



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Development Committee
Subject:	An Munia Tober: Community Services Revenue Grant Aid support 2012/13 and Lease Arrangements.
Date:	26 June 2012
Reporting Officer:	Catherine Taggart, Community Development Manager
Contact Officer:	John Nelson, CSUM, Community Facilities.

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	An Munia Tober (AMT) is the main Traveller support group within Northern Ireland providing specific services to Travellers within the greater Belfast area and also providing a regional supporting role. AMT receive Community Services Revenue Grant award of £17,116.06 pending compliance with our assessment procedures and their ability to demonstrate monitoring compliance.
1.2	In April 2011 the Council were advised that the Director of AMT had been dismissed following the discovery of financial irregularities which could potentially leave the organisation insolvent. The Board of AMT commissioned Bill Osborne to assist the AMT Directors investigate the current financial situation and to recommend a course of action for the Board to follow.
1.3	The Council's Traveller Liaison Officer immediately informed BCC Audit and Legal Services of the current position of AMT and it was agreed to hold all council grant support to AMT until the management and fiscal arrangements of AMT met our required professional standard as assessed by BCC Audit, Governance and Risk Services.
1.4	In September, AMT further advised Council that the agreed programme of work to address the issues recorded in the Investigation Report were ongoing and that the organisation were working, with support from Bryson Charitable Group, to address the financial issues and seek a way forward whilst maintaining much needed services to the Traveller community. The proposal was for Bryson to initially undertake the day to day operation and financial management of AMT and to consider options for the long time sustainability of the services provided. The agreement was subject to funding being released from OFMDFM to facilitate

	Bryson's involvement.
1.5	Following six months of Bryson management of AMT, the Council were advised on the 29 th March 2012 by Jo Marley, Bryson Director of the <i>Transfer of Ownership- An Munia Tober to Bryson Charitable Group</i> . Details were set out in the correspondence from Jo Marley which are being considered by a Council solicitor. Community Services and officers from Legal Services, met with Bryson in May 2012 where all outstanding issues were resolved.
1.6	Belfast City Council have supported the efforts of AMT and Bryson during this difficult period given our stated commitment to the retention of a quality Traveller Support Organisation as an essential element in the promotion of quality of life issues that impact on the Traveller community .
1.7	The current lease arrangements relate to the Glen Road site i.e. two porta cabins and the land immediately adjoining them. The lease expires on the 30 th September

2	Key Issues
2.1	AMT remains a viable organisation and continues to be a registered company, however due to the recent financial and management difficulties the previous AMT Board of Directors resigned and have been replaced by Directors nominated and elected at a EGM, on the 20 th April 2012
2.2	AMT is now a sub group of Bryson Charitable group and is being fully managed and controlled by them and is subject to their assessed governance arrangements.
2.3	Community Services support this new arrangement which ensures effective governance and the retention of a dedicated traveller support organisation in the city. Community Services have assisted both AMT & Bryson during this difficult period of change.
2.4	BCC Audit Risk and Governance Services (AGRS) have assessed the new arrangement for management of AMT within the Bryson Charitable and the associated financial policy, procedure and practice. They confirm that they meet the required standards to permit the continuation of BCC grant support to AMT as a sub-group of the Charitable group.
2.5	Bryson Charitable Group have worked with AMT and Community Services in order to address the AMT financial irregularities, however an amount of £6,000.00 is still outstanding, this relates to costs associated with rent and insurance.
2.6	In order for Bryson Charitable group to formally take over the management of AMT, they have requested that their current core funders consider one off additional funding support to address this deficit position. They therefore ask that BCC contribute £2,000 to meet this outstanding balance.
2.7	Officers will continue to offer specific Traveller Liaison and community development support in order to facilitate this transition period and to build the capacity of the newly constituted group to maintain and then build effective support services for the Traveller community. Service provision will be monitored throughout this period with a formal review of the new arrangements at the end

	of the year.
2.8	Leasing arrangements with AMT are due for renewal (1 st October 2012) with the current lease period stated as 5 years. Committee are asked to consider renewing this lease for a period of no more than 5 years up to 30 th September 2017 pending discussion with Legal Services and subject to a review after 12 months. The lease relates to the two porta-cabins and the adjoining land on the Glen Road. Legal Services are currently working on updating this document.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	Revenue Grant towards the overhead and programme costs of the Traveller service provision to a maximum value of £17,116.06 for 2012/13, included in revenue estimates. Officer and worker support from within existing budgets
3.2	The request for the exceptional payment of £2,000 from within existing Traveller Liaison budget.

4	Equality and Good Relations Considerations
4.1	The Traveller community is recognised under Section 75 of the Equality legislation. AMT provides essential support services to promote quality of life issues that impact on the Traveller community

5	Recommendations
5.1	It is recommended that committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Note the continuation of revenue grant aid support to AMT for the provision of Traveller Support Services, ii. Note the ongoing provision of officer support to develop and monitor service provision during this transition year iii. Approve the renewal of the lease for the Travellers' Portacabin for a 5 year period from October 2012 iv. Approve an exceptional payment of £2,000.00 to Bryson Charitable Group to address the accumulated deficit.

6	Decision Tracking
John Nelson will implement committee decision and progress lease renewal in association with Legal Services.	

7	Key to Abbreviations
AMT – An Munia Tober BCC – Belfast City Council OFMDFM – Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister	