
MANAGEMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC HALLS

Report by Director - Resilient Communities

SCRUTINY & PETITIONS COMMITTEE

8 December 2022

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

1.1 At its meeting of 14 March 2022, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee requested a report outlining the operating characteristics and funding regime in regard to the management and funding of halls across the Borders to develop an understanding of fairness and functioning of management committees. For the purposes of this report the term 'Halls' will cover town halls, village halls and community centres. In summary:

Funding	SBC provides annual funding to the Federation of Village Halls of approx. £50k per annum.
Facilities / Leases	SBC has 45 leases in place for 'Halls'. 20 of these are leased to Live Borders.
Maintenance	Each individual lease determines the level of maintenance/repair obligation including where Communities/Voluntary Management Committees have obligations and responsibility for the maintenance or repair.
Management	'Halls' are often run by independent voluntary management committees, who take the bookings, keep the hall clean and undertake the obligations of the lease.
Oversight	The Scottish Borders Village & Community Halls (SBVCH) group currently has 95 halls as members of the SBVCH. This includes approx. 50 owned by individual communities or held in private trusts.

1.2 There is inconsistency in regard to the lease arrangements, maintenance obligations, funding and management arrangements for 'Halls'.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Scrutiny & Petitions Committee:

- (a) Notes the findings of this report; and**
- (b) Notes that the planned work to review and update of the Scottish Borders Cultural Strategy and action plan– the remit of which will also include lease, maintenance, funding and management options for 'Halls'.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the Scrutiny & Audit meeting of 14th March 2022, the committee considered a report on the management and maintenance of public halls. The findings of that report were noted and the committee requested that a further paper be presented to outline the operating characteristics and funding regime for halls.
- 3.2 Village Halls host regular local events and activities, they provide space for local clubs and societies to run activities and play a major role during emergency responses and elections. Village halls are often run by independent voluntary management committees, taking bookings for the hall, ensuring that it is clean and maintained. The social aspect of village halls contributes to keeping Borderers fit, healthy and better connected; and that our communities remain resilient and vibrant.
- 3.3 For the remainder of this document the term 'Halls' will be used as a catch-all for Town Halls, Village Halls and Community Centres.

4 VILLAGE HALL FEDERATIONS & FUNDING

- 4.1 An umbrella organisation called Scottish Borders Village & Community Halls (SBVCH) brings together four Federations of Village Halls (FVH) in the Borders. These Federations have been in place since the days of the District Councils.
- 4.2 Collectively there are 95 halls in the Borders who are members of the FVH, the role of the FVH to support the halls in their respective areas, but it is not a requirement for any hall to be a member of the FVH. The FVH area-split is shown in the table below:

Federation of Village Halls Area	Number of Halls
Berwickshire	26
Central Borders	23
Roxburgh	32
Peeblesshire	14
	95

- 4.3 SBC has lease arrangements in place for 45 'Halls', therefore based on the Federation having 95 members, the *majority* of 'Halls' (who are part of the FVH) will be owned by their individual communities or held in private trusts.
- 4.4 All village halls leased from SBC have a responsibility to run as community enterprises and to fundraise as required. In addition to this, SBC provides annual funding to all members of the FVH of approximately £50,000 per year, split:

Area	No' Halls	20/21 SBC Funding (£)	Avg. funding per hall	Award administered by
Berwickshire	26	13,502	£519	BAVS
Central Borders	23	14,470	£629	The Bridge
Roxburgh	32	13,869	£433	The Bridge
Peeblesshire	14	8,184	£584	The Bridge
	95	50,025	£526	

4.6 This funding formula was devised by SBC many years ago where each FVH receives a share based on:

- 50% on the number of Halls in the respective Federation
- 50% on the rural population for each area (excluding certain towns and villages which now have Halls run by Live Borders)

4.7 The FVH uses 5-6% of the annual grant to pay for secretariat (provided by either The Bridge or by BAVS). The secretariat undertakes the administration of the grant and the reporting to SBC. Community Development support to the FVH is provided free of charge by The Bridge and BAVS, in their role with the Borders TSI. The FVH also provides and updates a Village Halls Handbook for use by village hall committees, covering all of their legal areas of responsibility.

5 LEASE ARRANGEMENTS

5.1 As mentioned in 4.3 above, SBC has lease arrangements in place for 45 'Halls'. 20 of these are leased to Live Borders and 25 leased to local community groups/committees.

5.2 The maintenance obligations, the duration and the annual cost of the leases (which have been developed over a number of years on a case by case basis), are inconsistent. Some leases are 'Internal repairing Only', whereas others are 'Full repairing and Insuring'. Lease duration ranges from 1 year to 100 years and similarly the annual cost ranges from £0 to £735:

Lease maintenance obligation		Duration	Annual Cost
FRI	Full Repairing and Insuring	Anywhere between 1 and 100 years	Anywhere between £0 and £735
FRO	Full Repairing Only		
IRI	Internal Repairing and Insuring		
IRO	Internal Repairing Only		

6 MANAGEMENT

6.1 The 25 leases that SBC has with Live Borders are broadly split 50/50 between community centres and town halls. For the Town Halls, all bookings are made via a central Live Borders mailbox and the bookings are controlled and managed by Live Borders.

- 6.2 For Community Centres leased to Live Borders, the method of booking very much depends on the individual community centre and management committee. The community centre management committees generally manage the day-to-day running of the centre, including bookings, rates charged and income generated.
- 6.3 In regard to cleaning, for the community centres leased to Live Borders, cleaning support is generally provided through caretakers employed by Live Borders. However, this is not always the case for example in Langlee and Newcastleton Community Centres, SBC provides the cleaning support.
- 6.4 For those community centres leased to Live Borders, each community centre management committee pays an annual contribution to Live Borders equating to 65% of income from lets. This is intended to cover utility and maintenance costs.

7 SCOTTISH BORDERS CULTURAL STRATEGY

- 7.1 The SBC Council Plan 2022-23, under the 'Good Health and Wellbeing' theme contains an action to Review the [Cultural Strategy](#) for the Scottish Borders. This work is scheduled for early 2023.
- 7.2 As can be seen in sections 4, 5 and 6 above there are inconsistencies in how 'Halls' are leased, funded and managed. It is proposed that the upcoming work to refresh the Cultural Strategy also explores options to improve consistency in regard to lease arrangements, funding for 'Halls' and the management arrangements for 'Halls'.

8 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Financial

There are no costs attached to any of the recommendations contained in this report. Any financial implications of changes to lease terms should be identified as part of the work to review and update the Cultural Strategy.

8.2 Risk and Mitigations

There is a risk that the current variability of leases that SBC has with community groups/committees may result in inequality. The existing arrangements may also result in tenants not voluntarily renegotiating their leases to Full Repairing and Insuring terms. However, a number of the recently renewed leases have been done so on FRI terms (see 4.8) – often to meet grant funder requirements where grant recipients must have a lease of at least 20 years duration.

There remains the ongoing risk to community centre viability (as highlighted in the previous report) as a result of how sustainable voluntary management committees are. Anecdotal evidence suggest that a number of Committee members are 65+ and that attracting new (particularly <65) members to voluntary committees is a challenge.

8.3 Integrated Impact Assessment

No IIA has been carried out at this stage as this report is for information and no decision are required. Depending on the outcome of the Cultural Strategy review, IIAs may be required

8.4 Sustainable Development Goals

Checklist completed

8.5 Climate Change

Checklist completed

8.6 Rural Proofing

Not applicable.

8.7 Data Protection Impact Statement

There are no personal data implications arising from the proposals contained in this report.

8.8 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

Not applicable.

9 CONSULTATION

9.1 The Director (Finance & Corporate Governance), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Director (People Performance & Change), the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

Jenni Craig

Director - Resilient Communities Signature.....

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Background Papers:

Previous Minute Reference: [Item No. 14 - Management of Halls - AuditScrutiny-Mar22.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

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

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