

CABINET ITEM COVERING SHEET PROFORMA

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

19 APRIL 2018

**REPORT OF SENIOR
MANAGEMENT TEAM**

CABINET DECISION

Leader of the Council – Councillor Bob Cook

COMMUNITY ASSETS UPDATE

1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide an update to Members on Community Assets including the transfer programme. It provides updates on the more recent transfers seeking approval for one-off funding requests and two additional lease/transfer requests.

2. Recommendations

Cabinet are recommended to:

1. Note the extensive asset transfer programme to date.
2. Agree one-off funding requests up to £202,000 as outlined in the report to be funded via existing community and maintenance budgets.
3. Agree a lease to EPIC in advance of the development of a Community Interest Company for Primrose Hill Community Centre.
4. Agree to delegate approval of the asset transfer of the former Fairfield Boys Club building to 'Keep the Dream Alive' 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. Reason for the Recommendations/Decisions

To provide Cabinet with an update on community assets.

4. Members' Interests

Members (including co-opted Members) should consider whether they have a personal interest in any item, as defined in **paragraphs 9 and 11** of the Council's code of conduct and, if so, declare the existence and nature of that interest in accordance with and/or taking account of **paragraphs 12 - 17** of the code.

Where a Member regards him/herself as having a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 16** of the code, in any business of the Council he/she must then, **in accordance with paragraph 18** of the code, consider whether that interest is one which a member of the public, with knowledge of the relevant facts, would reasonably regard as so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Member's judgement of the public interest and the business:-

- affects the members financial position or the financial position of a person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code, or
- relates to the determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission or registration in relation to the member or any person or body described in **paragraph 17** of the code.

A Member with a personal interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, may attend the meeting but must not take part in the consideration and voting upon the relevant item of business. However, a member with such an interest may make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to that business before the business is considered or voted on, provided the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose whether under a statutory right or otherwise (**paragraph 19** of the code)

Members may participate in any discussion and vote on a matter in which they have an interest, as described in **paragraph 18** of the code, where that interest relates to functions of the Council detailed in **paragraph 20** of the code.

Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

It is a criminal offence for a member to participate in any discussion or vote on a matter in which he/she has a disclosable pecuniary interest (and where an appropriate dispensation has not been granted) **paragraph 21** of the code.

Members are required to comply with any procedural rule adopted by the Council which requires a member to leave the meeting room whilst the meeting is discussing a matter in which that member has a disclosable pecuniary interest (**paragraph 22** of the code)

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SUMMARY

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RECOMMENDATIONS

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BACKGROUND

1. Members will recall that the Council has a Community Asset Transfer Strategy – Let's Share - which was agreed by Cabinet in 2011 and reviewed in 2017.
2. The Strategy continues to be successful with a steady number of requests for transfer over the years. Onsite, a Community Building Trust, has been established and now operates 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

NEW TRANSFER REQUESTS

3. The Council has received additional transfer requests for the Primrose Hill Community Centre and the Fairfield Boys Club; details are provided below.
4. The Primrose Hill Community Centre has been empty for a considerable period. It was previously approved for asset transfer but unfortunately was not progressed. The Council has now received an approach from a number of community groups who wish to work together, led by EPIC, and are looking to develop a Community Interest Company with a view to asset transfer. In order to progress this it is proposed that a short-term lease is entered into with EPIC, as lead and a one-off cost of £40,000 to address immediate maintenance issues in order that the building can be opened.
5. The Fairfield Boys Club building was leased to a local charitable organisation 'Keep the Dream Alive' in 2015. This has proved extremely successful, the organisation have accessed significant external funds and operate a vibrant, well supported centre. They have now approached the Council to progress Asset Transfer as there is an opportunity to access additional funding, however this is dependant on a 25 year lease. Cabinet are 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

FURTHER UPDATES – COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

6. In addition to Asset Transfer arrangements there are a number of organisations who run community buildings across the Borough on behalf of the Council.
7. The track record of these organisations is good. Experience has shown that a transition period is often needed in order for organisations to stabilise and reach their full potential. Indeed, this was the case with the asset transfers outlined above.
8. Members will recall that following the liquidation of Know How North East in 2015, the Council have continued to ensure that the Clarences Community Centre remains open as there continues 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 BELP which anticipated that grant funding would be available. Exploration of this funding continues 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 is required.
9. CornerHouse@Newtown took over the responsibility of the community building less than 2 years ago and have developed the business in this short period. The Council has recently withdrawn its usage of the building in response to wider savings plans. CornerHouse@Newtown are proactively marketing the vacant space created and are confident that this will be successful in the medium-term. Given the organisation is still very much in transition one-off parachute funding of £42,000 is suggested in order to stabilise the business in the short-term.
10. Tees Music Alliance operate the Georgian Theatre building and have been instrumental in developing the Cultural Quarter area of the town into a thriving attraction of bars and restaurants. They have achieved growth in trade since the reopening of the extended facilities, however, require additional support in the short-term while they transition to the new expanded programme of events. They are working with Tees Valley Community Foundation and it is likely that this will require an element of match funding of up to £60,000.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

11. This report has not been subject to a Community Impact Assessment as there is no change in policy.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12. The report recommends additional payments of £202,000 to be funded from existing community and maintenance budgets.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

13. Legal support will be required for the lease and asset transfer process.

RISK ASSESSMENT

14. This is categorised as medium and will be covered by existing management control mechanisms.

COUNCIL PLAN POLICY PRINCIPLES AND PRIORITIES

15. Developing strong and healthy community.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

16. Not applicable.

CONSULTATION INCLUDING WARD/COUNCILLORS

17. There has been consultation with Community Groups in advance of the report.

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