

ANGUS COUNCIL

EDUCATION COMMITTEE

4 June 1996

REPORT BY THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

Report No 396/96

REVIEW OF LETTING CHARGES AND PROCEDURES

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to seek authority to increase letting charges for Education Department premises to achieve the target savings required by the Education Committee and to simplify the present administrative procedures.

1 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- (a) approves the proposed pricing structure contained in this report,
- (b) instructs me to write to all users of Education Department premises to advise them of the new pricing structures and scale of charges,
- (c) instructs me to liaise with Head Teachers and School Boards to ensure the most economic use of school premises for lets in session 1996-97,
- (d) instructs me to liaise with School Boards to simplify the present administrative arrangements to provide a more efficient 'one-stop' service for lessees,
- (e) instructs me to produce further reports on the specific issues of the vetting of applicants and the use of rural schools where there is no caretaker.
- (f) instructs me to continue to liaise with the Directors of Recreation Services and Cultural Services with a view to establishing consistent Council policies on the letting of all premises.

2 INTRODUCTION

Following the 10% increase in letting charges for the period April - June 1996 approved by the Education Committee on 13 March (Item 7 refers) a review of the pricing structure and the availability of premises has been carried out. Discussions have also taken place with officers from the Departments of Recreation and Cultural Services in an attempt to achieve greater consistency in charging policies.

3 BACKGROUND AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Education Department currently subsidises the costs of all lets for which a charge is applied. The element of subsidy is particularly high for those groups included in the concession category. In addition a large number of groups who are eligible to use school premises enjoy these facilities free of charge (ref Appendix 2) and all costs for these lets are borne by the Education Department budget.

As a result of Council decisions on the Revenue Budget for 1996-97, the Education Department is required to find savings of £50,000 from the letting scheme in the current financial year. This saving can best be achieved through a combination of increasing prices and attempting to rationalise the use of burgh schools for evening meetings. It should be possible to reduce the total number of schools open on any one evening by suggesting to some user groups that they use a neighbouring school rather than their first choice of venue thereby allowing a number of different activities to be undertaken at the same venue and confining operating costs to a smaller number of establishments. This proposal is consistent with Council's policy of encouraging the use of school facilities outwith school hours.

Educational premises are made available to a number of different user groups currently defined as Free, Standard, Nominal or Commercial. Although these categories appear to be quite discrete, problems frequently arise over classification and it is proposed that the number of categories be reduced to three - Free, Concession and Standard with all current users clearly identified to avoid problems caused by ambiguity. These proposed categories are detailed in Appendices 1 and 2.

It is further proposed that all charges are increased to a more economic rate allowing the Education Department to generate income which can be used towards the target savings of £50 000. The proposed increases, detailed in Appendix 1, will have the greatest impact on groups in the standard category but still represent

greatest impact on groups in the standard category but still represent good value for them when compared, for example, to the cost of other similar sporting facilities.

In rural areas there has, to date, been a practice of allowing small groups the use of school premises without the services of a caretaker for a reduced rate. In the light of the increasing need for personal security and, in order to ensure that the Council is protected in law, it is proposed that this practice be reviewed.

At present there is no procedure in place for vetting applicants who apply for a let of school premises. Following the publication of the findings of the public enquiry into the tragedy at Dunblane Primary the Council may require to address this issue, and it is therefore proposed that some consideration should now be given to it.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is estimated that the proposals outlined in this report will generate the savings required.

5 CONSULTATION

This report has been the subject of consultation with the Chief Executive, Director of Law and Administration, Director of Finance, Director of Recreation Services, Director of Cultural Services.

JIM ANDERSON
DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

JAA/JN/LD

**ANGUS COUNCIL
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

**CHARGES FOR THE LETTING OF
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PREMISES**

The proposed new rates of charges (exclusive of VAT) to become effective from 19 August 1996 are:-

STANDARD RATE (charges per hour)

These rates (Table A) are set for user groups not eligible for Education Department support, and taking place in premises which have a caretaker. The groups include Aerobic/Keep-fit classes; Dancing classes; Discos and WRI Groups.

Category 1

Classroom, Staffroom
GP room, Small Hall
Playground

Category 2

Large Hall
Gymnasium
Sports field
(with changing facilities)

Category 3

Swimming Pool
Games Hall

Table A

	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
Mon/Fri	£11.45	£15.00	£13.65	£25.00	£18.50	£35.00
Saturday	£20.25	£25.00	£25.20	£35.00	£33.00	£45.00
Sunday	£23.70	£30.00	£29.05	£40.00	£36.90	£50.00

Where a single person or organisation books more than one unit of accommodation on any one occasion the higher charge will apply for the principal unit and the charges in Table B will be applied for each additional unit.

Table B

	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
Mon/Fri	£2.55	£3.00	£3.50	£6.00
Sat/Sun	£11.40	£12.00	£12.60	£13.00

Where premises have no full-time caretaker and there is no reasonable alternative local facility for meetings (ie in rural areas), classrooms, staffrooms or small halls will be available at a charge of £5.00 per hour Monday - Friday and £12.00 per hour at weekends. (The previous rates were £2.55 per hour Monday - Friday and £11.40 for weekends).

These same rates (Table B) will be applied to users of premises where external facilities only are used and the services of a caretaker are not required.

CONCESSIONARY RATE (charges per member, based on a two-hour let)

This category is designed to allow any bona fide youth or community group or association to plan regular bookings for a complete school year (maximum number of 35 meetings per year). Each group, or association of groups, is required to make one payment which covers its total membership based on the scales below (Table C). For charging purposes the minimum number for any group applying for this rate will be 15. The groups in this category are Art & Craft Workshops; Athletic Clubs; Badminton Clubs; Boys Brigade; Brownies; Camera Clubs; Cubs; Football Clubs; Guides; non profit-making Martial Arts Clubs; Netball/Basketball Coaching; Non-commercial Theatre Clubs, Musical Societies and Drama Classes; Playgroups; Radio Car Racing Clubs; Recognised Adult/FE Education Classes; Scouts; Skater/Hockey Clubs; Staff Recreation Clubs & Former Pupil Sports Clubs; Swimming Clubs and Classes; Tennis Clubs; Toddler Groups and Youth Clubs (with Education Department links).

Table C

Age range	Equivalent Current	Proposed	Equivalent Current	Proposed	Equivalent Current	Proposed
Under 12	£2.25	£5.00	£2.90	£7.00	£3.60	£8.00
13-18	£6.80	£8.00	£8.50	£10.00	£10.60	£15.00
Adults	£13.50	£17.50	£16.50	£20.00	£21.70	£35.00

- Category 1 accommodation will be made available to Under-8 groups at the rate of £3.00
- Groups who book more than one unit of accommodation will be charged for each additional unit as shown in Table B (hourly rates).
- Unemployed Adults and Students will be charged the rates applied to the 13-18 age group.

Additional Notes

- Special terms can be negotiated for 'one-off' events for non profit-making groups functioning for the benefit of the community, but subject to the Council covering its costs at least.
- Individual groups qualifying for concessionary rates may find it more economical to apply for standard rate charges depending on their particular circumstances. Assistance in this matter will be provided by the School Lets Section in the Education Department Office.

**ANGUS COUNCIL
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT**

LETTING OF EDUCATIONAL PREMISES

FREE CATEGORY

A large number of users of Education Department premises enjoy free use of the facilities. Priority is given to these users on the basis of 1) Schools, 2) Community Education Service, 3) Adult Education Associations. These user groups include:-

- The School (all school activities, business meetings and school fund-raising activities, School Board, Parent/Teacher Associations, Former Pupil Associations)
- Any group, vouched for by the Head Teacher, who organise a social event/fund-raising event for the benefit of the school
- Community Education Service
- Councillors holding Surgeries
- Regular monthly meetings of Community Councils
- Out of School Care Clubs
- Organisations for people of (State) pensionable age
- Organisations for people with disabilities
- Children's Panel (for training purposes)
- Classes for Mother tongue tuition
- Sunday schools and kindred organisations for persons up to the age of 18, having no other premises in which to meet, with the exception of cases where special accommodation arrangements have been made between the Council and Church Authorities.

In addition several activities are promoted by the Community Education Service at no cost to the users. These activities include:-

- Training with an educational focus for voluntary organisations including Scottish Pre-school Play Association and the Angus Association of Youth Clubs
- Community Fora/Liaison meetings
- Adult Basic Education
- Classes for English as a second language
- Supported issue-based groups
- Youth Work/Consultation/Development meetings
- Partnership meetings/Groups.

