



Report to: Development Committee

Subject: Markets Community Centre out of hours opening

Date: 17 September 2013

Reporting Officer: John McGrillen, Director of Development, ext 3470

Contact Officer: Cate Taggart, Community Development Manager, ext 3525

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Belfast City Council directly manages 22 Community Centres across the city. This includes the Markets Community Centre based within the Markets Community in the Shaftesbury ward of South Belfast.
1.2	The Markets Development Association (MDA) is a local community development and regeneration organisation. MDA are a member of the Inner South Neighbourhood Renewal Partnership Board and work in partnership with a range of groups including BCC Community Services to deliver services to the Markets and Lower Ormeau community. MDA are leading on regeneration/community development and interface issues, most notably the high profile Cromac Regeneration Initiative (CRI) in association with Donegall Pass Community Forum and Shaftesbury Recreation Centre and the Lanyon Tunnels Regeneration Project.
1.3	Community services have had a long association with the MDA. Their move into the community centre has resulted in increased public throughput at the centre with usage figures for the building at ninety two per cent. In turn the MDA have access to accommodation at the centre to deliver projects of local benefit.
1.4	MDA currently occupy two offices at the Markets Community Centre. In compliance with the Community Services Pricing Policy; MDA meet Community Development criteria and therefore do not incur hire charges. The organisation is required to sign and comply with the conditions of hire outlined in the centre booking procedure. This document is agreed and signed by the group on a quarterly basis.
1.5	MDA have indicated that similar to most community organisations service delivery is not confined to office hours. Directly managed community centres operate core opening hours and do not normally open at weekends.

1.6	MDA have requested that Community Services consider providing community centre access to their organisation outside of core hours. The group have suggested that a key holding arrangement be established. This would allow the group to extend the services which they find are being curtailed due to both availability (i.e. the centre programme is so busy that additional project development cannot be accommodated) and council's current operational arrangements.
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2	Key Issues
2.1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Community centres operate core opening times Monday to Friday. - With the exception of one-off requests and some 'historical' agreed usage, Community centres do not normally open at weekends. - Due to health and safety considerations the public are not permitted access unless a member of the supervisory staff team is on duty. - We do not currently provide keys of community centres to user groups.
2.2	The provision of keys to MDA would allow the group to develop and extend its services with access at particular times such as the period between 5pm – 6pm Monday to Friday, weekends and late evenings. MDA have identified a number of projects which would specifically benefit such as the development of work with senior citizens. Youth intervention projects. Health and well being initiative (Bike project, circuit's class, dance class) etc.
2.3	<p>The approval of the request would provide;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Added value from a Council perspective as it will encourage new opportunities for collaborative working, increased volunteering and participation. - Maximise the use of a Council asset. - Offer value for money. With growing pressure on resources this model provides a more efficient asset offering increased use and greater community benefit. - Shared use of the facility which will support more sustainable use of the asset, sense of involvement, ownership and civic pride.
2.4	The provision of keys to the MDA would not impact on Council staff working arrangements as access to the building would be outside of normal working hours i.e. when staff are not normally on duty.
2.5	BCC legal Services Section and Estates Management Unit have advised that a Licence Agreement will be required with the organisation if Committee authorise the key holding request.
2.6	Authorisation of key holding of a Council asset to an external body will set a precedent for future requests. Committee will be informed of all such requests in advance. However precedent is already set in the operation of other assets, for example, Parks and Leisure department operate 'Out Of Hours Licence Agreements' at its leisure centres whereby sports clubs have been provided with keys to leisure facilities for their specific sporting requirements.
2.7	Castlereaugh Borough Council operates a system of 'unmanned centres'. (Clonduff, Braniel, Downshire and Dungoyne). Keys to facilities are provided to a member of the local community. Groups/organisations wishing to use the facilities gain access via the local key holder. Council staff consists of one part

	time cleaner.
2.8	The Licence Agreement will also take account of a container belonging to the MDA situated in the grounds of the Markets Community Centre. This container provides storage for equipment related to healthy living projects. The MDA have responsibility for the container, maintenance and insurance. A formal agreement is required as the container is situated within the confines of the community centre perimeter fencing i.e., council land.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	<u>Financial</u> There will be some increase to utility consumption in the facility due to extended use.
3.2	<u>Human Resources</u> There are no human resources implications as extended opening of the facility will be outside staff normal working hours.
3.3	<u>Asset and other implications</u> Authorisation of key holding to an external organisation has the potential to maximise sustainable use of a Council asset; providing a unique model of partnership delivery of services.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	There are no relevant equality and good relations implications attached to this report.

5	Recommendations
5.1	Members are requested to consider authorisation of the key holding request from MDA subject to the organisation entering into a Licence Agreement with Council. Following a pilot test period of one year a review will be undertaken with specific consideration of any budgetary implication.
5.2	If members agree to the key holding request then a recommendation will be taken to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee requesting that a Licence Agreement with MDA is prepared for approval. The terms of the Licence Agreement having been prepared by BCC Legal Services and Estates Management Unit.

6	Decision Tracking
	Community Development Manager to liaise with the Director of Property and Projects with a view to bringing a report to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in due course.

7	Key to Abbreviations
	MDA - Markets Development Association CRI - Cromac Regeneration Initiative