

# Culture and Communities Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 29 February 2024

## Moredun Community Centre

Executive/routine  
Wards

Routine  
16 – Liberton/Gilmerton

### 1. Recommendations

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- 1.1 Culture and Communities Committee is asked to note this update on Moredun Community Centre, following a fire in May 2023.

**Paul Lawrence**

Executive Director of Place

Contact: Andrew Field, Head of Community Empowerment

E-mail: [Andrew.field@edinburgh.gov.uk](mailto:Andrew.field@edinburgh.gov.uk) | Tel: 0131 529 7354

# Report

## Moredun Community Centre

### 2. Executive Summary

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- 2.1 This report provides an update on Moredun Community Centre, following a fire in May 2023.

### 3. Background

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- 3.1 On the evening of 13 May 2023, a fire took place at Moredun Community Centre, 6 Moredun Park View.
- 3.2 The fire was set deliberately, and the Fire Services and Police Scotland attended the incident. There were no reported physical injuries.
- 3.3 The building is currently unsafe for public use and was closed immediately after the fire with the gas, electricity and water supplies turned off.
- 3.4 Ward councillors have made a site visit and discussed next steps with Council officers.

### 4. Main report

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#### **Building Structure and Facilities**

- 4.1 Moredun community centre was built around 1950. It is a single storey building constructed of brick with a pitched roof clad in bitumen felt.
- 4.2 The building contains a kitchen, toilets, and a community hall. It sits in a relatively open location next to a playing field and a mixture of Council and private housing. There is a car park within the grounds to the front of the building.
- 4.3 The building was surveyed in 2023 as part of the wider programme of work being carried out across all community centres in the city. It has been classed as being in C condition (poor) with circa £238,000 capital investment being required to bring it up to a modern standard. Notwithstanding the immediately costs required, the building is of prefab type construction and, after over 70-years, is considered to be at the end of its natural life.

### **Fire Damage**

- 4.4 Direct fire damage has occurred to the rear boundary fence, the rear wall, the felt roof and within the building to the kitchen and corridor areas.
- 4.5 This includes damage to the ceiling, floor and wall decoration in the kitchen and the corridor, electrical lightning and cabling, plasterboard ceilings, the gas boiler and water cylinder, and the flat felt roof. There is additional fire damage to the rear boundary fence timbers and rear wall paintwork.

### **Community Centre Use**

- 4.6 When operational, the centre hosted two lunch clubs per week, run by the Libertus organisation. A weekly bingo session took place on Fridays organised by the committee and the centre was also used for local parties and other gatherings.
- 4.7 Both lunch clubs have been re-located to the Libertus main office building which sits within the Liberton/Gilmerton ward. Discussions are ongoing with them as to the permanence of this relocation.

### **Community Centre Staffing**

- 4.8 Historically, the community centre has not been run in a way that is typical of other Council community centres. There were no Council staff based in the building and the only council services involved is a weekly inspection by Facilities Management.

### **Centre Management Committee**

- 4.9 The Moredun Community Centre committee consists of a small number of local people who deal with the lets and caretaking of the building. The committee are registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR).
- 4.10 There are no computers or IT provision on site.

### **Lease Arrangements**

- 4.11 There is a lease for the building dated 1994 in the name of the Moredun Education Association. Alongside this sits a standard Council constitution.

### **Conclusions**

- 4.12 The principal issues are the current state of the building; the cost to bring it back into use; and the fact it is technically in a life expired state. Any expenditure is likely to only achieve a limited period of further usage and therefore to continue any future activity from the site would require a newly constructed building.
- 4.13 The usage of the building is limited when compared with other community centres and these uses can be accommodated elsewhere, for example, Goodtrees Community Centre is nearby.
- 4.14 While there is a wider community centre review ongoing, the particular circumstances of having an empty and vulnerable building necessitate an earlier decision. In a wider financial context it is difficult to justify further expenditure and therefore it is intended to keep the centre closed and seek alternative uses for the site.

## **5. Next Steps**

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- 5.1 In considering the next steps for Moredun Community Centre, the following have been considered:
  - 5.1.1 The local re-provision of the lunch clubs has been secured;
  - 5.1.2 The building requires unbudgeted capital investment, repairs and improvements works which are not budgeted for. The costs are outlined in the financial impact section below;
  - 5.1.3 The building is at the end of its natural life making further repairs difficult to justify.
  - 5.1.4 There is a purpose-built community centre nearby; and
  - 5.1.5 There are no Council staff based in the building.
- 5.2 Based on this, it has been concluded that the Council should not carry out repairs and improvement work, and that the building should be permanently closed.
- 5.3 The process will now begin to formally declare the property surplus through the Council's Property Strategy Group, and expressions of interest will be sought for the future of the site including offering it to Housing as part of the small sites affordable housing delivery programme. The results of this will then be reported on, and approval to proceed sought, from the Finance and Resources Committee.
- 5.4 At time of writing, remaining management committee members are being contacted to arrange a meeting with them to discuss the permanent closure of, and next steps, in relation to the building and site. This will include discussions on removal of the furnishings and materials currently still in the building and consideration of their future use.

## **6. Financial impact**

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- 6.1 The preliminary report from the Council's insurers recommends that a provisional reserve of £30,000 is allocated for repairs works.
- 6.2 However, this reserve figure only covers reinstatement. The capital investment requirement of circa £238,000 would suggest that, should there be a desire to retain the centre, then demolition and new build would be the preferred solution.

## **7. Equality and Poverty Impact**

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- 7.1 Any proposals resulting from the sale of the Moredun Community Centre site would require an equality and poverty impact assessment.

## **8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications**

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- 8.1 Any proposals resulting from the sale of the Moredun Community Centre site would require to be considered and agreed in line with the Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act.

## **9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact**

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- 9.1 At time of writing, the remaining members of the management committee of the centre are being contacted to discuss with them the closure of the building and the site future.
- 9.2 Alternative solutions have been secured for the lunch clubs.

## **10. Background reading/external references**

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- 10.1 None.

## **11. Appendices**

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