



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Community & Play Centre Committees
Date:	15 September 2010
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Relevant Background Information

At its meeting in August 2010, Councillors asked for an information report on the status of Community Centre Committees.

Members will be aware that Council developed a range of Community and Play Centres since the mid 1970s currently managing 22 across the City, and operating a model of partnership work with local elected Centre Committees in the development of this service. The concept of Centre Management Committees was introduced at that time to ensure that community centres would reflect and respond to the needs of their local communities.

Under this model, staffing and day to day management of the Centres are the responsibility of the Council, with Centre Committees enabled to exercise oversight of the Centre programme, make recommendations on resources available for programme development, consider bookings, and become involved in local issues. These roles and responsibilities are set out in the document 'Constitution for Local Partnership in Council Community Centres' This document was agreed by Council in January 1975, and subsequently reviewed in 1989 and 1999

Community Centre Committees are therefore independently constituted organisations. The constitution was drawn up by Legal Services and allows for the appointment of a Member of Council to each committee: Councillors are appointed for the term of council and are generally local representatives with an interest in community development.

Key Issues

An outline is attached at Appendix 1 outlining the current status of centre committees.

A number of local factors will influence the propensity of live committees such as:

- The level of local community infrastructure in the area
- Level of volunteer involvement
- Density of other neighbourhood assets
- Intra community relationships

Members are reminded of a number of initiatives currently planned or underway to support improved policy and related practice to support the strategic alignment of community centre impacts including governance arrangements.

1. The Departmental Business Plan 2010/11 includes a proposed action to review community centre management roles and responsibilities in order to ensure the better use and planning of our city assets. Officers are preparing a paper for Committee consideration on how we might identify and agree effective models for council management of neighbourhood assets. Any work will be developed in partnership with other relevant departments and will be aligned to the BCC Asset Management Strategy.
2. Legal Services are currently reviewing the liabilities placed on Councillors in representative roles on external bodies. This will inform the Councillor representation on CCCs and the ongoing service practice review.
3. Officers are working with Legal Services on the cross Council review of the *Conditions of Hire* for all BCC assets in order to ensure compliance and introduce a consistency of approach with generic conditions whilst continuing to remain particular to the needs of the relevant venue.
4. Alongside these developments, a business improvement project is underway to review the current practice and procedure in relation to Community Centre Committee roles and responsibilities. This work has been initiated and plans are ongoing to develop a training programme which will prioritise an understanding and related capability regarding financial roles and responsibilities and related practice and procedure. This programme will be delivered to service support staff and then to each committee membership. AGRS are supporting the content of the programme.

Resource Implications

There are no direct resource implications.

Recommendations

The Committee is asked to note the content of the paper.

Decision Tracking

There is no decision tracking attached to this report.
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Documents Attached

Status of Community & Play Centre Committees.

Abbreviations

CCC: Community Centre Committees

AGRS: Audit, Governance and Risk Services
