

Finance and Resources Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 16 January 2025

Bingham Community Centre, Bingham Avenue, Edinburgh – Proposed Lease

Executive/routine
Wards

Routine
Ward 17 – Portobello/Craigmillar

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That Finance and Resources Committee approve a one-year tenancy to the Starpic Project for Bingham Community Centre, Bingham Avenue, Edinburgh on the terms outlined in this report and on other terms and conditions to be agreed by the Executive Director of Place.

Gareth Barwell

Interim Executive Director of Place

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Report

Bingham Community Centre, Bingham Avenue, Edinburgh – Proposed Lease

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Bingham Community Centre is currently being operated temporarily by the Council while a new tenant is found. After marketing, the Starpic Project are the preferred bidder, and this report seeks approval to grant them an initial 12-month tenancy on our current standard core community centre terms. It is anticipated that Starpic will take on more responsibility for the property and its costs after that time. Starpic will undertake their own youth work while maintaining access to the wider community.

3. Background

- 3.1 Bingham Community Centre is one of the Council's core community centres and was occupied by a Management Committee until 1 January 2022 when it was leased on a temporary basis to Community Renewal. Community Renewal occupied offices within the same building as the community centre and agreed to take on the tenancy to support the Management Committee.
- 3.2 Community Renewal, who have a long-term commitment to work in the Bingham area, took over the lease of the Community Centre on the 1 January 2022. They also hold a separate lease on the building and garage situated at the front of the Centre from where they operate.
- 3.3 Community Renewal agreed to take the lease on for Bingham Community Centre initially for one year and thereafter, on a monthly rolling basis, until alternative arrangements could be made. The principal objective of this arrangement was to ensure that in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic the Centre was re-opened for the use of the local community.
- 3.4 The previous Management Committee that held the lease pre-COVID were not in a position to continue to do so due to governance issues. These governance issues led to an Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) investigation which looked at:
- 3.4.1 Use of charitable funds for purposes out-with the remit of the charity's constitution;
 - 3.4.2 Conflict of interest issues;

3.4.3 Financial record keeping; and

3.4.4 Safeguarding issues.

3.5 While these issues are resolved and a new Management Committee is in place, they are not in a position to take on a new lease. Community Renewal terminated the agreement on 20 April 2024. As a result, the property was marketed to attract a tenant who would operate the property as a community centre.

4. Main report

- 4.1 Submissions were received from two potential tenants and meetings were held with both. Starpic Project was selected as the preferred bidder, even though their initial proposal is concessionary in nature, because they are already established locally and will operate the property as a multi-use community centre.
- 4.2 Starpic's mission is "to support young people while removing barriers towards creating confident individuals, successful learners and guiding towards a more positive destination while improving attendance and achievement." They will be able to run their activities from the centre whilst also accommodating the other community groups.
- 4.3 The following terms have been provisionally agreed:
- 4.3.1 Subjects: Bingham Community Centre as shown shaded pink on the attached plan;
 - 4.3.2 Tenant: Starpic Project, Company Number SC473419;
 - 4.3.3 Rent: £1 p.a. if asked;
 - 4.3.4 Lease term: an initial 12-month period to allow Starpic to fundraise with a view to them taking on more of the property costs after that time;
 - 4.3.5 Costs: the Council will continue to cover most of the property costs including maintenance, statutory compliance, utilities, buildings insurance and cleaning for the initial 12-month period;
 - 4.3.6 Permitted Use: community use only, with access for all elements of the community; and
 - 4.3.7 Fees: the Council is meeting its own surveyors fee for this transaction. There are no legal fees.
- 4.4 The Council is working with the other bidder at the closing date to try and secure a different Council property for their use. While they were not seeking a concessionary arrangement, they are looking for a base for their specific project, rather than looking to run a community centre.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 A draft missive of let is already agreed and will be signed following approval of the report. Following a meeting of all relevant parties, an initial plan has been agreed for the Management Committee to access to the building at two times, on a weekly basis, to continue the provision of two activities. This will be reviewed at three monthly intervals during the period of the lease to allow the opportunity for additional access if appropriate. At the same time, the progress that Starpic has made in delivering their mission for the community centre will be reviewed.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The Council will continue to be responsible for all the property costs in the short term however it is anticipated that Starpic will be able to take more of that responsibility after the initial year. The property cost of running the centre is approximately £30,000 per annum.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 If granted a lease, Starpic will be able to provide activities in line with their vision whilst also maintaining community access to the centre which will enhance equality and impact positively on the local community.

8. Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 The impact on sustainability has been considered. There is minimal impact from this new lease of an existing community centre.

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

- 9.1 The Council's continued involvement in the maintenance and statutory compliance of the property while Starpic build capacity and funding to take this on will ensure the property remains safe and the property related risks are appropriately managed.
- 9.2 There is a risk that Starpic are not able to raise the necessary funds to take on all of the building costs within the initial 12-month period. That will lead to the Council being unable to deliver any identified savings from leasing the building in the longer term. However, it is considered prudent to explore the opportunity for the charity to find a sustainable financial solution for the building which protects the services offered to the community.
- 9.3 Ward members have been made aware of the recommendations of the report.

10. Background reading/external references

10.1 None.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Location Plan.



SITE PLAN

SCALE 1:1250

• EDINBURGH • THE CITY OF EDINBURGH COUNCIL	
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLACE DIRECTORATE	
BINGHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE 65-1 BINGHAM AVENUE EDINBURGH	
DATE	9/10/24
SURVEYED BY	Third Party
DRAWN BY	Mark Ballantyne
SCALE	1:1250 @ A3 SIZE
NEG. NO.	A3/1836a