



the bushland shire

creating a living environment

BUSINESS PAPER

WORKSHOP MEETING

**Wednesday, 28 July, 2010
at 6.30pm**

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AGENDA AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

PRESENT

OPENING PRAYER

Pastor Karina Kreminski of the Community Life Church, Cherrybrook will be opening the meeting in prayer.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY

Statement by the Chairperson

"We recognise our Shire's rich cultural and religious diversity and we acknowledge and pay respect to the beliefs of all members of our community, regardless of creed or faith."

ABORIGINAL RECOGNITION

Statement by the Chairperson:

"We recognise the traditional inhabitants of the land we are meeting on tonight, the Darug and Guringai Aboriginal people, and respect is paid to their elders and their heritage."

AUDIO RECORDING OF COUNCIL MEETING

Statement by the Chairperson:

"I advise all present that tonight's meeting is being audio recorded for the purpose of assisting in the accuracy of the Minutes. The recordings may be accessed by members of the public once the Minutes have been finalised and speakers are requested to ensure their comments are relevant to the issue at hand and to refrain from making personal comments or criticisms."

APOLOGIES / LEAVE OF ABSENCE

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Clause 52 of Council's Code of Meeting Practice (Section 451 of the Local Government Act, 1993) requires that a councillor or a member of a Council committee who has a pecuniary interest in a matter which is before the Council or committee and who is present at a meeting of the Council or committee at which the matter is being considered must disclose the nature of the interest to the meeting as soon as practicable. The disclosure is also to be submitted in writing (on the form titled "Declaration of Interest").

The Councillor or member of a Council committee must not be present at, or in sight of, the meeting of the Council or committee:

- (a) at any time during which the matter is being considered or discussed by the Council or committee.*

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- (b) *at any time during which the Council or committee is voting on any question in relation to the matter.*

Clause 51A of Council's Code of Meeting Practice provides that a Councillor, Council officer, or a member of a Council committee who has a non pecuniary interest in any matter with which the Council is concerned and who is present at a meeting of the Council or committee at which the matter is being considered must disclose the nature of the interest to the meeting as soon as practicable. The disclosure is also to be submitted in writing (on the form titled "Declaration of Interest").

If the non-pecuniary interest is significant, the Councillor must:

- a) *remove the source of conflict, by relinquishing or divesting the interest that creates the conflict, or reallocating the conflicting duties to another Council official.*

OR

- b) *have no involvement in the matter by absenting themselves from and not taking part in any debate or voting on the issue as if the provisions of Section 451(2) of the Act apply.*

If the non-pecuniary interest is less than significant, the Councillor must provide an explanation of why they consider that the interest does not require further action in the circumstances.

PETITIONS

MAYORAL MINUTES

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RESCISSION MOTIONS

MATTERS OF URGENCY

ITEMS PASSED BY EXCEPTION / CALL FOR SPEAKERS ON AGENDA ITEMS

Note:

Persons wishing to address Council on matters which are on the Agenda are permitted to speak, prior to the item being discussed, and their names will be recorded in the Minutes in respect of that particular item.

*Persons wishing to address Council on **non agenda matters**, are permitted to speak after all items on the agenda in respect of which there is a speaker from the public have been finalised by Council. Their names will be recorded in the Minutes under the heading "Public Forum for Non Agenda Items".*

GENERAL BUSINESS

- *Items for which there is a Public Forum Speaker*
- *Public Forum for non agenda items*

- *Balance of General Business items*

GENERAL MANAGER'S DIVISION

Nil

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY DIVISION

Page Number 1

**Item 1 CC33/10 COMMUNITY CENTRES AND HALLS SECTION 377
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES - OUTCOMES OF FURTHER
CONSULTATION**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council:

1. Note the further consultation which has been undertaken with representatives of Section 377 Management Committees in respect of this matter.
2. Note the additional future management options which have been developed as a result of the further consultation and the financial implications associated with each option.
3. Determine its position in respect of the future management of community centres and halls.

ENVIRONMENT DIVISION

Nil

PLANNING DIVISION

Nil

WORKS DIVISION

Nil

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

PUBLIC FORUM – NON AGENDA ITEMS

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1 COMMUNITY CENTRES AND HALLS SECTION 377 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES - OUTCOMES OF FURTHER CONSULTATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the 17 March 2010 Ordinary Meeting, Council deferred consideration of Report No. CC10/10 and requested that further consultation be undertaken with community centre Section 377 Management Committees in respect of the future management of Council's community centres and halls. A community workshop consultation was subsequently held on Sunday 16 May 2010, attended by representatives of the Management Committees, Councillors and relevant staff.

At the workshop, Council staff made a presentation about the intent and content of Report No CC10/10, and explained the management options considered in the Report (i.e. Options 1 to 4). They also demonstrated the Pathway booking system which is currently used by the Community Services Branch for Council managed community centres. Following the staff presentations, Mr Phil Smith from the Pennant Hills Community Centre Section 377 Management Committee presented an alternative management option (i.e. Option 5). There was then an opportunity for all in attendance to raise issues, provide their views and to ask questions.

This Report provides details of the views that were expressed at the workshop and tempers those views with the issues which had been raised in Report No CC10/10. It also summarises points of commonality which appeared to exist between the Management Committees in respect of the future management of Council's community centres and halls. Those points of commonality have subsequently been developed into a further management option known as Option 6. That Option is detailed on pages 7, 8 and 9 of this Report.

Whilst it is anticipated that Management Committees may favour Option 6 over any of the previous options discussed, the key area which Option 6 does not address is cost effectiveness. There are also issues associated with the operation of a network wide booking system in a decentralised fashion in terms of privacy controls and system integrity controls that need to be factored into decision making.

With these constraints in mind, staff have developed Option 7. That Option addresses the desire of Management Committees to remain in place, the cost effectiveness of the Option, Council's desire to affect customer service improvements and the capacities and limitations of the network wide booking system. Option 7 is detailed on pages 9, 10 and 11 of the Report.

Whilst it is estimated that Option 7 would be cost neutral to administer in terms of the booking of affected centres, it is not clear at this stage whether additional support would be required to be provided to Management Committees to undertake the other elements of their roles. The outcome of these deliberations would be dependant upon decisions associated with how risk management inspections are undertaken, how financial accounting is supported and how procurement activities are supported. Also needing to be taken into account would be whether or not the Management Committees of some of the smaller centres without paid staff would hand management of the centre back to Council.

Even if the worst case scenarios in respect of cost to Council and the Committees were realised in all of the above circumstances, it is estimated that Option 7 would still be a less expensive model than Option 5 or 6. Option 4 (i.e. full Council management with community advisory committees) would, however, remain the most cost effective management option.

It is recommended that Council note the further consultation which has been undertaken with representatives of the Section 377 Management Committees and the additional future management options developed as a result of this consultation. Having regard to the financial implications of each Option, Council needs to determine its position in respect of the future management of the community centres and halls.

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this Report is to respond to the resolution emanating from Council's consideration of Report No CC10/10 at the 17 March 2010 Ordinary Meeting and, as a consequence of the further consultation which has taken place with representatives of Section 377 Management Committees, to provide alternative options that may be considered in respect of the future management of Council's community centres and halls.

DISCUSSION

Consultation With Section 377 Management Committees

At the 17 March 2010 Ordinary Meeting, Council considered Report No. CC10/10 and resolved that:

- 1. Consideration of Executive Manager's Report No. CC10/10 be deferred until such time as proper consultation with the management committees of community centres and their local communities has been undertaken.*
- 2. Consultation shall be by means of a workshop with Councillors in attendance and held on a weekend to maximise opportunities for the community to address and respond to the issues raised in Executive Manager's Report No. CC10/10.*
- 3. Council continue to develop the on-line booking system for implementation at a date to be determined.*

In order to meet the requirements of points 1 and 2 of the above resolution, a community workshop consultation was held on Sunday 16 May 2010 between 9.30am and 1.00pm at the Hornsby Leisure and Learning Centre. Representatives of Section 377 Management Committees from each of the volunteer-managed community centres were present at the consultation. Four Councillors and three staff also attended.

The first part of the workshop involved a presentation by Council staff about the intent and content of Report No. CC10/10 and included an explanation of the management options considered in the Report (i.e. Options 1 to 4). There was also a demonstration of the Pathway booking system which is currently used by the Community Services Branch for Council managed community centres. Copies of the presentations and hand outs from the workshop are attached for Council's information.

Following the staff presentations, Mr Phil Smith from the Pennant Hills Community Centre Section 377 Management Committee presented an alternative management option (i.e.

Option 5). A copy of Option 5 and staff comments in respect of such are provided as an attachment to this Report.

As part of the discussion that followed the presentations, the representatives of the Management Committees presented a number of differing views about issues which had been raised during the workshop. As a consequence, the details provided in this Report are not necessarily a consensus view of all the Committees. In summary, the key points arising from the discussion included:

- There was dissatisfaction in the level of support and feedback provided to Management Committees by Council over the period of review of the *Existing 377 Management Committee with Significantly Improved Performance* model of management. In this regard, it was noted that the review period was between the September 2008 and September 2009 Annual General Meetings. The Committees felt that, in the future, additional support should be provided through a peer management model (as suggested in Option 5) or directly through Council.
- There was a need for the Finance and Procedures Manual to be tailored to the needs of each centre depending upon its size, layout and individual needs. The Committees had a view that smaller centres with lower utilisation rates did not need to have the same inspection and reporting requirements as larger, more highly utilised centres.
- Following the demonstration by Council staff of the new Pathway booking system, no significant concerns were expressed by the Management Committees about the system being implemented in a decentralised fashion i.e. where each centre uses the system to manage bookings for their centre. It was noted that the main issues to deal with in implementing a decentralised booking model would be the training of volunteers to operate the software and the funding of the appropriate hardware and software at each centre. Also, because the Pathway system is integrated with Council's other information management systems and this is inherent to its design, Council would need to consider the appropriateness of Committee volunteers having access to Council databases containing detailed personal information of residents and facility hirers.
- The sharing of financial resources across the network of centres was discussed as a means to implementing a decentralised booking system and also as a means to better support smaller, less financially enabled centres. No clear outcome or position was agreed upon in relation to this issue, although Report No. CC26/08 was referred to as an agreed historical position on shared resources. That Report indicated that many Committees were accumulating funds for major capital projects and that such an approach was consistent with sound facility management principles. Within this context, the matter of shared funds was questioned as a viable or desirable objective.
- Committees associated with some of the smaller community centres questioned the need to have the same quorum requirements as the larger or more highly utilised centres (especially when the volunteers of the smaller centres come from smaller communities). They also questioned the need for the Committee representation to consist of a diversity of stakeholders – rather than one or two primary facility users.
- Many Committees expressed a desire to continue managing centres within the current arrangements.

- A few Committees expressed a desire to explore the Advisory Committee management model detailed in Option 4 attached to Report No. CC10/10.

Responses to Issues Raised in Report No. CC10/10

Part 1 – Review of Management Model

Part 1 of Report No. CC10/10 dealt with the review of the Management Model titled *Existing 377 Management Committees with Significantly Improved Performance*. The feedback from Management Committee representatives was that insufficient support was provided by Council to make the management model a success. Smaller Committees also indicated that the performance bar that was set by the adoption of the Finance and Procedures Manual was too high and unreasonable or onerous for smaller, less utilised centres to implement.

Provision of additional support

From an officer's perspective, support to implement the current management model was consistent with the resource allocation provided. The *Existing 377 Management Committees with Significantly Improved Performance* model relied on Management Committees following a detailed Finance and Procedures Manual. Committees were involved in the development of these Manuals and signed a management agreement to implement the Manuals. Council staff were available to provide assistance when requested but generally, Management Committees were given the responsibility to implement the Council adopted Manuals as per the management agreement that they signed. It is noted that this management agreement allowed Committees to retain the care, control and management of the community centres. If additional support is considered to be required to implement the existing Finance and Procedures Manual, Option 1 (referred to in Report No. CC10/10) provides an option for moving forward. This option was estimated to have ongoing costs to Council of approximately \$55,000 per annum.

Finance and Procedures Manual Review

The matter of reviewing the Finance and Procedures Manual to tailor the requirements for smaller centres is possible – although more onerous for Council to administer if implemented. It should be noted that the tailoring of reporting already happens to a certain extent in terms of the facility safety inspection. This is because checklists only need to be completed for the facility in question. As such, a small, one room centre, only requires the one room centre to be inspected thereby taking less time to complete than a larger centre where multiple rooms and fittings must be inspected. What could be altered is the frequency with which the smaller, less utilised centres require inspections. The rationale with respect to this matter is that centres with less frequent utilisation incur less wear and tear and, therefore, pose less of a hazard risk. It is noted that it is unlikely that the financial reporting procedures could be changed, based on the size of the centre, because of the legislated GST reporting requirements.

OH&S/Risk Management

Taking into account the feedback provided at the workshop, two options could be tested for improving the performance of OH&S/risk management. The first is to reduce the frequency with which inspections need to be undertaken to quarterly rather than monthly – as described above. There is a small risk involved in reducing the frequency of inspections in this manner and this option should only be available to smaller centres with low utilisation. The other

option is for Council to coordinate the inspections with a paid officer. This would come at a cost for each centre but a sliding scale could be introduced such that centres only pay for the time cost of the actual inspection and reporting/administration time. As such, this option would be cheaper for smaller centres that require less inspection time and (potentially) less frequent inspections.

Communication processes

The Committees indicated that they would appreciate more detailed feedback on their performance as well as coaching and possibly mentoring. It is noted that the adoption of Option 1, as detailed in Report No. CC10/10, would enable this level of feedback and support to take place.

Consistent booking/utilisation system

Following the demonstration of the Pathway Booking system, the concept of using a common and integrated booking system was not opposed by Committees. Subsequent to the workshop, a number of Committees have made further enquiries regarding commencing using the system. The key issues to consider in progressing this matter would be the additional costs of operating the system in a decentralised fashion and the additional support and training requirements for volunteers. A related issue to the use of an integrated booking system is the question of whether funds should be administered centrally through Council's Debtor System or whether Committees should retain a separate and individual accounting system. Council would need to make a decision in relation to this matter if a decentralised approach to bookings is the preferred option moving forward.

Fees and charges

It was noted that the types of fees and charges for the community centres needed to be more consistent, particularly if Council moves to a common booking system.

Promotions Program

This matter was not discussed in detail during the workshop and is considered to be a separate issue in terms of the future management model used to manage community facilities. It is, however, relevant to the current considerations as the promotion of booking processes will need to take place having regard to the decision about the appropriate future management model to be implemented for community facilities.

Training Programs

The need for additional training and support was discussed at the workshop, particularly in regards to the needs associated with the Pathway Booking System and also in terms of being valuable in assisting Management Committees to meet relevant KPIs. More specifically, some Committees talked about training as being Committee-specific. They described it as being tailored coaching and support rather than being based around generic issues and rolled out at Section 377 Reference Group Meetings, as it had been during the review period.

Part 2 – Quorums and Committee Composition

Part 2 of Report No. CC10/10 dealt with the outcomes of the 2009 Annual General Meetings of the Management Committees. It addressed issues associated with quorums and the composition of Committees as well as reporting on the financial operation of centres.

Quorums are established so that the operation of Committees charged with the care, control and management of a community asset are transparent and the Committees can operate without favour or the suggestion of favour. Dwindling Committee numbers were also linked to poor asset management performance in Report No. CC10/10.

Given that Management Committees operate under the delegation of Council, and manage a public asset using public monies, the matter of Committees operating with appropriate quorums should not be negotiable, regardless of the good intentions and passion of the remaining Committee members. In the case of those Management Committees that have not been able to meet quorum numbers and/or fill executive positions, it is recommended that committee vacancies should either be required to be advertised and filled within six weeks, or Council should resume management of these facilities at the earliest opportunity. This recommendation is made with the knowledge that risk management practices are potentially not being undertaken in these centres and Council and staff are exposed to personal liabilities in the event of an injury of a patron (or volunteer) on the site.

Part 3 – Future Management Options

The workshop consultation in May 2010 provided representatives of the Management Committees with an opportunity to respond to the issues raised in Report No. CC10/10 such that they could be reported to Council and potentially influence the final determination of the method to be used to manage community facilities in the future. The following points of commonality were identified:

- A network wide booking environment could be achieved using a decentralised approach whereby Management Committees retain the care, control and management of community facilities. This arrangement would, however, preclude the creation of a centralised telephone booking service with consistent customer service hours. There would also be considerable logistical and information management issues that would need to be overcome to implement the model.
- There are three options for addressing risk management in the operation of community facilities. All of these three options enable Committees to retain the care, control and management of the community facilities. The first option would be to reduce the frequency of inspections with a view to enhancing compliance with a less frequent inspection regime. The success of this approach would need to be regularly monitored as compliance is not assured. The second option would be to implement a peer management/mentoring model with the current risk management processes (as described in the Procedures Manual) and review the success of this approach. Again, compliance would need to be monitored as essentially, the peer management model provides an extra layer of support but does not ensure that inspections are conducted. The third option would be for Council to undertake the task of facility inspections and pass the cost of providing this service back to the Committees. A sliding fee scale could be adopted contingent upon the time taken to undertake each inspection. A staff member/s could be employed casually to undertake this work across the network with Management Committees funding only the hours worked by the officer in respect of their centre.
- With regard to enhancing financial reporting by centres, the move to a common booking system would improve the capacity for centres to be audited – assuming that centres retain a cash accounting system and operate outside of Council systems. To ensure the submission and improve the quality of the financial reports, Committees

would still require additional support. Should Council require that income derived from the hire of community centres be managed through Council's debtor system, the need for financial reporting by the Management Committees would no longer be an issue.

- Regardless of the decisions associated with the previous issues, a review of the Finance and Procedures Manual is required in order to update it with new booking procedures and also new contractor engagement procedures. This last matter will require additional training for Management Committees to ensure that they engage contractors in a manner which ensures that the contractors have appropriate occupational health and safety practices in place – thereby protecting Council's interests.
- There is potential for developing and recommending individual management arrangements for particular centres, outside of the options already canvassed, because of the particular centre's pattern of use, size or remoteness.
- There still exists an unaddressed resourcing issue within the Community and Cultural Facilities Team whereby the management of three additional centres (beyond the capacity of current resource allocations) has been taken on following the hand back of management of centres to Council. This matter needs to be addressed urgently as it has been outstanding since June 2009.

Having regard to the above feedback provided by Management Committees, and tempering this with issues raised in Report No. CC10/10, the following operational model (Option 6) has been developed as a further potential option that Council may wish to consider:

- The Gumnut Community Centre be "re-purposed" as a child care facility and operated under a licence arrangement with the current primary facility hirer during preschool operational hours. Council could then be responsible for administering after hours bookings. Alternatively, the primary facility hirer could be offered licensed use of the facility during preschool hours and Council could seek the creation of a Management Committee for the facility which has a greater diversity of representation. The facility could then continue to function as a community centre managed by a Management Committee.
- The Dangar Island Community Centre be offered to an appropriately constituted local organisation under a lease arrangement and managed in a model consistent with Council's other "non-community centre" community buildings such that the current patterns of use can continue but that the responsibility for the management of the facility sits with the organisation signing the lease. Current examples of lease arrangements include those premises occupied by the Dural and District Historical Society and the Hornsby Wood Working Men's Shed.
- Management Committees who are currently not meeting quorum requirements be provided with a final chance to advertise and form an appropriately constituted committee. If this is not successful within a six week period, Council resume management of the centre.
- Other Management Committees remain in place with additional support provided.

- Management Committees be provided with the opportunity to buy OH&S inspections from Council, with this activity being undertaken by existing casual staff (in the first instance).
- The development of a network wide booking system continue, and when it is operational, funds collected by the hire of all community centres be administered through Council's debtor system (thereby addressing the financial reporting issue). It is noted that the system would be rolled out to Committees at a time consistent with the achievement of satisfactory results associated with user acceptance testing.
- The matter of resourcing the management of West Epping and Brooklyn Community Centres be addressed as a matter of urgency due to Council not meeting its own performance targets around risk management due to delayed decisions on resourcing commitments. It is noted that a full time Booking Officer would be required.

With the possible exception of the recommendation pertaining to Gumnut Community Centre, which has been raised by staff due to potential conflicts of interest which exist with the current arrangements, Option 6 has been developed to be as consistent as possible with the desires of Management Committees. It is noted that Option 6 does address performance issues raised in Report No. CC10/10.

The booking of community centres using the Pathways booking system is possible whilst retaining Management Committees. If a decentralised approach to administering on-line bookings was chosen, this would effectively take away the option of centralising telephone bookings. In this regard, although technically Council could accept and administer bookings for any community centre using the Pathway system, there would be significant double handling around booking confirmations, invoices, etc if Council did this and then had to communicate the information to Management Committees.

Given the feedback from the Committees about their desire to retain the responsibility for bookings, the business rule would need to be such that telephone bookings would remain the responsibility of Committees. It is noted that this approach would limit the scope to improve customer service and would send conflicting messages to customers. Under such a model, telephone bookings would take place via 13 different telephone numbers at varying times of the day depending upon the availability of the Management Committee representatives or Booking Officer for each centre.

It is difficult to estimate the likely financial impact of providing Management Committees with additional support and also lowering reporting and performance criteria. It may be appropriate that reporting requirements are lowered and support levels remain the same and this approach be reviewed in 12 months. Simply lowering the reporting requirements may provide circumstances more conducive to the successful implementation of the *Existing 377 Management Committee with Significantly Improved Performance* model. However, adding a more complex booking system into the mix would require additional training and support for each Committee in both the short term and the long term. This makes Option 6 similar in expense to Option 1 which was discussed in Report No. CC10/10.

Implementing the non quorum model (from Option 2) as part of Option 6 may see two or three centres return to Council management. Coupled with the three "over quota" centres already being managed in-house by Council, those five or six centres would require one full time booking officer to manage. This issue was previously raised in Report No. CC46/09. This approach could be partially funded by income from these centres, but not completely. However, if any other Management Committees choose to become Advisory Committees (as

was indicated as a possibility at the workshop consultation on 16 May 2010), another tipping point will be reached in terms of Council's ability to administer the centres that it is responsible for and additional resources would again be required.

OH&S inspections could be delivered in a cost neutral manner if centres are billed for the services that they receive. Council is encouraged to consider if the purchase of OH&S inspections will be mandatory for Management Committee or if a grace period will be given if reporting requirements are revised to be less frequent for less utilised community centres.

Under Option 6, there would be additional costs associated with operating a decentralised booking system. This would require up to 13 computers, 13 broadband connections, 13 virus protection packages, 13 software licenses and at least 13 individuals trained to use the system. However, Committees have expressed an interest in pursuing this path with regards to the future management of community facilities. The funding of these expenses will need to be factored into considerations associated with this model.

If Option 6 is supported, Council would be placing an additional impost of time on volunteers in order for them to learn and operate the booking system. The system requires specialist training to use and is not as simple as operating a paper based diary system that many committees currently use. The availability of time of volunteers was suggested in Report No. CC10/10 as a possible reason for non-compliance with the Finance and Procedures Manual during the review period. However, at the 16 May 2010 workshop, the feedback received from some Committees was that non-compliance was as a result of a lack of support provided by Council and not the availability of time of volunteers. As such, if Committees retain a booking responsibility, additional support will be required to ensure the successful implementation of the more involved booking process.

Whilst it is envisaged that, of the options canvassed to this point, Management Committees would probably favour Option 6, there are issues with that Option's cost effectiveness. There are also issues associated with operating the booking system in a decentralised fashion in terms of privacy controls and system integrity controls that need to be factored into decision making.

With these constraints in mind, Council officers have developed a further option (Option 7) which addresses the desire of Management Committees to remain in place, the cost effectiveness of Option 6, Council's desire to affect customer service improvements and the capacities and limitations of the online reservation management system.

Option 7 would be:

- The Gumnut Community Centre be "re-purposed" as a child care facility and operated under a licence arrangement with the current primary facility hirer during preschool operational hours. Council could then be responsible for administering after hours bookings. Alternatively, the primary facility hirer could be offered licensed use of the facility during preschool hours and Council could seek the creation of a management committee for the facility which has a greater diversity of representation. The facility could then continue to function as a community centre managed by a Management Committee.
- The Dangar Island Community Centre be offered to an appropriately constituted local organisation under a lease arrangement and managed in a model consistent with Council's other "non-community centre" community buildings such that the current

patterns of use can continue but that the responsibility for the management of the facility sits with the organisation signing the lease.

- Management Committees who are currently not meeting quorum requirements be provided with a final chance to advertise and form an appropriately constituted committee. If this is not successful within a six week period, Council resume management of the centre.
- Other Management Committees remain responsible for the care, control and management of the facilities – including facility safety inspections (the frequency of which will be reviewed for the smaller centres). With regards to the larger centres, the paid booking officers will continue to undertake this function for those facilities.
- Paid booking officers associated with community centres (both permanent part time staff and casual staff) work from a Council office to administer bookings for the centre they currently take bookings for as well as take bookings that are lodged during their allocated work time for other centres. Payment of the officers would continue to be met from their existing centre's funds.
- The above dot point would provide the opportunity for use of the Pathways booking system and a centralised telephone booking system for all centres with paid booking officers (i.e. Pennant Hills, Cherrybrook, Roselea, Galston, Thornleigh and Epping) as well as Council managed centres (i.e. Arcadia, Asquith, Berowra, Brooklyn, Hornsby, Hornsby Heights, Mount Colah, Thornleigh - Hawkins Hall, West Epping and Wiseman's Ferry). This would improve the customer service for those centres as a centralised telephone booking service would be available during working hours.
- Also, if Council was to resume management of centres currently not meeting quorum requirements (i.e. Glenorie and Epping Creative Centre) then those centres would also be able to be booked through the Pathways booking system and a centralised telephone booking system.
- This would leave only the Beecroft, Cowan, Dangar Island, Gumnut and Mount Kuring-gai centres as not being able to be booked through Pathways. If those centres were left to maintain their own booking and administration procedures, they would need to be provided with additional support to meet agreed performance standards. It is noted, however, that two of those centres (i.e. Dangar Island and Gumnut Community Centre) may be operated under different arrangements anyhow – see the first two dot points above.
- Centres booked centrally could also have payments administered centrally through Council's Debtor System but, for accounting purposes, the income and expenditure associated with particular centres could be separated within Council's accounting system. Council would then be able to report to Management Committees on income and expenditure for their centres on a quarterly basis.

The advantage of Option 7 would be that it maximises the productivity of paid staff across the network whilst allowing Management Committees to retain the care, control and management of the site. This approach would also allow Council to address the shortfall in booking officer hours needed to address the additional centres that Council has been required to manage without the provision of existing resources.

The administration of fees would also be centralised in the majority of centres, thereby reducing the need for volunteers to undertake financial reporting requirements. Employed staff would be using a relatively sophisticated booking system and would be provided with ongoing daily support by management, as well as be provided with peer support. The Occupational Health and Safety of employees would also be better managed because there would be a reduction in the use of casual booking officers who work from their private residences. Management Committees would be able to view the bookings made for their centre through Pathways and these would be updated in real time. The capacity for Management Committees to access information on facility utilisation would not be compromised. Council would also be able to provide quarterly performance reports to Management Committees.

It is estimated that Option 7 would be cost neutral to administer in terms of the booking of the affected centres. What is not clear at this stage, is whether additional support will be required to be provided to Management Committees to undertake the other elements of their roles. The outcome of these deliberations would be dependant upon decisions associated with how risk management inspections are undertaken, how financial accounting is supported and how procurement activities are supported. Also needing to be taken into account would be whether or not some of the smaller centres without paid staff would hand management of their centres back to Council. Even if this was to occur, it is estimated that Option 7 would still be a less expensive model than Option 5 or 6. Option 4 (i.e. full Council management with community advisory committees) would, however, remain the most cost effective management option.

Implementation of a Centralised Booking System for Community Centres

This Report affords an opportunity to provide an update in respect of progress on the development of a centralised booking system for community centres and halls. In this regard, staff have been working on the roll out of the Pathway booking system for Council managed facilities since February 2010. Training, development and preparation work had commenced prior to that time. The first stage of the process has been to learn to operate the booking system and to understand how the system integrates with Council's other databases and administration processes. During this period, system familiarisation has taken place and issues which have been experienced have either fully or partly been resolved. Eventually, further work is required with the software provider in order to prepare the system for broader use and for the system to be ready to accept on-line bookings on Council's webpage.

Taking into account staff leave and other project priorities within the Community and Cultural Facilities Team (e.g. the re-purposing of Willow Park Community Centre to become the Wallarobba Arts and Cultural Centre), and regardless of the decision Council makes on the preferred future model of management, the Pathway booking system requires further development prior to it being ready to roll out to Section 377 Management Committees. This would also be the case if Council decided to accept management of facilities currently managed by Section 377 Committees. It is estimated that a roll out could occur early in 2011.

The estimated roll out time should not delay Council in making a decision on the future management of community facilities. The issues raised in this Report and Report No. CC10/10 are considered to be valid regardless of the timelines associated with the roll out of the booking system. Report No. CC10/10 was primarily about the performance of Section 377 Management Committees against the agreed performance standards as identified in the Finance and Procedures Manual. The availability of a centralised booking system was identified as an opportunity for customer service improvements outside of the review process associated with the *Existing 377 Committee with Significantly Improved Performance* model.

BUDGET

The budget implications are discussed within the body of this Report and its attachments and will vary depending upon the model of management chosen by Council.

POLICY

There are no policy implications associated with the recommendations made within this Report.

CONSULTATION

This Report provides feedback from consultation undertaken with representatives of Section 377 Management Committees. The Report also provides feedback from staff within the Community and Cultural Facilities Team and has taken into account feedback from the Community, Cultural and Recreation Facilities Task Force.

TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE SUMMARY

A Triple Bottom Line assessment is not required of this Report.

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

The officer responsible for the preparation of this Report is the Manager Community Services Branch, Mr David Johnston who can be contacted on 9847 6800.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council:

1. Note the further consultation which has been undertaken with representatives of Section 377 Management Committees in respect of this matter.
2. Note the additional future management options which have been developed as a result of the further consultation and the financial implications associated with each option.
3. Determine its position in respect of the future management of community centres and halls.

DAVID JOHNSTON
Manager - Community Services
Corporate and Community Division

GARY BENSLEY
Executive Manager
Corporate and Community Division

Attachments:

1. Executive Manager's Report No. CC10/10 - Community Centres and Halls Section 377 Management Committees including Attachments
2. PowerPoint Presentation to 16 May 2010 workshop with Section 377 Management Committees
3. Option 5 Presented by Mr. Phil Smith from Pennant Hills Community Centre, Section 377 Committee
4. Staff Comments on Option 5 (including costings)

File Reference: F2004/06390-02

Document Number: D01408594