



Subject:	Voluntary Management Community Centres – White City & Carrick Hill
Date:	3 rd March 2020
Reporting Officer:	Nigel Grimshaw, Strategic Director of City & Neighbourhood Services Ryan Black, Director of Neighbourhood Services
Contact Officer:	Kelly Gilliland, Neighbourhood Services Manager, North John Nelson, Community Facilities Manager, North & East

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some time in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report or Summary of Main Issues
1.1	Members are advised that the Council has received a request from White City Community Development Association (WCDA) and an approach from Carrickhill Residents Associations in relation to future management arrangements and support from Belfast City Council regarding the management of both the White City and Carrickhill Community Centres.
1.2	Both community centres are independently operated by the community organisations, on land owned by Belfast City Council.
1.3	The request from White City Community Development Association is seeking the Council to take over the ownership, operation and management of the facility as a result of current community capacity challenges.

1.4	The request from Carrickhill is to consider how the Council could better support the ongoing maintenance responsibilities of Carrickhill Community Centre as well as assist Carrickhill Resident Group to address outstanding necessary repairs as identified by a Condition Survey report completed in 2017.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	<p>The Committee is recommended to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Give approval for Officers to commission a conditions report of White City Community Centre to be undertaken to ascertain the current condition of the building and ascertain cost for immediate and ongoing maintenance requirements. 2. Give authority for Officers to liaise with White City Community Centre to consider implications for asset transfer and ongoing community involvement, in consultation with Legal Services and Estates. 3. Give approval for a 'one off' payment of up to £15K to Carrick Hill Residents Association to fully implement the final identified works from the 2017 building conditions report. 4. Give authority for Officers to liaise with Carrick Hill Residents Association to consider how arrangements can be streamlined at Carrick Hill in line with other Council supported independently managed community centres. 5. Agree for a further report to come back to the People and Communities Committee in relation to the outcomes of the above work and recommendations for moving forward and that both facilities are scoped in to the current external review of Independently Managed Community Centres.
3.0	Main report
3.1	<p>White City Community Centre</p> <p>White City Community Centre was built in 1998 in partnership with Belfast Regeneration Office with a funding split of BRO 75% and BCC 25%. BCC own the land on which the White City Community Centre stands and the adjoining playground. Donegall Pass Community Centre and Carrickhill Community Centre were built under the same arrangement with Donegall Pass being directly managed by BCC as there was no suitable community group in place to manage the Centre.</p>
3.2	<p>White City Community Development Association (WCDA) agreed to manage White City Community Centre and a 25-year lease agreement for the building has been in place between BCC and White City Community Development Association since February 2000.</p>

3.3	<p>The Treasurer/Director with WCDA and Centre Manager, recently announced his retirement from both the WCDA and the Centre and the group formally wrote to Council in November 2019 stating that there were now only between 4-5 serving Board members none of whom were keen/able to take on any of the more formal roles (treasurer, secretary, etc.) and therefore they felt that they would no longer be able to manage the Centre on a long-term basis and were requesting that ownership and management transferred to the Council. It is also worth noting that, as per the terms of the lease, because Council own both the land and the building, should WCDA fold, Council would be required to take back the Centre by default.</p>
3.4	<p>As per the terms of their constitution, an Emergency General Meeting (EGM) was convened on the 29th January where WCDA announced their intention to dissolve the company and where community representatives and residents in attendance voted unanimously to support the Board's request for Belfast City Council to consider formally taking on ownership and management of the Centre (follow up letter from Mr Dunn included as an Appendix).</p>
3.5	<p>Council Officers were in attendance at the EGM and stated that this could be a lengthy process potentially taking 6-9 months before a final decision would be made – the existing Board Members agreed to continue in their roles during this period to ensure that the Centre would continue to operate and offer its existing programmes. Should the Council adopt the Centre, the remaining Board Members have indicated that they would be keen to take on an advisory/steering group role and would be guided by the Council as to what that could/should entail.</p>
3.6	<p>Carrickhill Community Centre</p> <p>Carrickhill is managed by Carrickhill Residents Association (CRA) and is included in the Independently Managed Group of BCC Community Centres. However, unlike some of the other groups who manage Community Centres on behalf of BCC CRA own the building itself but have a 99 year lease agreement for the land which began in 1997 – in most other cases BCC own the building and lease it to the group managing the Centre.</p>
3.7	<p>As the current owners of the building, Carrick Hill Resident Association are responsibility for the centre's maintenance, however in 2017 the Council carried out a condition survey on the building which identified £99k worth of work that needed to be carried out.</p>

3.8	<p>Carrickhill Residents Association have successfully secured and spent £58k to address some of the issues identified within the report and have also used their reserves to replace the boiler. However there remains approximately £15k of outstanding repairs. CRA have also stated that they are finding it increasingly difficult to meet annual ongoing running and maintenance costs and therefore there is a significant risk that they will no longer be able to operate the centre on the level of grant they currently receive.</p>
3.9	<p>CRA wish to continue to manage Carrickhill Community Centre but in order to do so are requesting that Council supports them, both to address the outstanding repairs, as well as with the increasing annual running and maintenance costs.</p>
3.10	<p>Community Centres - Council's Current Approach</p> <p>Belfast City Council currently operate Community Centres in three ways, these are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Directly Managed (manned) – there are 23 directly managed Community Centres that have a BCC-employed supervisory and development staff team in place. 2. Directly Managed (unmanned) – there are 3 unmanned centres with local key holding arrangements in place. 3. Independently Managed Centres – there are 7 Independently Managed Centres where Belfast City Council owns the building and/or land, but they are managed by an Independent Community/Voluntary Group.
3.11	<p>The Directly Managed Centres are managed and maintained by Belfast City Council whereas the Independently Managed Centres are maintained according to the terms of the lease agreement with the Group managing the centre.</p>
3.12	<p><u>Financial & Resource Implications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Condition survey for White City Community Centre • The cost of the repairs for Carrickhill Community Centre will be met from non-recurrent capital finance. <p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications/Rural Needs Assessment</u></p>
3.13	<p>White City Community Centre</p> <p>None specifically in relation to the request in itself, however, given the proximity of the Centre to the recently removed Serpentine Rd interface/peace wall, and the involvement of the WCDA/White City Community Centre in garnering support for its removal, there is a risk that either temporary or permanent closure of the Centre will have a negative and lasting</p>

3.14	<p>impact in terms of the ability to sustain and further develop the good relations and equality work that has been put in place over the last number of years to make such an achievement possible.</p> <p>Carrickhill Community Centre</p> <p>Again none specifically in relation to the request, however it should be noted, like WCDA, CRA via programming at the centre promote, encourage and support a wide range of age groups to take part in cross-community and good relations-focussed activities.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 - Letter from WCDA.