



## Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	East Belfast Neighbourhood Office Lease
Date:	15 September 2010
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen Director of Development ext 3470
Contact Officer:	Cate Taggart, Community Development Manager, ext 3525

### Relevant Background Information

The East Belfast Neighbourhood Office (EBNO) was established by Council to address the absence of BCC community centre provision in the Pottinger area and to stimulate community development activity.

Council took a two year lease of these premises from 14 April 2000. Revised lease terms offered by the landlord at expiry of the initial term have legitimately been rejected as being more onerous than the original terms. Council therefore continue in occupation on a month to month basis under the original lease terms. This tenure can be brought to an end by serving three months written notice.

The office, which is situated on the Beersbridge Road, is staffed by a Community Development Worker (CDW). As a consequence of limited passing footfall and the need to close the premises when the officer is away on business, usage of the premises has been low. The CDW has, however, worked across the area and has contributed to an increase in the number and capacity of voluntary community organisations that have been established. These include Willowfield Parish Community Association, Lower Woodstock Community Association, Lower Castlereagh Community group and Mountpottinger Presbyterian youth outreach.

### Key Issues

Council has agreed to the re-structuring of Community Services which will see the creation of specific units to support community facilities and area development. Within this new structure, staff have been allocated accommodation in line with their new duties and within existing community centre premises.

This new approach means there is no further service accommodation need for the EBNO premises.

Those groups who regularly use the office can be accommodated within our Dee Street Community Centre and the community development work in support of the Pottinger area will be subsumed into the role of the Community Development Officer within the Outer East Area Support Unit.

The allocation of £11,000 to cover the cost of the lease and other building related costs will be a direct saving to council.

### **Resource Implications**

Any move to surrender the lease will offer a saving to BCC of £11,000.00.

### **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Council ends the lease for the East Belfast Neighbourhood Office.

### **Decision Tracking**

Further to agreement that the lease for EBNO be surrendered.

Time line: 31 March 2011                      Reporting Officer: Catherine Taggart

### **Abbreviations**

EBNO – East Belfast Neighbourhood Officer  
BCC - Belfast City Council  
CDO– Community Development Officer