



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to</b>	Development Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	Donegall Pass Community Centre: management arrangements
<b>Date:</b>	21 May 2013
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Cate Taggart, Community Development Manager, ext 3525

<b>1</b>	<b>Relevant Background Information</b>
1.1	Donegall Pass Community Centre (Apsley Street, Donegall Pass) was constructed in 2001. Council support for the community centre was approved by the Community & Leisure sub-committee at its meeting on 12th March 1996. Council provided part funding toward capital and running costs. The total capital cost being £244,500. 75% of which was funded by 'Making Belfast Work.'
1.2	Direct management of the centre by Council was viewed as a short term measure with the ultimate aim being to adopt the local community management model at the end of an agreed period (2 years). This was extended in 2003 and again in 2007 on the basis that both the local community and Council officers felt the capacity had not been adequately developed to support local independent management arrangements.
1.3	Donegall Pass Community Forum (DPCF) published a master plan for the area in 2009 and officers met with representatives of the DPCF in order to assess their potential to assume management responsibilities for the centre.
1.4	A full economic business plan (2010) was undertaken by DPCF in 2010 and this included stakeholder consultation, extensive desktop research and benchmarking analysis. The study considered a range of options for the management of the centre and associated risk.
1.5	The Development Committee (11 <sup>th</sup> May 2010) agreed to a request from the DPCF to 'seek to explore the possibility with Council of conducting a period of transition (1 year) which would allow it to fully examine the practicalities of assuming the management of the centre successfully'. Committee (14 <sup>th</sup> September 2011) authorised an extension of the transition period for a further six

	months.
1.6	Before entering into agreement to undertake management of the community centre DPCF felt that a number of outstanding issues needed to be addressed. These related to income and expenditure (current and potential), programming of local services, the current design of the building and possible adaption to meet the needs of DPCF. Development Committee agreed (26 <sup>th</sup> June 2012) that it would be necessary to provide some time to the DPCF (Autumn 2012) to allow them to consider fully all elements of this undertaking and to then provide a realistic, planned and robust approach to Council.

<b>2</b>	<b>Key Issues</b>
2.1	DPCF have expressed its preferred approach which involves transferring services, projects and staff to the community centre in advance of undertaking the formal management of the facility. This transfer of their business and related staff team to the community centre would facilitate the acquisition of 'hands on' experience of management responsibilities. It will also support the provision of specific training to the DPCF and its staff on all aspects related to community management of a Council facility.
2.2	This arrangement has merit for Council as it will enable a partnership approach to services and support provision for the local community delivered from one local facility. It provides opportunity for joint working with no competing interests. The move to the community centre also represents a saving to the Council revenue grant to DPCF for its premises at Grove House.
2.3	Officers suggest that at the end of a period of one year, and following a robust assessment of the Forums ability, the process to transfer management would commence.
2.4	DPCF have since informed Council (March 2013) that the organisation are experiencing significant internal issues which they are actively attempting to address. On the advice of officers, DPCF have engaged the professional expertise and support of an external agency to assist them in their efforts.
2.5	DPCF have agreed to provide details to Council of the measures employed to address the current internal issues of the organisation as well as evidence that all matters of concern have been fully resolved. This will be submitted to Council prior to any further progress of transfer arrangements. We will continue to work with DPCF to offer appropriate support.

<b>3</b>	<b>Resource Implications</b>
3.1	<u>Financial</u> The community centre will require some internal adaption to accommodate the range of projects/services to be delivered by DPCF from the centre. Officers will work with Property and Projects to identify costs which we propose should be met from grant savings.
3.2	<u>Human Resources</u> There are no immediate human resource implications.

3.3	<b>Asset and other implications</b> There are no asset implication at this time.
-----	---

<b>4</b>	<b>Equality and Good Relations Implications</b>
4.1	There are no equality and good relations implications attached to this report.

<b>5</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
5.1	Members are asked to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Note ongoing progress</li> <li>2. Endorse the proposal for transfer of DPCF services/projects and staff to Donegall Pass Community Centre.</li> <li>3. Agree the proposed timeline and conditions associated with DPCF assuming responsibility for the management responsibility of the community centre:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– submission of an evidenced based report indicating that DPCF have addressed their internal issues and that they are a competent, effective and cohesive organisation,.</li> <li>– Council staff to provide specific training and ‘hands on’ experience on all management responsibilities, standards, systems and procedures for 12 month period</li> <li>– Subject to an assessment of DPCF’s capability and the agreement of the Development Committee, the process to transfer management of the Donegall Pass Community Centre will commence.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

<b>6</b>	<b>Decision Tracking</b>
Yvonne Coyle to implement committee decision	

<b>7</b>	<b>Key to Abbreviations</b>
DPCF – Donegall Pass Community Forum	