

STAFF REPORT

TO: Community Services Committee
FROM: Community Services Manager
DATE: 10 November 2010
SUBJECT: Richmond Community Facility – RCS10-11-08

PURPOSE

To consider the report from Strategic Leisure NZ Ltd and consider a recommendation from the Richmond Ward Councillors.

BACKGROUND

An allowance of \$1.58 million was made in 2009/2010 towards a new community facility in Richmond. The 2009/2010 LTCCP quotes:

“The existing halls are old and small, and the Richmond/Waimea areas population is growing steadily. A modern, multi-purpose facility may better meet the needs of the local community.”

The idea was to extend or enhance some existing or planned facility owned by a third party.

Earlier this year Strategic Leisure NZ Ltd were contracted to provide a “Needs analysis for a major community facility in Richmond” (copy attached).

DISCUSSION

David Allan (Strategic Leisure NZ Ltd) presented the report and a power point presentation to the 15 July 2010 Community Services meeting.

The report stated that the supply and demand analysis was used to help to determine whether existing or planned facilities are meeting, or have the spare capacity to meet, existing or projected demand. The major findings were:

- The mix of facilities available or under construction in Richmond provide venues able to meet identified demand for local purposes with one exception. There was strong demand from respondents to the resident’s questionnaire for a cinema in the Richmond area.
- The most apparent gap evidenced by consistent reporting of demand by facility providers was for affordable meeting spaces for small meetings and activity groups generally up to 50 people.

- Additional capacity for meeting spaces is being made available at the Library and Saxton facilities, but these are not widely known or perceived as relevant.
- Current facility providers were unable to identify a local user group requiring a large audience venue in the Richmond area.
- No user groups or organisations were able to be identified through the review of the Found Directory, local newspapers and newsletters, submissions to the Nelson-Tasman Arts Strategy.
- There has been a major expansion in larger venues in the Richmond area including in recent years the redevelopment of Club Waimea and development of the Hope Community Church. In addition, the opening of the Headingly Centre in the near future will increase further the supply available for major gatherings and performances.
- Several major facilities have constraints regarding access because of regular commitments such as Sunday worship at the Church facilities. Grace Church was the only Church that is likely to be available on an occasional basis for use on Sundays as part of a multi-day booking for an event.
- Most facilities had constraints as to the type of activity such a 21st parties and the serving or sale of alcohol, particularly the Churches. Club Waimea and Richmond Town Hall do not have any restrictions. In addition, several of the churches indicated they are unable or reluctant to take on regular long term bookings because of the likely clashes with church events and programmes.
- The redevelopment of the Trafalgar Centre, the Suburban Club and the reopening of the Theatre Royal also provide more options for larger capacity events within the wider catchment.

The report then discussed opportunities for partnering in the development of a new facility but concluded that these were limited. As an alternative the report stated that the Council could consider partnering through an access agreement with one or several facility owners to meet the need for affordable meeting spaces in Richmond and the hire of facilities for not-for-profit for community purposes that meet certain criteria.

The report stated that, through the evidence to date there is no need in the short to medium term for the development of a convention or community facility able to host performances and functions. However, there is a demand for a cinema of some scale and type to be determined.

The recommendations from the report were:

- 1 That Council establish the most effective means of establishing and maintaining a single repository on information on facilities available for community hire that can be accessed through the internet, phone and counter service.

- 2 That Council investigate the viability of establishing partnerships with one or more facility owners to secure community access options for a specified number of days per annum for not-for-profit community purposes.
- 3 That Council consider establishing a fund to assist with hire of facilities for not-for-profit community purposes that meet merit criteria.

At the 26 August 2010 Community Services Committee meeting the Richmond Ward Councillors were asked to consider the needs analysis and then to report back to Community Services.

RECOMMENDATION

The Richmond Ward Councillors discussed the report's three recommendations and have now recommended to the Community Services Committee that:

- 1 The Found Directory and the new Richmond Unlimited website be used as the repository for all information on facilities available for community hire.
- 2 The fact that all the facilities eg Club Waimea, schools and churches are already available for public use, it is not considered necessary to enter into any access options.
- 3 It be recommended to the Grants and Community Facilities Rate Subcommittee that a fund be established within the existing grants from rates budget to assist organisations with the cost of hiring facilities anywhere in the Tasman District. As these funds could be required at any time of the year the Grants and Community Facilities Rate Subcommittee would need to put in place procedures for accessing such funds.

The Richmond Ward Councillors also discussed the issue of a cinema in Richmond which was something that came out of the report. While very keen to see a cinema in Richmond, the Councillors agreed that Council should not have any financial involvement with this as it is a commercial venture.

LL Kennedy
Community Services Manager

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