



BCC Community Asset Transfer Interviews – Guidance and Info Session

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(On behalf of Save Birmingham)

Session will cover

- Introductions
- What CAT means in Birmingham City Council
- Pre- interview preparation
- Interview – Who should attend and Interview Panel
- Interview – what questions to expect
- Interview – what questions to ask
- Post Interview – what happens next



What CAT means in Birmingham

- Leasehold not freehold – generally a fully repairing lease up to 25 years (negotiated break clauses)
- Economic rent offset by Valuing Work – not “peppercorn”
- To bona fide “not for profit” community organisations – defined as one which uses any surplus revenues to realise its goals rather than distributing as profit or dividends plus “asset lock” and clearly stated social goals/ focus on community benefit
- Asset must be used for inclusive community use not just for organisation purposes

REMEMBER

- Be Honest – Why do you want a CAT – it’s not an easy option or panacea for everything. Viability not Liability
- Be Aware – CAT is not resource neutral – time, capacity and money i.e. Legal Fees – you are advised to get legal advice plus you may BCC Legal Fees (approx. £800-£1,250) and possible TUPE implications
- Ensure organisational Governance and Finance are up to date and in order.
- Timescales – BCC hoping to achieve the community asset transfers for 1st April 2025
- Be clued up on the CAT process and understand the jargon
<https://www.platformplaces.com/news/jargon-buster-property-and-community-assets>

Pre-Interview Preparation

- Outline Business Plan – needs to be into BCC by 30/9/24. Doesn't need to be fully complete but indicative of what you want to do ST,MT and LT – Finance and activities etc.
- Familiarise yourselves with your Business Plan ideas- will be asked about it at interview
- Ensure Governance structures of organisation up to date – background checks will be done
- Bring Trustee information and Constitution with you
- Ensure Financial information is up to date – 3 yrs of accounts to be available on request
- Take a look at some of the information on BCM Website around CAT and/or Community Asset Transfer website [Community Asset Transfer in Birmingham](#)
- Speak to others who have gone through the process

USEFUL REFERENCE – [The Community Hub Handbook – How to run a successful hub and make your neighbourhood thrive](#)



Interview – Who should attend

- Attendees to interview should be Trustees/ Board Members and not just paid employees
- Maximum of 3 people
- You may want to nominate a main spokesperson for answering interview questions but everyone in attendance should contribute



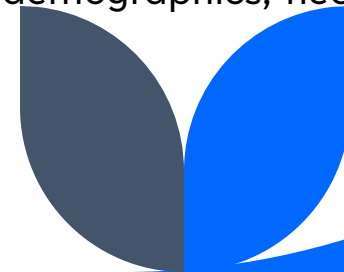
Interview Panel

- There will be a Panel of Interviewers – can feel overwhelming so be prepared and relax...
- Not there to trip you up but do need to find the “best fit” for assets
- 6 Officers on Panel – chaired by Lesley Poulton – Head of Service plus reps from Corporate Landlord, NDSU, Community Centre management, Finance and HR and a note taker.



Interview – what questions to expect

- **General Information about your organisation and governance arrangements** - decision-making mechanisms in place, constitution, what type of organisation structure you are –charity, CIO, CIC etc; affiliations
- What things need to be in place to **take on a lease** – Board approval, legal, finance arrangements
- **Business Planning and priorities** – ST (6months), MT (5 years) and LT -
- **Experience of and Knowledge** of what's needed to **practically manage and run a community asset** – H&S, Safeguarding, RAs, Fire Procedures, Outgoings, Insurance, Staffing, security etc.
- What might a **typical day look like** at the centre – opening hrs, activities etc
- Who are **prospective partners and stakeholders** – who?
- **Timescales** – are you able to work to the proposed BCC Timescale of April 2025
- What **formalities might need to be undertaken** – Board approvals, legal advice, secure finances, condition surveys etc.
- Show **knowledge of the building and surrounding local neighbourhood** – demographics, needs, priorities



Interview – what questions to ask

- Recent running costs
- Available Condition Survey
- Market Value of building
- Estimates for any repairs that are required
- Are there any physical issues with the building
- Any TUPE implications
- Listed heritage buildings come with an extra health warning – is there any additional support from BCC

IMPORTANT - You need to make an informed decision to undertake an asset transfer – Viability not Liability for your organisation



Post Interview – what happens next

- Interview Panel looking for Best Fit – may ask for some organisations to work together going forward. Be prepared to be flexible
- “Preferred Community Partner” status
- Require Full Business Case
- Advise you get an independent survey – structure(internal and external), mechanical, electrical, fixed furniture and equip ie. Boiler
- Take on Legal advice
- Valuing Worth to be completed
- Heads of Terms to be agreed
- Finalised CAT Lease to be signed



Thank you

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