



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	Donegall Pass Community Centre
Date:	14 September 2011
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen, Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Development Manager

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Donegall Pass Community Centre is situated on Apsley Street in the Donegall Pass area of the city. The centre was constructed in 2001 in a direct response to community need in the area and has provided much needed services and facility access to the entire community since then.
1.2	BCC support for the centre construction was approved by the Community & Leisure Sub Committee at its meeting on 12 th March 1996. Members agreed the Council would part fund the construction together with some associated running costs. The total capital cost being £244,500: 75% of which was grant aided by 'Making Belfast Work'.
1.3	Under the original terms of its development the responsibility of managing the Centre was undertaken by BCC, however this was viewed as a short term measure with the ultimate aim of transferring this management to the community. Therefore the meeting of the sub Committee in August 2000 agreed that a provision be made within the revenue estimates to enable the centre to operate as a full time directly managed facility for a period of two years with a view to building local capacity to adopt the local community management model at the end of an agreed period. This arrangement was further extended at the meeting of the Sub Committee of 7 th January 2003 and again in 2007 on the basis that both local community and BCC officers felt the capacity had not been adequately developed to support local independent management arrangements.
1.4	Donegall Pass Community Forum developed an area master plan (2009) for the Donegall Pass area. The Community Centre is considered to be a vital part of the Donegall Pass master plan which will enable the strengthening of community

	<p>infrastructure and facilities. Within this context officers have met with representatives of the Donegall Pass Community Forum in order to assess the potential of the Forum to assume management responsibilities for the Centre. The outcome of this being that the Forum with support from Council undertook a full economic business plan with stakeholder consultation, extensive desktop research and benchmarking analysis. The study considered a range of options for the management of the centre and associated risk.</p> <p>At its meeting on 12th May 2010 the Development Committee agreed to the Request from Donegall Pass Community Forum to 'seek to explore the possibility with BCC of conducting a period of transition which would allow it to fully examine the practicalities of assuming the management of the Centre. This would allow the group to fully examine all aspects of management as well as build further its capacity to undertake the management of the centre successfully. Committee further authorised a robust assessment at the conclusion of the transition year to ascertain the capacity of the Forum to undertake management of Donegall Pass Community Centre.</p>
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2	Key Issues
2.1	The Community Centre represents a significant investment by Council in an area of social need.
2.2	The Donegall Pass Community Forum as the lead community organisation for the inner city urban village that is Donegall Pass has local community support and is either involved in or is delivering a range of services/projects of benefit to local people.
2.3	The Donegall Pass Community Forum in seeking to explore the possibility with BCC of conducting a period of transition regarding the Community Centre at Donegall Pass are mindful of undertaking this function in the current economic downturn and more importantly the uncertainty of a diminishing funding environment.
2.4	The process related to 'transition' has commenced.
2.5	Donegall Pass Community Forum has contacted Council Officers (Appendix 1) to request an extension to the agreed transition year. The request is based on a number of factors which have delayed the necessary procedure vital to the transition process to be completed.

3	Resource Implications
	There are no resource implications connected to this request in 2011/12.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
	The request does not have equality/good relations considerations.

5	Recommendations
	Members are requested to consider the request from Donegall Pass Community Forum to extend the allocation period of transition for six months.

6	Decision Tracking
	Recommended action to be completed by Catherine Taggart.

7	Key to Abbreviations

8	Documents Attached
	Appendix 1: Correspondence from Donegall Pass Community Forum requesting an extension to the agreed transition period.