



Belfast City Council

Report to	Development Committee
Subject:	Ballymacarrett Recreation Centre Lease Renewal
Date:	21 October 2014
Reporting Officer:	John McGrillen ext 3470 - Director of Development
Contact Officer:	Catherine Taggart ext 3535 – Community Services Management

1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	Ballymacarrett Recreation Centre is one of the six independently managed centres. The centre was transferred to Connswater Community and Leisure Services by way of a lease on 20 February 2006 for community management. They were given an initial 3 year lease during which time an offer of support from BCC was available to help get them established.
1.2	The lease was then renewed for a further 3 years however the death of the group's chair led to a period of uncertainty, with monitoring returns highlighting difficulties with CC&LS's management of the centre. Community Services therefore provided development support and worked with CC&LS to address their difficulties.
1.3	Following a Capacity Building training programme the centre was returned to community management by way of a new 18 month lease from 1 October 2011, which was subsequently renewed for a further 18 months from 1 April 2013. This current lease renewal is due to expire on 30 September 2014.
1.4	CC&LS continue to manage the building with all initial difficulties having been addressed with no re emergence of any problems. EBCDA the local Capacity building group continues to support the group including having a seat on the group's Board of Directors.
1.5	CC&LS's primary focus is to contribute to the regeneration of the area, it works in partnership with several local community organisations and a range of statutory agencies to enhance the facility and the services it provides.

1.6	The centre opens 7 days a week and usage of the centre is now over 75%. An extensive pool of volunteers is in place both to support the operation of the centre and it's Management Board.
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2	Key Issues
2.1	Since 2006 CC&LS have provided recreation and community services at the Ballymacarrett centre which serves the lower Newtownards, Inner East Area, and will be a key BCC facility to support the operation of the Connswater Greenway.
2.2	In order to develop the work CC&LS have requested that BCC consider renewing the lease agreement for a period of 5 years with the option to extend for a further 5 years. This would enable the group to develop the Centre's programme and services over a longer term especially in terms of accessing external grants, as many funders require a longer lease to be in place before considering long term project or Capital funding.
2.3	Under Community Services structure the Independently Managed centres have a dedicated Development Officer who is there to support, advise and monitor the work.
2.4	CC&LS have recently completed an improvement change programme to ensure that Ballymacarrett R.C. is managed and operated in a professional manner. They have established an effective and efficient method of working and have, in conjunction with BCC, put in place a range of practices that should help to ensure that the centre continues to operate at a high standard.

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The centre receives a payment of £55,108 per year to manage the centre which is net of the rent payable in-line with the independently managed community centre model. It is proposed that the same arrangement will apply to this additional lease. They are also eligible for small grant support such as Summer Scheme, Project and Community Chest. All allocation is from within existing budget allocation.

4	Equality and Good Relations Implications
4.1	There are no Equality or Good Relations issues.

5	Recommendations
5.1	It is recommended that Committee agree to a further lease to CC&LS for 5 years from 1 October 2014 with provision to extend for a further 5 years subject to a rent of £10,775 per annum.

6	Decision Tracking
The Director of Development to liaise with the Director of Property and Projects with a view to bringing this matter to the next available meeting of the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee.	