

Notice of Non-key Executive Decision

Subject Heading:	Temporary suspension of Voluntary and Community Group room bookings at Yew Tree Resource Centre (20 Yew Tree Gardens, Romford RM7 9AA)
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Jason Frost
SLT Lead:	Barbara Nicholls
Report Author and contact details:	Caroline May, Head of Business Management, Adult Social Care
Policy context:	Government advice following the outbreak of Covid 19 virus in the UK
Financial summary:	Total income for the year received from the groups that use the centre is in the region of £4,500. A pro-rata amount of income will be lost based on how long the room booking facility is suspended for.
Relevant OSC:	Individuals
Is this decision exempt from being called-in?	Action is required following the taking of the decision so urgently as to justify exemption from being called in

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The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

Communities making Havering	[X]
Places making Havering	[X]
Opportunities making Havering	[]
Connections making Havering	[]

Part A – Report seeking decision

DETAIL OF THE DECISION REQUESTED AND RECOMMENDED ACTION

This executive decision is seeking formal approval to temporarily cease taking room bookings at Yew Tree Resource Centre. The voluntary and community sector use the rooms at the centre for a variety of purposes, namely group meetings. Income is generated through use of the rooms, although the main purpose for offering this service is to support the sector.

Groups that use the centre:

The centre is used by a variety of groups, namely:

Citizens Advice Bureau
Shop Mobility
Hard of Hearing Group
Hearing Eyes Club
Macular Society
MS Group
PAC
Parkinson's Support
Partially sighted (evening)
Partially sighted drop in
Remap (evening)
STEP
Sight Action
Some NELFT groups

All bookings have currently been cancelled by the groups themselves due to the Covid-19 situation and following guidance from the Government on group gatherings and social distancing. All groups consist of more than two people so given current guidelines it is not feasible or safe for the groups to continue to meet at the centre.

Staffing:

When the groups are in attendance there is a need for reception to be covered, for the building to be open at the required time and for the rooms to be made available and configured in an appropriate way. This all carries staffing implications at a time when

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we are reducing staffing presence in all Council buildings in order to avoid all but essential travel and to ensure social distancing.

Decision being requested:

That room bookings be suspended for a period of three months (until 30 June) or until we have appropriate Government guidance and assurance that it is safe and practical for individuals to commence group activity such as meetings.

Given the Covid-19 situation, it is not currently feasible on health and safety grounds, and would be in breach of Government guidance, to continue to facilitate group meetings at the centre.

We remain acutely aware of how important and valued the services that operate from Yew Tree Resource Centre are but the general safety of the people we support, our staff and members of the public remains our priority and therefore this is felt to be a proportionate response.

AUTHORITY UNDER WHICH DECISION IS MADE

Part 3 Section 3.4(c) Powers of second tier officers:

(c) To manage buildings and facilities under their control including letting, hiring or otherwise permitting the use of such premises and property for occasional purposes and to dispose of obsolete, worn out and surplus stores, equipment and vehicles, ensuring that value for money is obtained on all asset disposals

STATEMENT OF THE REASONS FOR THE DECISION

These decisions have been taken as a result of the changes in government and PHE advice on social distancing and self-isolation following the outbreak of Covid 19.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The option to stay as we were is discounted given Government Guidelines around social distancing.

PRE-DECISION CONSULTATION

The Lead Member for Adult Social Care has been consulted on all these service changes prior to the decision.

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NAME AND JOB TITLE OF STAFF MEMBER ADVISING THE DECISION-MAKER

Name: Caroline May

Designation: Head of Business Management, Adult Social Care

Signature:

Date: 26th March 2020

Part B - Assessment of implications and risks

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

There are no apparent legal implications in taking the proposed action. If the users of the facilities have already stopped making bookings there are unlikely to be any contractual issues in ceasing the hiring of the facilities to comply with Government guidance and Regulations.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

This report is requesting temporary suspension of use of rooms by third parties (namely voluntary and community groups) at Yew Tree Resource Centre.

The full year impact of this would be loss of income of £4,500, so a part year closure would be the pro-rata amount, with a three month impact being loss of income of £1,125.

Resources that support the room bookings will be utilised elsewhere.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS (AND ACCOMMODATION IMPLICATIONS WHERE RELEVANT)

Staff who usually support the room bookings will work from home or be temporarily redeployed elsewhere in accordance with the Council's published COVID-19 Managers' Guidance.

EQUALITIES AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 requires the Council, when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to:

- (i) The need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (ii) The need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share protected characteristics and those who do not, and;
- (iii) Foster good relations between those who have protected characteristics and those who do not.

Note: 'Protected characteristics' are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation.

The Council is committed to all of the above in the provision, procurement and commissioning of its services, and the employment of its workforce. In addition, the Council is also committed to improving the quality of life and wellbeing for all Havering residents in respect of socio-economics and health determinants.

An EqHIA (Equality and Health Impact Assessment) is usually carried out when a

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current or planned service/policy/activity is likely to affect staff, service users, or other residents. It is acknowledged that in emergency or urgent situations it will not always be possible to carry out an EqHIA in advance of a relevant activity, however, managers will undertake the required EqHIAs at the earliest opportunity. Where managers are already clear that protected groups/users will be impacted negatively by the intended activity, then this will be noted in the next paragraph and/or put into EqHIAs. Where the negative impact of the intended activity can be mitigated, this too should be set out in this report and/or the EqHIA.

In all situations, urgent or not, the Council will seek to ensure equality, inclusion, and dignity for all.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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Part C – Record of decision

I have made this executive decision in accordance with authority delegated to me by the Leader of the Council and in compliance with the requirements of the Constitution.

Decision

Proposal agreed

Details of decision maker

Signed



Name: Barbara Nicholls

CMT Member title: Director for Adults Social Care and Health

Date: 25th March 2020

Lodging this notice

The signed decision notice must be delivered to the proper officer, Debra Marlow, Principal Democratic Services Officer in Democratic Services, in the Town Hall.

For use by Committee Administration

This notice was lodged with me on _____

Signed _____