

**DECISION NOTICE - CORONAVIRUS EMERGENCY RELATED**  
**Key Executive Decision taken by an OFFICER**

**KEY DECISION Subject:** Closure Community Centres & Community Arts Centre

**DECISION TAKER:**

**Name:**

**Job Title:**

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**REASON WHY THIS DECISION DID NOT APPEAR ON THE FORWARD PLAN AND THE URGENCY PROVISIONS WERE NOT FOLLOWED:**

This key decision was taken as part of the Council's emergency response to the national Coronavirus Emergency. Due to the necessary speed of decision taking at this time it was not possible to comply with the Council's Constitution that includes the requirement to give 28 days' notice of the decision to be taken; publish details 5 clear days before the decision was taken; publish the decision within 2 days of it being taken; and provide the 5 day call-in period before implementation. Nor was it possible to comply with the Urgency provisions in the Constitution

**DECISION TAKEN:**

The Closure of Community Centres & Community Arts Centre

**REASONS FOR DECISION:**

All Community Centres and the Community Arts Centre with the exception of those that are required to maintain key worker childcare provision (Timebridge Community Centre) closed on Monday 23 March.

**OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED:**

The Council could have continued to leave the decision in the hands of individual Community Associations and the Arts Guild rather than stepping in as the asset owner. This was ultimately rejected due to the clear prescriptive nature of central government advice.

Equally the Council could also have not made the commitment to explore the options available to meet unavoidable expenses during the closure period. However, this option was rejected as it was clear that without this support,

many of the Community Associations that operate throughout Stevenage would have been unable to sustain themselves through the closure period.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

There is no direct additional financial implication to SBC with the closure of Community Centres and the Community Arts Centre. However, there is a likelihoods that operators of these facilities will ask for financial support

SBC have advised the Community Centre's wherever possible to Furlough staff.

SBC facilities team to maintain compliance testing at the moment and are arranging with centre managers to mothball sites.

**LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The Community Centres were closed following advice from government with regard to public facilities hosting gatherings for members of the community the only exception to this that applied to Stevenage Community Centres that provided child care for key workers.

**EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:**

Government advice applies to all users, staff and services that were being provided by the Community Centres and the Community Arts Centre.

**CONSULTATIONS:**

Consultees were informed of government advice to close facilities and concurred with this decision

Executive and Opposition Group Leaders

Community Centre Managers

Strategic Leadership Team

**Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

I agree that this decision was reasonable in all the circumstances, was urgent and could not reasonably be deferred

I further agree that any delay likely to be caused by the call -in process would prejudice the Council's or the public interest and that the decision should not therefore be subject to call-in.

**Signed:**

**Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

**Date:**

**DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISION: 23 March 2020**