

MEMORANDUM

Date:	29 July 2021
To:	Jo Miller, Chief Executive
Copy:	Mayor and Councillors
From:	Andrea Blackshaw, Director Neighbourhoods & Communities Kara Puketapu-Dentice, Director Economy and Development
Paper author:	Alannah Laban, Head of Assets & Facilities Management
Subject:	TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF HARDWICK SMITH LOUNGE FOR REPAIRS

Purpose (Executive Summary)

1. Due to the ongoing issues with leaks at Hardwick Smith Lounge resulting in visible signs of mould in certain areas, Hutt City Council engaged a specialist inspector to undertake air testing of the Hardwick Smith Lounge which has identified toxic mould. It would appear that a roof leak has caused moisture to run behind a brick veneer wall and remain undetected for some time.
2. The recommendation from the inspector is to close the building until remedial work can be undertaken. We also require further investigation to assess the current condition of the building before work can begin.

Recommendation

3. That the Chief Executive agrees that the Hardwick Smith Lounge is closed to the public with immediate effect for public safety, and all bookings relocated, until we can undertake further investigation and assessment of remedial work.

Approve / Decline

Background

4. On 19 July 2021 Healthy Homes Inspections undertook air testing in four identified areas as well as a test outside for comparison (see attached report). The four tested areas were:
 - Toilet, near entrance
 - Centre of lounge
 - Kitchen
 - Small lounge, on right
5. The testing revealed the following:
 - a. There is a serious issue with toxic mould in the building.

- b. Fungi was detected in the kitchen and small lounge that are considered to be toxigenic and are undesirable in indoor air. There are also bacterial clusters in the small lounge as well as spores in other areas that can cause health issues.
 - c. Considerable moisture issues throughout the building, with Gib disintegrating and obvious mould, contamination with discoloration and odour.
 - d. There is also the strong possibility that there is Gram-Negative Bacteria in the carpet.
- 6. The inspector's report recommended:
 - a. That the building be temporarily closed until remediation has taken place. This includes stripping out of mouldy material, rotten timber and Gib as well as carpet tiles and carpet removed from all rooms.
 - b. Anybody entering the rooms should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). Any items being removed from the room require thorough cleaning and disinfecting.
 - c. Remediators must be familiar with dealing with toxic mould. Full PPE and respiratory protective equipment (RPE) should be used and personnel should be suitably qualified.
 - d. Further air testing needs to be undertaken before rebuilding takes place to prevent any viable spores colonising again, if the right conditions are present.
 - e. If the building is to remain open or if anyone is entering the building, the installation of portable air purifiers may help reduce the airborne fungal spore levels. The suggestion is that an air scrubber and a commercial dehumidifier are installed to dry the air and remove toxic mould spores from the environment.

Risks

- 7. The risks of closing the hall are low. Some members of the public will be concerned about the closure. An explanation through our channels of the reasons should ensure minimal reputational risk. There is capacity at nearby council facilities to take on many of these bookings.
- 8. The risks of leaving the building open to the public are high as evidenced by the attached report that recommends closure. There are regular hirers of the hall every Sunday (Church groups), 90% of Saturdays are booked with casual hirers. The building is quieter during the week with some regular hirers. Groups are accessing the hall for various activities including nature groups, school groups, Scout groups and other events such as church and weddings.

Utilisation/Financial implications

- 9. For the period of 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2021, the utilisation for the facility was 26.93% equating to 431 bookings. This represents revenue of approximately \$21,000.00. Utilisation at the nearby Belmont Memorial Hall is slightly under 50% for the 2020/21 year equating to 711 bookings.
- 10. During the LTP process, elected members were advised that, in the current financial environment, managing and funding our existing stock into the future will pose a

challenge. This is due to several factors including the high number of buildings built in 50s and 60s coming up for renewal at the same time and renewal and replacement of existing assets not being prioritised in recent years, meaning our stock is in poor condition.

11. The current state of our assets combined with the cost pressures Council is facing require us to think differently about the management of assets in the future. As part of our future strategy work we plan to map our assets to consider each community's needs, now and in the future, and how those are best met. This will be informed by community conversations, and will provide an opportunity to consider the future use of existing assets, identify gaps to inform future planning and decision-making and rationalise some assets if desired.
12. Consideration will need to be given to this in decisions about the future of this facility.

Legal implications

13. Possible implications on the insurance of the Hall.

Health, Safety and Security implications

14. The hall is recommended for closure to ensure the health and safety of the public. No staff are based at the hall.

Communication and Engagement

15. The Mayor and elected members will be advised.
16. Signage will be organised.
17. Information will be provided for the public via usual communication channels.
18. Hirers will be informed of the closure and supported to find alternative venues.

Attachments

19. There are attachments to this paper:

Attachment 1: Hardwick Smith Lounge - Healthy Homes Mould and Bacteria Inspection Report - 28.07.2021

Attachment 2: Hardwick Smith Lounge - Healthy Homes Biodet Testing Report - 27.07.2021

Signed:



Jo Miller

Chief Executive

Hutt City Council