

**Social Services Committee****29 March 2013****Freefield Centre Review**

CC-08-13-F

**Report Presented by  
Director of Community Care****Community Care****1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 In February 2012 the Council agreed to review the closure of the Freefield Centre (SIC Min. Ref. 14/12).
- 1.2 In August 2012 it was reported that Community Care considered that it would be a viable option to transfer the running of this facility to the Third Sector. The Social Services Committee requested a further report be presented, setting out outcomes and options of the review that would support this action (SSC Min. Ref. 31/12)
- 1.3 In October 2012 this report was presented at Committee (SSC Min. Ref. 40/12). The decision of this Committee was to recommend the following to the Council;
- That Community Care Services continued to work with the VAS, customers and other stakeholders of the Freefield Centre to identify alternative means of providing the service;
  - That where appropriate, options for voluntary sector provision would be promoted through the work being done as part of the Reshaping Care for Older People programme;
  - That staff within Community Care would continue to support people with an assessed need in line with eligibility criteria set out in the With You For You process;
  - We would continue to be supported to continue the very positive work that we had done in order to be able to transfer the service in a timely and seamless manner.

The Council approved those recommendations at its meeting on 5 December 2012 (SIC Min. Ref. 102/12)

- 1.4 This report is to update Members on current issues that have affected transfer of this facility from Local Authority to our Third Sector Partners.

## **2.0 Decision Required**

- 2.1 That the Social Services Committee RECOMMENDS that the Council RESOLVE to end the provision of this discretionary facility from 31<sup>st</sup> May 2013 in order to decrease risk of either a draw on reserves or impact of funding on statutory provision for assessed need.

## **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 Community Care and Third Sector Partners have been undertaking work to secure ongoing provision of this facility, at neutral cost to the Council and to explore ways in which the facility and usage of the building could be increased to support current and future assessed need for day care and other services in Lerwick.
- 3.2 We received a very high level of interest from our Third Sector Partners and Community Groups and a workshop was held to discuss many options. This workshop also had representation from people who use the facility. The following were initial ideas from about how these Third Sector and Community groups could support the service to continue and expand;
- VAS – potentially take on the lease of the building and develop the use of the building to incorporate their Carer's Support Services. Also to develop day services alongside the current Luncheon Club facility for people in Lerwick with an assessed need for day care.
  - WRVS – interested in developing a café and running the luncheon club.
  - British Red Cross – were interested in moving into the building and using the basement for storage and utilising the building as a training venue.
  - New Life Church – converting the basement into a 'skills centre' and developing the upper part of the building as a café. They were also offering to transport the 'Meals on Wheels' to the centre each day to reduce the dependency of the service onto the Local Authority.
  - COPE – wanted to explore the option of being able to renovate the building to incorporate a kitchen facility to be able to operate their Catering business from as well as being able to provide food for the Luncheon Club.
  - Moving On Employment Project – offering to support in terms of maintenance and cleaning of the building.
- 3.3 During November and December all of these options were explored, with individuals who use the service and Third Sector Partners. The basement of the Freefield building is not suitable for conversion to a usable space nor is it suitable for storage. The idea of equipping the building with a suitable kitchen capable of catering for the requirement of hot meals was also not an option. This would have restricted the

space for other use of the building making it practically unusable. These issues restricted the ongoing interest of The British Red Cross, New Life Church and COPE.

- 3.4 Through further investigation of VAS taking on the lease, it became apparent that there was a considerable spend required on the building for maintenance and upgrade, without any additional value being obtained from the building in terms of additional services. This presents a financial risk, as well as one of relationship and reputational risk in terms of building ongoing partnerships based on trust.
- 3.5 With this in mind we investigated further whether this was a cost that the Council should consider if we could ensure that the building would be suitable for use for future development. It was concluded that the building would not be fit for purpose for other potential usage to support Community Care activity.
- 3.6 Although we have been successful in negotiating some aspects of the service at Freefield with its current users, two issues remain: change of location from the current building and change in staff that provide the service. These two areas are of most significance and so hinder alternative provision.
- 3.7 Current users would accept an increase in charge for the meals to £5 and would be happy to accept that a hot meal would not be provided on a Saturday and a few other small amendments. However these would still leave the Council with lease responsibilities, maintenance and up grading costs and cost of staff. Community Care's budget would not support these costs.

## **4.0 Implications**

### Strategic

- 4.1 Delivery On Corporate Priorities  
The proposals in this report contribute to the Medium Term Financial Plan as agreed by the Council in September 2012. They also support the principles of Best Value for the community. This form of service is not available at any other location in Shetland and so is inequitable in this sense.
- 4.2 Community /Stakeholder Issues  
Ongoing stakeholder engagement has been undertaken with a Steering Group meeting regularly.
- 4.3 Policy And/Or Delegated Authority  
In accordance with Section 2.3.1 of the Council's scheme of Administrations and Delegations, the Social Services Committee has delegated authority to take decisions in relation to those functions within its remit. The Council resolved on 9 February 2012 that budget proposal reviews were agreed subject to formal reports being submitted to Committee with detailed options for change. In addition, the Council agreed that for the areas of significant review where there is a requirement for policy, service standards or methods of delivery

proposals to be further developed in detail, to report back to the Council for formal decisions, prior to implementing the budget proposal.

4.4 Risk Management

If Freefield continues hitherto, there is a risk that the Council will be open to challenges in terms of equality. The service currently operates outwith the eligibility criteria for Community Care Services and is only provided in Lerwick.

Failure to reduce the net ongoing running costs of the Council carries a significant risk to Community Care Directorate meeting its agreed Medium Term Financial plan. If not achieved this will result in the Council's financial policies not being adhered to which would require a further draw on from reserves, which is not sustainable.

4.5 Equalities, Health And Human Rights

The proposals in this report contribute to a consistent framework and range of support services for all people with an assessed need in all areas of Shetland. The Equality Impact Assessment can be seen at Appendix 1.

4.6 Environmental – None.

Resources

4.7 Financial

The Council approved the Medium Term Financial Plan and it is assumed that all savings proposals, including Freefield, will be achieved to ensure further draws on reserves is not required. The alternative to a further draw on reserves would be that Community Care is directed to find the savings from other areas of activity. However this would mean that we would have to stop or reduce services for assessed need and this has legal implications for the Council.

A budget of £41k is included in the 2013/14 budget for the Freefield Luncheon Club, this assumes that the £80k savings proposal approved on 9 February 2012 would be achieved. The recommended option from the Freefield review is to end provision of the discretionary service with effect from 31 May 2013 which would generate £80k recurring annual savings towards the Medium Term Financial Plan.

If this decision is not adopted it will result in a breach of Council policy which will require an additional draw on reserves in 2013/14 to ensure a balanced budget.

4.8 Legal

The provision of a Luncheon Club is a discretionary provision under Section 12 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. Therefore the Council can decide to stop this provision following completion of the Equality Impact Assessment.

4.9 Human Resources

Consultation with the four individual members of staff working at the Freefield Centre will continue in order to explore the options available in accordance with the Council's Policy on Organisational Restructure.

4.10 Assets And Property

Freefield is currently operated by the Council under the terms of a 30 year lease held with Grafton GB. The terms of the lease include an option for the landlord to buy back the building at the end of the lease period. However, the lease can be reviewed annually and can be terminated at any time. The full lease is up as of August 2013. The costs of the lease until 31 May 2013 are built into the 41k contingency that was left in the 2013/14 budget.

## 5.0 Conclusions

5.1 Both Community Care officers and Third Sector partners have invested significant time and energy identifying ways in which we could secure the future of a luncheon club in Lerwick that was cost neutral to the Council.

5.2 VAS have shown their ability to bring together like minded organisations to develop a joint working collaboration between several providers and we would like to thank all partners for the work that they have shown energy and creativity in their undertaking.

5.3 This is a discretionary service that, if we continue, would put pressure on reserves or on statutory provision, of which the later is not an option, due to the council's legal responsibilities.

5.4 We accept that some users who use the luncheon club facility will meet eligibility criteria for other statutory provided services and this has been figured into our 2013/2014 budgets.

5.5 In order to assess and provide provision for any statutory provision to any individual who currently uses the Freefield Luncheon Club facility and to ensure staff are fully supported then we would seek to cease the provision as from 31st May 2013.

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## Appendices

APPENDIX 1 - Equality Impact Assessment Form



**Shetland Islands Council**  
**Integrated Impact Assessment**

**Part 1 – Background Information**

What are you trying to achieve?	Reduce Council Funding on non-statutory provision.
Is this a new or an existing policy, procedure, strategy, practice or service being assessed?	Closure of Service
Please give a brief description of the policy, procedure, strategy, practice or service being assessed	Lunch Club and Social Opportunities provision within Lerwick, for older people: Monday to Saturday each week, excluding public holidays.
What is the intended outcome of this policy, procedure, strategy, practice or service?	Closure of Freefield
Please list any existing documents which have been used to inform this Integrated Impact Assessment.	N/A
Has any consultation, involvement or research with people impacted upon by this change, in particular those from protected characteristics, informed this assessment? If yes please give details.	Consultation with service users, Summer 2012 (including those with a disability, and older people). Communication with service users, throughout the process, including face-to-face and via a steering group.
Is there a need to collect further evidence or to involve or consult people, including those from protected characteristics, on the impact of the proposed policy? (Example: if the impact on a group is not known what will you do to gather the information needed and when will you do this?)	Yes, to establish how they can be supported, as a result the closure.

**Part 2 – People and Communities**

	<b>Impact (+ve / -ve / no impact / not known)</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
<b>Economic</b>	Possible +ve because opportunities for existing business to have increased custom.  -ve due to loss of jobs	
<b>Cultural</b>	Not known.	
<b>Environment</b>	Possible +ve due to reduction in energy requirements if building no longer used.  However, the building may have no alternative use.	Council to work with landlord to establish alternative use of the building.
<b>Poverty</b>	-ve impact on those service users who are on a low income, and currently benefit from the cost of a hot meal.  -ve impact on those service users without access to their own transport, as the current service includes the option to access a bus service, door-to-door.	Work with service users to find alternative ways of obtaining a hot meal and somewhere to meet other people.
<b>Health</b>	-ve impact on health: the service currently provides an opportunity for older people within Lerwick and elsewhere, with somewhere to go each day to meet other people and receive a nutritious meal.	Work with service users to find alternative ways of obtaining a hot meal and somewhere to meet other people.
<b>Stakeholders</b>	-ve impact on stakeholders: the service and location is highly valued by those who attend. For many it provides their only hot meals and motivation to leave their homes.	Work with service users to find alternative ways of obtaining a hot meal and somewhere to meet other people.
<b>Equalities</b>		
<b>Ethnic Minority Communities</b> (consider different ethnic groups, nationalities, language)	No Impact.	

barriers)		
<b>Gender</b>	No Impact.	
<b>Gender Reassignment</b> (consider transgender and transsexual people. This can include issues such as privacy of data and harassment)	No Impact.	
<b>Religion or Belief</b> (consider people with different religions, beliefs or no belief)	No Impact.	
<b>People with a disability</b> (consider attitudinal, physical and social barriers)	Additional -ve impact on this group, as the service provides accessible transport, door-to-door.	Ensure all have received a With You For You Assessment.
<b>Age</b> (consider across age ranges. This can include safeguarding, consent and child welfare)	-ve impact on this group as the service and location is highly valued by those who attend. For many it provides their only hot meals and motivation to leave their homes.	Work with service users to find alternative ways of obtaining a hot meal and somewhere to meet other people.
<b>Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual</b>	No Impact.	
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b> (consider working arrangements, part-time working, infant caring responsibilities)	No Impact.	
<b>Other</b> (please state)	No Impact.	

### Part 3 - Resources

	<b>Impact (+ve / -ve / no impact / not known)</b>	<b>Next Steps</b>
<b>Staff</b>	-ve due to loss of jobs.	
<b>Finance</b>	+ve impact: £130,000 / year in direct operational costs, and no further property liabilities	

<b>Legal</b>		
<b>Assets and Property</b>	The building has no alternative use, for the Council.	Council to work with landlord to establish alternative use of the building.

**Special Council Meeting****17<sup>th</sup> April 2013****Supplementary Report - Freefield**

CC-12-13-F

**Report Presented by Director****Community Care****1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 A report was presented to Social Services Committee on the 29 March 2013 and is presented again for Council's consideration today. The report is titled "Freefield Centre Review" (report Number CC-08-13-F) (Social Services Committee Min. Ref. 10/13).
- 1.2 This supplementary report is to provide information to assist Members in its decision making process, when considering the recommendations within Report CC-08013-F.

**2.0 Decision Required**

- 2.1 The Council is asked to note the contents of this report which provides supplementary information in support of the decision required within report number CC-08-13-F presented as agenda item 1(a) for decision.

**3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 The report presented to Social Services Committee on 29 March 2013, highlighted that work to transfer this discretionary service to be supported by third sector partners had not been successful due to users of the facility being reluctant to negotiate on two areas;
- That the Luncheon Club operates out of a different building to the current building known as 'Freefield'.
  - That the users were not willing to be supported by staff or volunteers provided from Third Sector partners.
- 3.2 Prior to the Social Services Committee on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, communication with the users of Freefield was held and at that point they decided that they would look at alternative venues and how the service could be supported, in order for it to continue.

## Finances

- 3.3 The full cost of running the discretionary service based at Freefield for 2012/13 is set out in the table below:

DESCRIPTION	2012/13 ACTUAL COST
All staffing related cost	£65,958
Maintenance Cost	£15,164
Property Costs	£13,620
Meal Supply	£56,798
Other running costs	£1,997
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>£153,537</b>
Income From Meals	£27,732
Income from Room Hire	£3,085
<b>Net Cost</b>	<b>£122,720</b>

- 3.4 The gross cost of running Freefield is £153,537, income raised is £30,817 which gives a net cost of £122,720.
- 3.5 The table below shows the subsidy that the Council provides on meals and full Freefield service provided.

Description	Cost/Income	Meal User Numbers	Cost per User
Meals Cost	£56,798	7923	£7.17
Meals Income	£27,732	7923	£3.50
Council Subsidy	£29,066	7923	£3.67
Freefield Cost	£153,537	7923	£19.38
Freefield Income	£30,817	7923	£3.89
Council Subsidy	£122,720	7923	£15.49

The table shows that the Council subsidises each meal by £3.67 and subsidises the full Freefield service by £15.49 per meal supplied. This is an expensive model of provision for a discretionary service.

- 3.6 The current income suggests an average daily attendance of 25 people per day assuming the centre was open for 312 days (6 days a week) in 2012/13. The current model of providing the facility is meals are brought in from the Kantersted Kitchen. There is no provision to cook meals at the premises on a “as needs be” basis. This model has the potential to “over provide” meals to ensure availability which is wasteful and pushes up the cost of meal supplies for the Council.
- 3.7 There is also a hidden cost of the Freefield meal service within Community Care. This is because the Kantersted Kitchen is operated on a Saturday only to provide meals to Freefield.

## 4 Proposals from the Users of Freefield

- 4.1 Detailed proposals from the Users of Freefield and what they consider the financial cost can be found in Appendix 1 & 1a. However each element of the proposal is stated below with a response on its viability.

- 4.2 Despite gaining cooperation to look at other already available alternatives, since the meeting on the 31st March 2013, the users of Freefield have come up with alternative proposals in order to maintain the service at the current location and to continue with paid staff provided by S.I.C.
- 4.3 The users have had a builder look at the premises and in particular the roof and have advised that he reports 'little' work is required. This is not in dispute at the current time. However this is an ageing building that has got significant potential expenditure risk over the coming years. An estimate of the risk over the next three to five years is £78,000 - £100,000; this is additional to planned and emergency maintenance year on year. The builder has advised that his firm will, at no cost to the Council, maintain the exterior of the building for a period of one year.
- 4.4 This would be a complex and inappropriate arrangement for the Council to enter into and one that only gives some 'respite' for one year. It does not take into account the other issues of internal maintenance both statutory and emergency. It has become apparent that if Freefield, is still occupied in any way by the 23rd May 2013, it would need to undergo its statutory 5 years electrical check. Based on previous checks, it has been estimated that the Council should set a budget of circa £14,000 for this financial year to comply with possible recommendations from the statutory check.
- 4.5 *The users of Freefield propose that the service could operate with a reduction in staff; they consider that two people plus a bank of volunteers to give assistance as and when required would be adequate. They feel the centre could still operate efficiently and would reduce outlay for wages. They suggest that this would work best if one person did 20 hours per week and a second 20 hours post be split between two people on a job share basis of 10 hours each so that days off and holidays could be covered more efficiently.*

The response to this is that there is still a cost to the Council. We cannot justify any expenditure on what is a discretionary service under the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. In comparing the expenditure of Freefield, the funding of this service would provide an additional 138 hours per week home care to individuals with complex assessed needs.

Also the users feel in the costing they provide in Appendix 1A, that the staffing cost would be circa £14,000. This is a huge underestimate and although they are reducing hours of paid staff they are still, by way of job share maintaining three posts, therefore the costs of this would still be in excess of £38,000.

Staff have historically been provided, but that is not a necessity or legal requirement. The fundamental issue for those who attend the club is to have a hot meal and to socialise. Staff have in effect been 'waitresses' and 'companions'. Nobody attending Freefield needs to have physical help to eat their food or to receive any other type of personal care. Members of this club, could and should support each other. However if

they used an already existing facility, any additional support could be provided by staff already in situ or by a volunteer(s).

- 4.6 *The users would suggest that lunches be served for five days a week only instead of six, and would raise the price of said lunches to £4.50 or perhaps £5 taking in additional revenue and cutting down costs of food and staff wages.*

In response to this, if users used Isleburgh they could still do so six days per week. Discussions have been held with the Executive Manager responsible for Isleburgh and the Director of Community Care this last week. Islesburgh can be made available sooner rather than later, providing a dedicated space for the current users of Freefield, in order to guarantee they can still remain as a group.

Discussions are to be held in relation to pricing. Isleburgh currently provide meals at two rates, i.e. for a standard portion and a smaller portion. Given the increased customer base, we can come to agreement that meals with either a sweet or starter can be provided at the proposed rate of £5 per person per day.

The cost that the users project in appendix 1a of this report actually state that the income would be based on 25 meals per day at a cost of £8.00 per person, instead of £4.50 / £5.00 stated above.

- 4.7 *Current users advise that they would set up a system whereby users would book their lunches at the beginning of each week so that a set number of meals with perhaps three extra (to cover for unexpected country visitors) could be ordered avoiding waste and extra expense.*

Using the current facilities at Isleburgh would negate, to some extent, the requirement for this to happen. However given this is a true operational business this will be accounted for and absorbed.

The other hidden cost highlighted in paragraph 3.7, absorbed by other budgets, would mean that Kantersted kitchens would have to continue to operate on a Saturday in order to provide meals for Freefield.

- 4.8 *The users state that at present, between twelve and fifteen various groups hire the centre on a regular monthly basis (this number increases in winter when Up Helly AA squads book the centre for meetings) and they state there are many more one off events. The centre is at present not advertised for hire and we feel that if it were to be advertised in the local media the number of hires could almost double bringing in much needed revenue.*

This still only brings in about £3,000 per annum. It is accepted by advertising we could increase this figure. However, the current, agreed 'hire rate' would barely cover a weekly advert in the Shetland Times. The other issue here is the increased cost of electricity and heating. The maintenance costs also have to be considered.

- 4.9 *The users go on to consider the basement and advise that although it was not suitable for a workshop or cafeteria as one of the volunteer groups wished, it is a perfectly good and dry space that could be hired out for general storage bringing in a considerable amount of extra income.*

The initial interest from some groups to rent this space was for general storage. However on inspection of the premises, interest was withdrawn for reasons such as access. If it was rented out and the Council still owned the building there would be insurance issues for the Council to consider in terms of any damage etc to stored items. Issues of security such as CCTV etc. would also have to be considered. This option poses too many issues for Officers to consider it viable.

- 4.10 *The users of the centre have also pledged that they would be willing to fundraise several times a year bringing in several thousands of pounds.*

The users of Freefield have projected an income via fundraising of £3,000 per annum. Although this is not a truly unrealistic projection, no plans of how they would raise this have been presented.

- 4.11 *The users also state that they are aware that the inside of the building needs to be regularly maintained and would suggest that the Moving On Project be used for this purpose.*

The Moving On Project could be used for this purpose but their input would be restricted to internal decor etc. The true internal maintenance costs would be for such things as electrical, plumbing heating etc, that would require to be undertaken by approved and registered tradesmen, if this was still a Council maintained property.

- 4.12 *The users commented on a budget of £50,000 that had been set aside to support the third sector transition.*

This budget was set aside to support the transition initially but when that was deemed to be unsuccessful, the budget was set aside for 2013/14 to ensure we had resources to assess need and provide transitional support to meet such need. This is not a year on year budget.

Appendix 1a sets out the users thoughts on the budgets. On this appendix, I have highlighted further comments for consideration.

## **5 Service Continuity Proposal**

- 5.1 In discussions with staff and managers responsible for Islesburgh, it has been agreed that a dedicated space can be made for those who currently use Freefield to meet up and have lunch each day.
- 5.2 This space can be made available immediately. However we propose that users begin to use the facility at Islesburgh a few days a week in the first instance. This will allow users to familiarise themselves with the

new facility and allow staff at Islesburgh to build up to the increased business in a staged manner.

- 5.3 A meeting to discuss menu choice and identify what can be offered for a cost of £5.00 is to be held. However the reassurance has been given that a hot meal with a starter or sweet can be achieved within this charge.
- 5.4 There is a consideration about volunteer staff, and this will not be taken away, however users themselves can organise and support each other and do not actually require dedicated paid staff to serve as waitresses.
- 5.5 There are implications for staff currently employed at both Freefield and Kantersted. These issues are integral to the Community Care Staffing Implications report that was presented to Executive Committee today. Given that a 'management transfer' of this service does not need to be considered there will be no transferring of staff under TUPE agreements.

## **6 Implications**

### Strategic

#### 6.1 Delivery On Corporate Priorities

The proposals in this report contribute to the Medium Term Financial Plan as agreed by the Council on 20 September 2012 (Min. Ref. 85/12). They also support the principles of Best Value for the community. This form of service is not available at any other location in Shetland and so is inequitable in this sense.

#### 6.2 Community /Stakeholder Issues

Ongoing stakeholder engagement has been undertaken with a Steering Group meeting regularly.

#### 6.3 Policy And/Or Delegated Authority

In accordance with Section 2.3.1 of the Council's scheme of Administrations and Delegations, the Social Services Committee has delegated authority to take decisions in relation to those functions within its remit.

The Council resolved on 9 February 2012 that budget proposal reviews were agreed subject to formal reports being submitted to Committee with detailed options for change. In addition, the Council agreed that for the areas of significant review where there is a requirement for policy, service standards or methods of delivery proposals to be further developed in detail, to report back to the Council for formal decisions, prior to implementing the budget proposal.

This report presents supplementary information in support of report CC-08-13-F presented at today's meeting.

#### 6.4 Risk Management

If Freefield continues to operate, there is a risk that the Council will be challenged in terms of equality. The service currently operates outwith

the eligibility criteria for Community Care Services and is only provided in Lerwick.

Failure to reduce the net ongoing running costs of the Council carries a significant risk to Community Care Directorate meeting its agreed Medium Term Financial plan and so a potential for further draws on reserves.

6.5 Equalities, Health And Human Rights

The proposals in this report contribute to a consistent framework and range of support services for all people with an assessed need in all areas of Shetland.

6.6 Environmental – None.

Resources

6.7 Financial

The Council approved the 2013/14 budget which does not include a provision for Freefield. Should this service continue, this will require a further draw on reserves or alternative savings found within the Directorate. The implications of this for Community Care are that other assessed needs services would have to stop or reduce and this has legal implications for the Council.

6.8 Legal

The provision of a Luncheon Club is a discretionary provision under Section 12 of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. The Council can decide to stop this provision although an Equality Impact Assessment would need to be completed in order to ensure that it was possible to implement any change of policy in a non-discriminatory way.

6.9 Human Resources

There have been ongoing discussions with staff and their representatives. There are redeployment opportunities for staff and other options have also been discussed.

6.10 Assets And Property

Freefield is currently operated by the Council under the terms of a lease which is effectively renewed annually and can be terminated at each anniversary. There appears to have been the belief that the Council was gifted the property. However we have no records that have been found in our possession that support this. The Council took a thirty year lease of the site and so it is possible that the 'gift/donation' of the building may be more of a commercial proposition rather than a charitable one. This is supported by the terms of the lease which include an option for the landlords to buy back the building at the end of the lease period. If the landlords do not wish to buy the property at market value and the Council does not want to renew the lease then the Council can sell the building to a third party provided that the building would not then be used for any purpose in competition with the business of the landlords.

## 7 Conclusions

- 7.1 The proposals set out by the current users of Freefield still rely on significant funding from Community Care. Community Care is not in a position where it can justify any level of spend on what is a discretionary service.
- 7.2 To avoid the potential expense of the statutory five year electrical check, we need to vacate the building by 23rd May 2013.
- 7.3 Use of Isleburgh offers the members of the luncheon club greater exposure to other activities and interactions, including intergenerational opportunities.
- 7.4 The current users' requirements are to have a warm meal and to socialise, Isleburgh fully supports both these aims.

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### List of Appendices

Appendix 1 CC12-13 – From User Group at Freefield Centre

Appendix 1a CC12-13 – Users Thoughts on Budgets

TO: ALL COUNCILLORS

FROM: USER GROUP AT FREEFIELD CENTRE

Following on from the Social Work meeting last week we have come up with a set of proposals that we feel could help keep the Freefield Centre operating efficiently and economically for the senior citizens of Shetland. We request that all councillors study these proposals prior to the special SIC meeting to be held later this month.

First of all Mr. R.J. Smith, a partner of Smith Building Contractors, has examined the roof of the centre for us and has found very little wrong with it. Following this examination he sent us a letter stating that should the centre be kept open and continue providing lunches for the senior citizens his firm would very generously agree to maintain the exterior of the Freefield Centre for one year free of charge.

We would also like to point out that the centre does have good access for the disabled. One of our disabled users who sadly lost both his legs and is totally wheelchair dependent regularly drives up from Sandwick, uses the car park and crossing, wheels himself into the centre for his lunch, and uses the disabled toilet totally unaided. He is a member of Disability Shetland and feels the centre has excellent access and facilities for the disabled.

I would also refer you to a report in the Shetland Times following the opening of the centre in 1977 where Councillor James Paton, in his opening speech said "I appeal to the people of Shetland to use the centre. It is not a Lerwick centre, but a centre for the whole of Shetland," That rule still applies and we have regular visits from folk from Bressay, Weisdale, Sandwick and Mossbank to name just a few.

## PROPOSALS:

1. We still maintain that the centre is in the best location and offers the best facilities for the service it provides and should remain open.
2. We feel that with a reduction in staff to two people plus a bank of volunteers to give assistance as and when required the centre could still operate efficiently and would reduce outlay for wages. This would work best if one person did 20 hours per week and a second 20 hours be split between two people on a job share basis of 10 hours each so that days off and holidays could be covered more efficiently.
3. We would suggest that lunches be served for five days a week only instead of six, and would raise the price of said lunches to £4.50 or perhaps £5 taking in additional revenue and cutting down costs of food and staff wages.
4. If it would cut down on the cost of purchasing the lunches we would be willing to have only one choice of main course daily (instead of two) with either soup or pudding, tea and biscuits.
5. We would set up a system whereby users would book their lunches at the beginning of each week so that a set number of meals with perhaps three extra (to cover for unexpected country visitors) could be ordered avoiding waste and extra expense.
6. At present between twelve and fifteen various groups hire the centre on a regular monthly basis (this number increases in winter when Up Helly AA squads book the centre for meetings) and there are many more one off events. The centre is at present not advertised for hire and we feel that if it were to be advertised in the

local media the number of hires could almost double bringing in much needed revenue.

7. Although the basement was not suitable for a workshop or cafeteria as one of the volunteer groups wished it is a perfectly good and dry space that could be hired out for general storage bringing in a considerable amount of extra income.
8. The users of the centre have also pledged that they would be willing to fundraise several times a year bringing in several thousands of pounds.
9. We are also aware that the inside of the building needs to be regularly maintained and would suggest that the Moving On Project be used for this purpose.

We have been told that a budget of £50,000 had been set aside to aid the volunteers to run the project. As this proposal did not come to fruition we would request that the same budget be kept in place to help with the above proposals and to this effect we enclose an income/expenditure sheet. As we do not know council costings we have had to make an educated guess at the expenditure and feel we may have overpriced some of the outlay.

There is a very positive desire for the centre to remain operational and hope that you will consider these proposals favourably and if so would respectfully request that you implement these proposals and leave the centre open and running for a period of one year with a review to take place after ten months to assess the success or failure of the venture.



Income per year

Council Grant

£50,000.00 There is no scope to give this as a grant without a year on year draw on reserves or pressure on other Directorates budgets as Community Care budgets have to be spent on statutory, rather than, discretionary services.

Income from meals – 25 daily at £4.50

£27,000.00 The true daily cost per person, based on an average of 25 is £15.49 per head per day.

Fundraising

£3,000.00 Accept this could be actualised, but no plan into how they would achieve this so have to consider that it is not available.

Centre lets – based on 20 x 2 hours monthly

£3,840.00 As advised the cost of advertising and additional heating and electricity would make this highly unachievable as a guaranteed income.

Hire of basement – approx. £40 weekly

£1,920.00 This cost if achieved per week should read as an income of £2,080. However for reasons described in the body the report this is not achievable

Total Income

£85,760.00

Expenditure per year

Lease

£1,600.00

Heating/lighting – based on £2,000 per quarter

£8,000.00

Cost of meals – based on 25 daily at £8.00 each

£48,000.00 In the proposals from users in the body of the main supplementary report then they state a cost of £4.50 - £5.00 per day NOT £8.00.

Household expenses – based on £100 weekly

£4,800.00

Staff wages – approx.

£14,000.00 This is highly underestimated, cost would still be over £38,000. Users could and do not appreciate training cost, etc.

Total expenditure

£76,400.00