



AGENDA ITEM NO. 5

GREATER FISHPONDS NEIGHBOURHOOD PARTNERSHIP 19th DECEMBER 2013

Report of: John Bos, Community Assets Manager

Title: Community buildings report

Contact Telephone Number: 0117 903 6440

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Neighbourhood Partnership is asked to:

- 1) Note the update for each of the community venues in this report
- 2) Indicate whether it supports the draft proposals to grant a lease to Oldbury Court Out of School Clubs
- 3) Support the other proposed actions in this report.

Part 1: Updates

1. Former Fishponds Library, Fishponds Road, BS16 3UH

Following the move of the library function into Robinson House, the building has been occupied by 'property guardians', to prevent it being vandalised or squatted. After initial marketing, it was agreed to sell the property to the adjoining school (now Fishponds CoE Academy) at market value, to be used as an annexe for both school and extra-curricular activities. It is anticipated that contracts will be exchanged by the end of the year. The school have indicated that it is their intention to make the building available for hire for meetings and community activities, when not in use for school purposes.

2. Oldbury Court Youth Centre, Delabere Avenue, BS16 2ND

Oldbury Court Out of School Clubs ('OCOSC') are currently proceeding with a community asset transfer ('CAT') of the youth centre on a short term

lease, which will secure the property for their successful out of school play provision. In addition, OCOSC will make the building available for other community activities, where possible, in order to meet the needs and aspirations of the local community and to generate income. It is anticipated that a full business plan will be submitted by the end of the year. The views of the Neighbourhood Partnership on the proposed lease arrangements are being sought (see 2.1 below).

3. Oldbury Court Community Centre, Delabere Avenue, BS16 2ND

The Community Centre is still leased to Oldbury Court Community Association. The building has not been in use for the last 2 years. It has been broken into on many occasions and serious damage has been caused to roofs, ceilings, and floors. A condition survey has highlighted £400-500K of repair works to restore the building to its former use.

Negotiations with the Community Association, to surrender their lease and return the building to the council, continue. Several enquiries from interested organisations have been received and although re-use seems unlikely due to the very high repair costs, discussions are ongoing. There is now an urgent need to come to a decision on the building's future and the Neighbourhood Partnership's views are being sought (see 2.2 below).

4. Hillfields Park Youth Centre, Thicket Avenue, BS16 4EH

Several community meetings have taken place and the council has agreed to halt the CAT process, to allow time to develop a solution that will see the building remain open and use by the wider community. Further discussions are currently taking place and the views of the Neighbourhood Partnership are being sought on the proposed short-term actions (see 2.3 below).

5. Harry Crook Youth Activities Centre, Moorlands Road, BS16 3LF

The council is the freehold owner of both the Harry Crook Centre and the playing fields around the building. Previously, the building was leased to the Bristol & District Federation of Boys Clubs. This has been superseded by a lease to Young Bristol ('YB'), which is still in force but comes to an end in 2016. YB have indicated they have ambitious plans for re-using the building and the council would need to consider any request from YB to extend or renew the lease. The council is not currently able to consider CAT requests from other interested parties in managing or taking over the property.

The building was broken into and vandalised at the end of the summer and this has reduced the likelihood of it being re-opened in the short term.

It has been confirmed that the building will not be required as part of the proposed new primary school that is currently being considered for the area. It is important that any future activities at the Harry Crook Centre do

not duplicate proposals for Hillfields Park Youth Centre and do not jeopardise the viability of other local community facilities.

Part 2: Proposed actions

6. Oldbury Court Youth Centre

Following receipt of a satisfactory business plan, it is proposed to grant a 5 year lease, with a break clause after year 2, at a peppercorn, linked to a service agreement, to OCOSC. Once the organisation has submitted its business plan, it will become clear whether this proposal is suitable and appropriate. If it is, the council will make a final decision to grant a lease through the CAT process.

The Neighbourhood Partnership's views on this proposal are sought. Any comments, in support or against, will be taken into consideration when a final decision is made by the council's Service Director Strategic Property. It is not possible to be precise about the lease arrangements at this stage, but the NP is asked for their views on the broad principle, as set out above.

7. Oldbury Court Community Centre

The council proposes to seek formal expressions of interest from the wider community for re-using the property through the CAT process. This will involve publishing a brief with details of the building, its defects and an outline of what uses/activities would be acceptable. It is proposed to involve the NP in finalising the Brief. This process will start as soon as possible and a 6-week period will be allowed for organisations to put their proposals together. A Panel, made up of council officers and a NP representative, will then short-list and interview potential bids to take over the management of the building. If no suitable proposals come forward, the council will consider selling the property for disposal and possible redevelopment.

All proposals will be subject to the council successfully recovering the property from the current tenants.

8. Hillfields Park Youth Centre

The council proposes to explore interim solutions for the building with local partners and stakeholders, so that it can continue to be used as a base for children & young people's activities. In addition, we propose to explore the building's potential and suitability as a 'community hub', where several community-based activities can take place at once. This will not be done through the CAT process and it will not involve inviting formal expressions of interest. It is hoped that agreement can be reached for at least a 12-month period. If a permanent solution cannot be found within that period, we anticipate using the CAT process to invite proposals from the wider community for the re-use of the building.