

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting19th April 2018

1. Title of Item/Report

Community Assets Update

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that gave an update on Community Assets including the transfer programme. It provided updates on the more recent transfers seeking approval for one-off funding requests and two additional lease/transfer requests.

The Council had a Community Asset Transfer Strategy – Let’s Share - which was agreed by Cabinet in 2011 and reviewed in 2017.

The Strategy continued to be successful with a steady number of requests for transfer over the years. Onsite, a Community Building Trust, had been established and now operated the following facilities:

- Elmwood Youth and Community Centre
- Robert Atkinson Youth & Community Centre
- Grangefield Youth & Community Centre
- Stillington Youth & Community Centre
- Norton Community Resource Centre
- Ragworth Neighbourhood Centre
- Billingham Campus Sport Block

The Council had received additional transfer requests for the Primrose Hill Community Centre and the Fairfield Boys Club.

The Primrose Hill Community Centre had been empty for a considerable period. It was previously approved for asset transfer but unfortunately was not progressed. The Council had received an approach from a number of community groups who wanted to work together, led by EPIC, and were looking to develop a Community Interest Company with a view to asset transfer. In order to progress this it was proposed that a short-term lease was entered into with EPIC, as lead and a one-off cost of £40,000 to address immediate maintenance issues in order that the building could be opened.

The Fairfield Boys Club building was leased to a local charitable organisation 'Keep the Dream Alive' in 2015. This had proved extremely successful, the organisation had accessed significant external funds and operated a vibrant, well supported centre. They had approached the Council to progress Asset Transfer as there was an opportunity to access additional funding, however this was dependant on a 25 year lease. It was therefore requested to agree in principle to the transfer subject to a robust business case, and agree that the final decision be delegated to the Director of Finance and Business Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

In addition to Asset Transfer arrangements there were a number of organisations who ran community buildings across the Borough on behalf of the Council.

The track record of these organisations was good. Experience had shown that a transition period was often needed in order for organisations to stabilise and reach their full potential. Indeed, this was the case with the asset transfers outlined above.

Following the liquidation of Know How North East in 2015, the Council had continued to ensure that the Clarences Community Centre remained open as there continued to be strong support from the community for the building to provide services such as the post office and convenient store, NHS doctors surgery and a workclub for job seekers support and advice. Following a review with Catalyst, a business case was received from BERP which anticipated that grant funding would be available. Exploration of this funding continued at pace, however, in order to help with transition, bridge the gap and produce a sustainable plan for the next 3 years a one-off parachute payment of £60,000 was required.

CornerHouse@Newtown took over the responsibility of the community building less than 2 years ago and had developed the business in this short period. The Council had recently withdrawn its usage of the building in response to wider savings plans. CornerHouse@Newtown were proactively marketing the vacant space created and were confident that this would be successful in the medium-term. Given the organisation was still very much in transition one-off parachute funding of £42,000 was suggested in order to stabilise the business in the short-term.

Tees Music Alliance operated the Georgian Theatre building and had been instrumental in developing the Cultural Quarter area of the town into a thriving attraction of bars and restaurants. They had achieved growth in trade since the reopening of the extended facilities, however, required additional support in the short-term while they transition to the new

expanded programme of events. They were working with Tees Valley Community Foundation and it was likely that this would require an element of match funding of up to £60,000.

RESOLVED that:

1. The extensive asset transfer programme to date be noted.
2. One-off funding requests up to £202,000 be agreed as outlined in the report to be funded via existing community and maintenance budgets.
3. A lease to EPIC be agreed in advance of the development of a Community Interest Company for Primrose Hill Community Centre.
4. Approval of the asset transfer of the former Fairfield Boys Club building to 'Keep the Dream Alive' be delegated to the Director of Finance and Business Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council following the submission of an approved detailed business case.

3. Reasons for the Decision

To provide Cabinet with an update on community assets.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Nigel Cooke declared a personal prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 6 - Community Assets Update as he was a Board Member of Tees Valley Music Alliance. Councillor Nigel Cooke withdrew from the meeting and left the room during consideration of the item.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight, 27 April 2018.

Proper Officer

23 April 2018