



PORTFOLIO AREA: HEALTH & COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Date of Meeting: 17th May 2004

Public

Key Decision: Yes

Recorded in Forward Plan:

No

Inside Policy Framework

Title: PETITION: FUNDING FOR RENTAL OF THE CHURCH OF
SCOTLAND HALL - PULMONARY & RESPIRATORY ACTION
GROUP

Report of: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Report reference: CE 15/04

Summary:

A Petition has been received which has been signed by 30 registered electors of the District of Carlisle. The Petition seeks sustained funding for the rental of the Church of Scotland Hall for exercise and rehabilitation for the Pulmonary & Respiratory Action Group.

This report outlines the background and context to the Petition; responds to the issues raised within it and proposes a cause of action for the Petitioners to pursue.

Recommendations:

That the Executive:

Supports the Petitioners in their request for sustained funding and for this to be pursued with the Carlisle & District NHS Primary Care Trust, North Cumbria Acute Hospitals NHS Trust (Cumberland Infirmary) and other relevant Health organisations.

Contact Officer: Maggie Mooney

Ext: 7018

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

- 1.1 A copy of the petition submitted by the Pulmonary & Respiratory Action Group is attached at Appendix 1.
- 1.2 Members of the Executive will be aware that a Petition was submitted by the Cardiac Rehabilitation Fitness Group on the 29th September 2003. Though the Petitioners then were not seeking sustained funding for venue rental, there are links between both Action Groups who describe themselves as sister organisations. It is perhaps worth summarising the process and outcome of this earlier petition to show the City Councils' continued involvement and commitment to this area of work. The earlier Petition was concerned with the continuation of the exercise programme; the need for appropriately qualified staff to facilitate the programme; specialist equipment to be based at the Sands Centre (where the programmes were held) and for the programme to be properly funded rather than subsidised.
- 1.3 Following the Executive meeting in September, the Executive Director, together with Council Officers, representatives from Carlisle Leisure Limited and Carlisle and District NHS Primary Care Trust developed strategies both short, medium and long term to support the Cardiac Rehabilitation Fitness Group. This work involved meetings with the Group, individual meetings between the Executive Director and the Chairman of the Group and meetings across the relevant agencies. This took place between October and December 2003.
- 1.4 The work led by the City Council had a number of positive outcomes and these included training of six additional Instructors (funded by Health); specialist equipment based at the Sands Centre; updates of the classes sent to patients by the City Council; planned development of community programmes to support those patients who are unable to access the Sands Centre.
- 1.5 On the 29th November the Chairman of the Group wrote of his appreciation of the outcomes and met with the Executive Director on 5th December to thank the Council for the provision of the first class support for the Group.
- 1.6 It is felt important to record the above information and remind the Executive of the commitment and energy that was given to this Group by Council Officers in partnership with Carlisle & District Primary Care Trust and Carlisle Leisure Limited.

2. THE ISSUES RAISED IN THE PETITION BY THE PULMONARY & RESPIRATORY ACTION GROUP & THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

2.1 The issues raised, together with the Council's response are as follows:

- I. The Group has expressed concern that the exercise room allocated at the Sands is on the first floor, requiring patients to walk up the stairs.

Response – The Council has allocated a budget for the installation of a lift within the Sands foyer and Carlisle Leisure Limited have planned for its installation in late Summer 2004.

- II. The problems of the current programme being based at the Sands Centre and the preferred venue of the Church of Scotland Hall.

Response – These sessions at the Sands were organised in response to the concerns of this Group, which were first raised by the Secretary on 18th November 2003. At that time the funding contribution of the sessions at the Church Hall had been withdrawn by North Cumbria NHS Trust – Cumberland Infirmary The Trust's contribution was for room hire.

Council staff and staff at the Sands have supported to the Group and have always been committed to further adapting the service to meet their needs. However this could not, at the present time, involve specialist instructors from the Sands supporting the Group at the Church Hall, as requested by them.

It is recognised that the Sands is not the ideal venue for some Members of the Group and that is why the community roll-out programme now being developed for this Group and the Cardiac Rehabilitation Group will be beneficial to them and in particular those members who are unable to attend either the Sands or the Church Hall.

- III. Funding. The Group has asked for a sum of £1,500 per year for the rental of accommodation at the Church Hall. The Group expects "the same recognition given to our sister group 'The Cardiac Rehabilitation Group'"

Response - Discussions with the Chairman of the Group and letters to them have stated that whilst the City Council will do everything it can to support the Group, it does not have access to funds. The Council does not have the statutory responsibility for Health and therefore does not receive Government funding to support health-related activities. This involvement relies upon strong partnership work with other agencies, particularly Health. Moreover it has been Health, through the Local Health Group, that has provided funding, through the 'Exercise on Prescription' scheme for this Group and the Cardiac Rehabilitation Group. The Executive Director, in her correspondence to the Group and meetings with the Chairman of the Group, has been consistent in stating the Council's policy on funding. She has also welcomed a discussion with the Group as it was felt the

through meeting members, ways of working together could be developed in the same way as the previous work with the Cardiac Rehabilitation Group. This was not taken up by the Group.

The Group has been encouraged to approach Health representatives directly and Council Officers have also communicated Health a number of times to elicit information regarding funding on behalf of the Group. It is understood that the Chairman has now made direct representation to Carlisle and District Primary Care Trust. It now appears that funding for the Group is not available within Health budgets and the funding earmarked for 'Exercise on Prescription' is being used to train instructors to facilitate the Groups, particularly in community settings. It also seems clear that this funding is only available for the next two financial years.

- 2.2 It is unfortunate that there has been a delay in responding to the Petitioners' concerns. This is because Council Officers have been waiting for a response from Health. However throughout all the discussions and written communication, it has always been made clear that the Council cannot offer financial support. Members will be aware of the budgetary implications of making a financial commitment year-on-year, especially as it would set a precedent for requests for funding by other Groups.
- 2.3 The Petitioners are right to remind the Council that this area of work is a priority in terms of fulfilling its 'Promoting Healthy Living and Lifestyle' objective (Corporate Plan 2002-2005) but the promise has always relied on collaboration with its partners. It is felt that the work undertaken to date underlines the Council's commitment to fulfil the priority and to a significant extent this has been done. Moreover the planned community rollout programme will ensure that users and would-be users of this programme will be able to access the specialist exercise classes close to their own homes. As with the Cardiac Rehabilitation sessions, the long term sustainability of fitness sessions for all has been the key underlying principle in taking forward the community sessions. This strategy also fits with the Council's commitment to collaborate with Health on other areas of concern across Carlisle, which in turn help Health to meet their local and national targets.

3. CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Consultation with this Group has been the main consideration in resolving the concerns expressed in the Petition. In addition consultation with Carlisle and District Primary Care Trust and Carlisle Leisure Limited has also been undertaken.

A2
refers

Pulmonary & Respiratory Action Group

28 April 2004

Mr J M Egan
Head of Legal & Democratic Services
Carlisle City Council
Civic Centre
Carlisle
CA3 8QG

LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES	
30 APR 2004	
PASSED TO	
ANSWERED	SM
MAIL LOG	

Dear Mr Egan

Following a number of letters to your Executive Director regarding the sustained funding for the rental of the Church of Scotland Hall for exercise and rehabilitation for the above group there has been no positive response to our letter dated 8th March 2004.

We therefore wish to exercise our democratic right with a petition for a 5 minute right to speak at your Council executive meeting which I understand is to be held on the 17th May 2004.

To comply with the law we enclose 30 plus signatures from interested parties who reside within the City Council area and pay council taxes to the City Council.

I enclose a copy of the aforementioned letter of the 9th March 2004 which outlines our requirements.

I trust the above is in order and we will be given our democratic right.

Yours sincerely

Chairman
Pulmonary & Respiratory Action Group.

Pulmonary & Respiratory Rehabilitation Action Group

8 March 2004

M/s M. Mooney
Executive Director
City of Carlisle
Civic Centre
Carlisle
CA3 8QG

Dear M/s Mooney

Ref: Funding Church of Scotland Hall for Exercise Classes and Social Sessions

At our meeting of the Action Group 3rd March 2004 it was unanimously decided That we should pursue the funding for the weekly rental of the above venue for 3 hours weekly all as in our letter to you of the 29th January 2004 expressing our concerns.

I shall comment on your reply to our 3 key concerns in chronological order:

- a. Whilst the lift to the first floor should be installed during the late summer there is no guarantee of this and the condition of the patients who cannot climb the stairs is deteriorating through lack of rehabilitation and some may have to return to hospital for treatment.
- b. Your comments re the journey to the Sands and I quote "but I guess that wherever the venue is situated this is likely to disadvantage some members of the group". I feel that this comment is given with lack of knowledge of the area. All bus stops and bus station are in close proximity to the Church of Scotland venue. There is a substantial walk from bus stops/station along Lowther Street, negotiating the hill (down and up) past the Civic Centre through the underpasses with slopes/steps prior to the walk across the Sands Car Park for rehabilitation patients. Need I say more?
Yes I will say more! The above has decreased the patients receiving these vital exercise programmes by some 50/60% the most vulnerable section of the group. The loose comment that "this walk is part of their rehabilitation programme" was not really thought through before it was made.
- c. The issues regarding the back log of patients. There is no intent to have all our patients exercise together. The costing given in our last letter 29/01/2004 are for a three hour period.

Cont.

The above statements are in answer to your comments. Furthermore it is possible for the "Sands Instructors" to come to the Church of Scotland Hall and conduct the training sessions and collect the £1.50 fee.

Note: There is public liability insurance cover through the Church of Scotland for these premises.

Funding.

We have decided not to apply for a grant as we feel that grants are a stop gap/ Ad hoc method. We require total funding from your department and the NHS Trust. We should also like to share the same recognition given to our sister Group "The Cardiac Rehabilitation Group" as our needs are similar and it is assumed that when we read your pledge City Council Promise Page 4 I quote, Aims: Improve cultural, leisure and sporting opportunities .

Strategies: Physical activity and sports strategy

Key Objectives and Actions. Implement the physical activity and sports strategy

EXERCISE ON PRESCRIPTION/CARDIAC REHABILITATION.

Council priorities 9th February 2004.

Please bear in mind that as previously stated £1,500.00 is the maximum we need per year to rent this venue. This would satisfy our members and give them through Exercise rehabilitation (being given very satisfactorily by the Sands instructors) some help and hope in trying to live with their pulmonary and respiratory problems

In order to keep an option on the Church of Scotland Hall we would look forward to receiving a positive outcome within the next 10 days. If however this is a negative outcome we have no course other than to implement our legal right to request (via your Legal and Democratic Services) to have a deputation and a 5 minute hearing at a Council Executive meeting and benefit from any media coverage which may ensue.

I trust that common sense will prevail and that the above action will not be necessary.

Yours sincerely

Chairman.