

Report to	Chippenham Area Board
Date of Meeting	7th March 2011
Title of Report	Community Asset Transfer

Executive Summary

This report deals with an application for the transfer of land adjacent to Chippenham Sailing and Canoeing Club (Grid reference 392911 172769) in accordance with Wiltshire Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy.

Proposal

Chippenham Area Board is asked to consider an application submitted by Chippenham Sailing and Canoeing Club for the transfer of land off Long Close, the Sailing Club and the Air Cadets (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

The 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:

1. The land is maintained for the benefit of the community and residents will be encouraged to enjoy the amenity
2. A standard 'reverter' clause is included in the title, which will ensure that if the land stops being used for the benefit of the community, Wiltshire Council will have the option to repurchase the land for the sum of £1.

Purpose of Report

1. Chippenham Area Board is asked to consider an application submitted by Chippenham Sailing and Canoeing Club for the transfer of land off Long Close, the Sailing Club and the Air Cadets (see map attached at Appendix 1). The applicants' proposal is set out at Appendix 2

Background

2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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.
5. Typically, organisations that would be considered appropriate are Voluntary and Community Groups/Associations, Town or Parish Councils, Trusts or Charities, or Social Enterprise Groups.

The application before the Area Board

6. The application from Chippenham Sailing and Canoeing Club is attached at Appendix 2 and relates to the transfer of land adjacent to the Sailing and Canoeing Club.
7. The application was submitted in accordance with Wiltshire Council's application process and meets the requirements for consideration by the Area Board.
8. The Community Area Manager has consulted with Strategic Property Services, who have undertaken appropriate consultation with service departments across the Council.
9. Local consultation has been undertaken by the applicant in accordance with the application checklist and the outcome of the consultation is included within the application.

The views of Council officers

10. On behalf of Wiltshire Council, Strategic Property Services (who have overall responsibility for the Council's estates and property) has provided the following observations to the Area Board.
11. Chippenham Sailing and Canoeing Club is a valuable community amenity, which is enjoyed by a broad range of people from across the community. It is also utilised and enjoyed by people from the wider community area and beyond.
12. It is important that links to the community beyond the town boundaries are maintained.

Main issues for consideration by the Area Board

13. Chippenham Sailing and Canoeing Club has secured letters of support from local Councillors and the Chairman of the Air Cadets.
14. 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.
15. Chippenham Sailing and Canoeing Club is a thriving club which plays an active part in local physical health and wellbeing. The club has played a significant part in the Rivers Festivals held in 2009 & 2010. The club has been awarded "ClubMark" and "TopClub" as well as being shortlisted for Wiltshire and Swindon Council team of the year 2010.
16. Officers understand Chippenham Sailing and Canoeing Club has a long term aim for the Club is to provide a fit for purpose facility which will include training room, meeting room and changing facilities. These will be accessible by groups such as youth organisations and other local community groups. The current area of land owned by the Club does not allow for this expansion.
17. This proposed asset transfer demonstrates a direct link to the Chippenham & Villages Community Plan "The River is an important asset in Chippenham and is not used to its full potential. Much could be done to enhance the town by enhancing the river and riverside environment." and "Insufficient outdoor sports facilities".
18. Chippenham Vision aims to enhance the riverside environment and make it a much more significant and accessible feature of the town.
19. 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", "We help communities help themselves" and "Increase opportunities for physical activity for the whole population".

20. It is a requirement that a 'reverter' clause is included in asset transfer arrangements. This means that, if the site stops being used for Community Public Open Space purposes, Wiltshire Council will have the option to repurchase the land for the sum of £1.00.

Recommendation

21. 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:
- i) The land is maintained for the benefit of the community and residents will be encouraged to enjoy the amenity.
 - ii) A standard 'reverter' clause is included in the title, which will ensure that if the land stops being used for the benefit of the community, Wiltshire Council will have the option to repurchase the land for the sum of £1.

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