



WHITEHOUSE COMMUNITY COUNCIL

COMMUNITY MEETING PLACE (THE HIVE) – DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN

The Council will soon take ownership of a new community meeting place, located at:

The Hive
Barrosa Way
Whitehouse
MILTON KEYNES
MK8 1JS

In 2024/2025, the Council put aside an earmarked reserve of £60,000 to cover set-up and first full year's running costs. This was based on an estimated £40k for yearly running costs and £20k for setting up costs.

Running costs include management of contracts, service provision, compliance and testing. Setting up costs include one-off purchases such as tables and chairs, office furniture, desktop PC, audio/visual equipment etc.

The estimated costs relating to the management of the facility and initial setting up costs are set out in Annexes A and B.

Marketing and Interest

The Council will be asking potential hirers of the new community centre to submit expressions of interest. There has been quite a lot of interest in using the hall for daytime nursery / childcare purposes. The Council will consider all applications to hire the space, equitably and consider all applications on their own merit.

There has been some interest shown by local community groups for regular hire of the hall and meeting rooms and a few enquiries have already been made for single-hire, such as weekend parties. Allowing a childcare facility to use the centre in the daytime will maximise income.

Rate and Terms of Hire

The terms and rates of hire have been agreed by the Council (Annexes C and D)

Income and Expenditure

The Council has included in its 2024/2025 budget an estimated £10k of income from the hire of facilities at the community centre. This is a conservative figure, but takes into account that the centre will be open for around 8 months of the 2024/2025 year.

Realistically, the Council could expect income of over £20k per annum once the community centre is established, has regular hirers and has a consistent flow of bookings for single-hire.

Budgetted Income for 2024/2025: £10k

Potential Yearly Income: Over £20k (this would increase if a dedicated childcare type service / nursery / after-school club) used the facility.

All estimated initial set up costs are likely to be spent in 2024/2025. A portion of the running costs (about two thirds) will be spent in 2024 / 2025:

Estimated Expenditure in 2024 / 2025: £49k (includes set-up costs)

Estimated Expenditure (running costs) over a full year: £43k

Initial set-up costs and contract / servicing costs will increase if the council wishes to install CCTV.

Initial set-up costs will increase by approximately £4k if the Council wishes to purchase its own staging.

Landscaping Costs

There will be some additional costs for the landscaping around the community meeting place. There is a 12 month defect period in place with a final inspection at the end of the period. A 12-year latent defect period will be put in place from completion, covering defective produces and workmanship.

A landscaping contract will not need to be in place until November 2025. To save costs, the landscaping contract could be tied in with the allotment landscaping maintenance contract. A proportion of the whole landscaping cost will need to be added to the expenditure costs associated with the community meeting place.

Staffing

The above costs do not include staffing costs. An additional £20k has been included in the staffing budget for 2024 / 2025 to cover the cost of an additional part-time member of staff (around 16 hours) to assist with the day to day running of the new community centre. This was calculated on a salary of around £12.50 per hour, but since NJC salary points has increased and SCP8 would increase to £12.86 per hour. There is a salaries contingency in the budget of £2,000 that would absorb any salary increases.

The work to be carried out on a daily, weekly and yearly basis to ensure the community centre is managed effectively and safely is set out in Annex E

Potential Savings for 2024 / 2025

There are savings to be made once the Council takes ownership of the community centre:

The Council will no longer need to hire rooms for its meetings or pay for storage of its assets. Staff will be based at the community centre so there is some small savings to be made on working from home allowances and mileage.

Hire of Meeting Rooms: £600

Storage: £2,500

Working from Home Allowance / mileage: £400

Approximate savings total: £3,500 per annum

Software

The Council has purchased the Scribe bookings software system and members of the public will be able to book hall or meeting room space on-line.

Health & Safety / Compliance

The Council is requested to purchase a health and safety / building compliance software system to ensure all safety check and tests are completed on time and never missed.

The Smartlog software system assists with facilities management, routing checks, monitoring, servicing, building compliance, testing, contracts management, asset management and training, The cost is £750 per year, for the system and support. The company will carry out health and safety checks at a discounted rate. See Annex F.

Alternatives

Contracts tend to be more cost effective when more than one building is being managed.

The Council will own only one building and the Council may want to consider employing a local cleaner / caretaker / key holder which could be funded, mostly by not having a cleaning contract and key-holding service.

This member of staff could be employed on a flexible working basis e.g, a minimum of 12 hours a week. This would ensure the security of the building when there are weekend activities taking place at the community centre. It could be that one week, the employee may work only 8 hours and other weeks over the minimum 12 hours to accommodate for full weekend bookings.

The costs of employing a cleaner/caretaker on 12 hours per week (£11.50 per hour) would cost approximately £9,000.

Cleaning and security/key holding contracts will be in the region of £10,000. There would still be a need for a security contract, who would be available to come our if the alarm goes off.