

Report to	Chippenham Area Board
Date of Meeting	29th February 2016
Title of Report	Community Asset Transfer

Executive Summary

This report deals with an application for the transfer of Englands Social Centre in accordance with Wiltshire Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy.

Proposal

Chippenham Area Board is asked to consider an application submitted by the Trustees of Englands Social Centre for the transfer of Englands Social Centre See map attached at Appendix 1. The applicant's proposal is set out at Appendix 2.

Reasons For Proposal

This proposal supports and implements Wiltshire Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy.

Recommendation

Chippenham Area Board is recommended to authorise the Solicitor of the Council to execute all documentation needed to implement the transfer subject to the following conditions:

The building is maintained for the benefit of the community and residents will be encouraged to enjoy the amenity

1. Purpose of Report

Chippenham Area Board is asked to consider an application submitted by the Trustees of Englands Social Centre Council for the transfer of Englands Social Centre See map attached at Appendix 1 and the applicants' proposal is set out at Appendix 2

2. Background

- 2.1. Wiltshire Council is supporting the principle of the transfer of community assets in order to empower and strengthen local communities. Wiltshire Council believes that transferring appropriate public assets to communities leads to more responsive services that better meet local people's priorities.
- 2.2. Transfer of an asset can also provide the opportunity to lever more resources into a community and provide a more accessible and responsive base from which to deliver local services.
- 2.3. A community group or organisation can benefit from greater financial stability and build confidence through having ownership (or long term security through a lease) of a physical asset. This financial sustainability can help the organisation become less dependent on grants, provide security for further borrowing and opportunities for further growth.
- 2.4. Typically, organisations that would be considered appropriate are Voluntary and Community Groups/Associations, Town or Parish Councils, Trusts or Charities, or Social Enterprise Groups.

3. The application before the Area Board

- 3.1. The application from the Trustees of Englands Social Centre is attached at Appendix 2 and relates to the transfer of Englands Social Centre.
- 3.2. The application was submitted in accordance with Wiltshire Council's application process and meets the requirements for consideration by the Area Board.
- 3.3. The Community Engagement Manager has consulted with the Asset Portfolio Manager (Estates), who has undertaken appropriate consultation with service departments across the Council.

4. The views of Council officers

- 4.1. On behalf of Wiltshire Council, Strategic Asset & Facilities Management (who have overall responsibility for the Council's estates and property) have provided the following observations to the Area Board:
 - 4.1.1. The property is currently leased to the applicant. The contractual term has expired but the lease is continuing by operation of law.

- 4.1.2. There are arrears of rent under the current lease. These will cease to accrue any further upon completion of the transfer.
- 4.1.3. In order to ensure that the arrears can be recovered, the transfer will need to be by way of a long lease. This lease will contain suitable terms to enable the arrears to be recovered.
- 4.1.4. The lease will contain a provision requiring the property to be used for community purposes. If it is not used for this purpose the lease will be terminated. This will fulfil the requirement in the CAT policy for a reverter clause in favour of Wiltshire Council.
- 4.1.5. Access to the property is over an unadopted lane. The lease will require the applicant to bear a fair proportion of the cost of maintaining the lane.

5. Main issues for consideration by the Area Board

- 5.1. It is a requirement under Wiltshire Council’s Asset Transfer Policy that there must be a clear link between the asset transfer request and local community priorities.
- 5.2. This proposed asset transfer demonstrates a link to Wiltshire Council’s priorities in the Local Agreement for Wiltshire “Help local communities develop their own priorities and improvements “and “We help communities help themselves”.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1. Having carefully considered the application and the views of Council officers, the Area Board is invited to approve the transfer subject to the following conditions:

The building is maintained for the benefit of the community and residents will be encouraged to enjoy the amenity.

Appendices:	Appendix 1 - Map Appendix 2 – Community Asset Transfer application
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