September 2003 (Report 582-2003), the principle of local Partnership Agreements to replace Service Level Agreements with the community centre Local Management Groups. Approval was also granted to extend access to 25 year leasing to a number of centres. This was deemed necessary to enable Management Groups to access external funding. The Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and the Head of Communities were remitted to keep these arrangements under review.

- 6.2 Twenty five year leases would have had the potential to place significant burdens on volunteer members of Local Management Groups and they have had legal advice to the effect that, should the Council pursue this course of action, they should move to become incorporated bodies - limited by guarantee, but with no share capital.
- 6.3 In exploring this course of action, community representatives became increasingly uncomfortable with the burden of responsibility which they felt would transfer to them.
- 6.4 There were also indications that such groups might face higher insurance costs for public and directors' liability.
- 6.5 Alternatives to 25 year leasing were explored and a Licence to Occupy was considered to be a more appropriate option. This was put to the test last year, when Charleston Local Management Group applied for Lottery funding based on a Licence to Occupy for 20 years. The application was successful.
- 6.6 The proposed updated Partnership Agreement, Constitution, and Licence to Occupy documentation has already satisfied the conditions set by external funders. It is the preferred basis for the partnership between Dundee City Council and community representatives who wish to become responsible for the running of local community centre management groups.

7.0 CONSULTATION

- 7.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executives (Finance) and Support Services), and Dundee Association of Local Management Groups have been fully consulted in the development of these proposals.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None.

Signed: Stewart Murdoch
Head of Communities

Date: 29 April 2005