1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 This report seeks to obtain the consent of Scottish Borders Council to lease three former office rooms at the Innerleithen Memorial Hall to the Innerleithen and Walkerburn Youth Group at a nominal rent for a 12 month period.

1.2 The offices at the Memorial Hall in Innerleithen were vacated by the Social Work Department and declared surplus to Council requirements in January 2014. The Memorial Hall is classed as a Common Good property.

1.3 The Innerleithen and Walkerburn Youth Group leased the Church Hall from the Church of Scotland on Leithen Road before it was sold in May 2014 and they now require new premises.

1.4 The Memorial Hall and offices are classed as Common Good property but since there is not an Innerleithen Common Good sub committee, the approvals for a lease requires the consent of Scottish Borders Council.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that Scottish Borders Council agrees:

(a) to authorise the Service Director Commercial Services to grant a 12 month lease terminable thereafter at one month's Notice at any time at a nominal rent to Innerleithen and Walkerburn Youth Group for three rooms at Innerleithen Memorial Hall;

(b) that the lease includes any other terms that the Service Director Commercial Services deems appropriate including:

(i) provisions for the tenant to bear the cost of rates and a service charge to cover utilities, heating and the cleaning of common parts;

(ii) the tenant to be responsible for internal decoration and day to day internal repairs of the 3 rooms it would occupy; and

(c) that the Council retains responsibility for keeping the premises wind and water-tight and for maintaining the heating system.
3  BACKGROUND & PROPOSALS

3.1 The Innerleithen Memorial Hall was acquired by the Burgh Council by donation from Henry Ballantyne in 1919 and has been classed as a Common Good property as the donation was for the benefit of the community rather than a specific Council use.

3.2 The offices next to the Hall were used by the Social Work Department and a Contact Centre until they were vacated in January 2014. The Council Chamber room is still used by the Community Council for their regular meetings. (see attached plan)

3.3 The Innerleithen and Walkerburn Youth Group is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). It is a non-profit distributing voluntary organisation providing recreational activities for children aged 9 to 18 years.

3.4 The Youth Group had previously been leasing the Church Hall on Leithen Road from the Church of Scotland. However it was sold in May 2014 and the Youth group had to vacate by 16th May 2014.

3.5 The Youth Group are open two nights a week from 4.00pm to 9.00pm but they would like to expand to four nights a week. They currently have about 30 children attending and are supervised by two SBC employed youth workers.

3.6 The proposed lease to the Youth Club would be for 12 months and thereafter on a month to month basis so that, if required, it can be terminated if the Memorial Hall is transferred to a Cultural Trust. The let would comprise three rooms on the first floor, together with use of the toilets and occasional use of the former ground floor Contact Centre by prior arrangement with the Halls Manager.

3.7 The terms of the lease will include a nominal rent of £1 per annum, if asked, but the Youth Club shall pay a service charge to cover their share of utility and other SBC costs e.g. cleaning of shared toilets.

3.8 The Youth Club will be responsible for arranging and paying for any extra services they require, for example phone lines and internet connections.

3.9 The Council shall retain responsibility for most repairs and maintenance of the property. The Youth Group shall be responsible for internal decoration and day to day internal repairs to the three rooms.

3.10 The former Contact Centre room on the ground floor is used by the Hall Caretaker as an office and shall not be made available to the Youth Club on a regular basis, unless by prior separate agreement with the Council’s Halls Manager. The former Contact Centre may be required for any wheel chair users in the Youth Club.

4  IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial
The lease will be cost neutral to the Council as there will not be a rental income from the lease but also the Council costs shall be covered by a service charge to the Youth Club.

4.2 Risk and Mitigations
There is a risk that the youth activities in Innerleithen could be put in jeopardy if the let does not proceed because there is no suitable alternative accommodation available in the short term.

4.3 **Equalities**

It is anticipated there will be no adverse impact due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from the proposals contained in this report. Wheelchair access is available to the ground floor room where the Youth Group can offer services to any wheelchair users.

4.4 **Acting Sustainably**

The proposed lease to the Youth Group will help the Innerleithen and Walkerburn community and environment by securing an active Youth Club which aids Community Learning and Development.

4.5 **Carbon Management**

There are no significant effects on carbon emissions.

4.6 **Rural Proofing**

Not applicable because no new Council policy or strategy is being requested.

4.7 **Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation**

There are no changes to be made.

5 **CONSULTATION**

5.1 The Chief Financial Officer, the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Legal Officer, the Service Director Strategy and Policy, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Chief Officer HR, the Service Director Interim Projects and Clerk to the Council have been consulted and their comments have been incorporated into the report.

Approved by

**Service Director Commercial Services** Signature................................

**Author**

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**Background Papers:** None

**Previous Minute Reference:** None

**Note** – You can get this document on tape, in Braille, large print and various computer formats by contacting the address below. James Morison can also give information on other language translations as well as providing additional copies.

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