

Northampton Borough Council Overview and Scrutiny



Overview and Scrutiny Committee

12 November 2018

Briefing Note: Revenue from Room Hire (Guildhall)

1 Background

Facilities Management are tasked with creating income through the hire of the public rooms at the Guildhall for various corporate and private events. These include wedding ceremonies, receptions, Xmas parties, graduations, award ceremonies and various charity events. The current income target for this financial year is £150K.

2 Room Hire Revenue Details

During 2017/2018 the total income from room hire was £173,473. This comprised:

£150,203 for room hire
£1,563 for equipment hire
£3,389 for external refreshments
£14,566 for internal refreshments
£6,572 for catering commission at 5%
£4,071 for bar commission at 10%

During this period we gave discounts to the value of £9,738 to charities and business partners.

The breakdown of bookings were:

8 partnership bookings (NCC/LGSS at 25% discount).
25 charity FOC (Free of Charge) bookings
41 charity bookings at 50% discount
22 charity bookings at 25% discount
205 external hires
10,737 internal room bookings

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During the first 6 months of 2018/2019 the total income is £48,582. This comprises:

£39,825 for room hire
£524 for equipment hire
£931 for external refreshments
£7,301 for internal refreshments
£708 for catering commission at 5%
£630 for bar commission at 10% (please note this only covers April – June)

During this period we gave discounts of £3,683 to charities and business partners. The breakdown of bookings were:

4 partnership bookings (NCC/LGSS at 25% discount).
2 charity FOC bookings
16 charity bookings at 50% discount
19 charity bookings at 25% discount
67 external hires
5,032 internal room bookings

3 Issues Identified

There are various events throughout the year that FM facilitate FOC. Historically, and included in the room hire policy, FOC events are:

- Mayor Making
- Remembrance Sunday
- Laforey Remembrance (Sea Cadets)
- Mayors Charity Sunday
- Heritage Weekend
- Mayors Events

However, more have been added and this impacts on FM budget as income generating events cannot be facilitated due to the rooms not being available and there is a cost to keeping the building open outside of business as usual. The current cost is £81 p/h from 21:30 onwards and £94 p/h on Sundays and Bank Holidays.

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Since March 2018 the following have also been facilitated FOC:

- International Women's Day
- Notre Dame School Anniversary
- Vintage Catwalk
- Tea Dance
- Music Festival
- Bloom Awards
- Diwali
- International Men's Day (although the booking was cancelled on 4th October, several events were turned away since the booking was made on 12th March 2018)
- Walter Tull Talk
- Kinky Boots Talk
- Food Fair
- Ghost Tours
- Nasty Northampton
- Kinky Boots Launch (booked on 03/11/17 and cancelled 4 weeks before event. Several events were turned away during this time)
- Sports Awards
- High Sheriff
- Twinning
- Marberg Festival
- Ride for Hope

To give an idea of lost income; nine of the events were held on Saturdays and potential income of £21,690 was not achieved. In addition, where events have been held outside Guildhall opening hours, additional costs have been incurred by the Council.

During this financial year marketing the Guildhall has been challenging because of the scaffolding that was erected for the roof works.

4 Conclusion

The Guildhall has significant potential for income generation and the Team has demonstrated the capacity to maximise this. The Guildhall is also "owned" by the residents of Northampton and there is a reasonable expectation on behalf of Members and residents that it will be available without charge.

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This report demonstrates that the growth in free use of the Guildhall facilities is impacting on income generation and is actually costing the Council money, where those events are outside normal working hours and the building would normally be closed. Members' views on whether or not we should try to restrict the free of charge use of the Guildhall are invited.

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