

Report to	Chippenham Area Board
Date of Meeting	14th November 2011
Title of Report	Community Asset Transfer

Executive Summary

This report deals with an application for the transfer of the majority of Monkton Park to Chippenham Town Council in accordance with Wiltshire Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy.

Proposal

Chippenham Area Board is asked to consider an application submitted by Chippenham Town Council for the transfer of the majority of Monkton Park, the map of the area is at Appendix 1. The applicant's proposal is set out at Appendix 2.

Reasons For Proposal

This proposal accords with 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. The 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 Town Council for the transfer of the majority of Monkton Park the map of the area is 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 Town Council is attached at Appendix 2 and relates to the transfer of Monkton Park.
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. It is understood that the applicant intends to undertake comprehensive consultation with local people.

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 no objection to the proposed transfer. There are a number of matters of detail which are the subject of discussions between both Authorities' officers, but all of these are considered to be capable of being resolved to both parties reasonable satisfaction
11. Monkton Park 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.
13. The proposed revenue budget has been prepared in accordance with Wiltshire Council Policy as set out in Cabinet Report 'Delegation of Services to Town and Parish Councils – Funding Delegated Services' dated 19th October 2011.
14. The income raised from the golf course and park events is approximately £7,000 and has not been deducted from the revenue budget.

Main issues for consideration by the Area Board

15. 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.
16. 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".
17. Chippenham Vision aims to enhance the riverside environment and make it a much more significant and accessible feature of the town.
18. 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".
19. Transfer of the 'routine' maintenance to Chippenham Town Council does not present any specific problem.

20. This is a valuable amenity for local people. It is important that the existing community vision that has been developed by local people over many years is embraced under the new arrangement and that the park continues to be recognised as an amenity for the whole community area.
21. It is a requirement that a 'reverter' clause is included in asset transfer arrangements. This means that, if in the opinion of Chippenham Town Council, the site stops being used for Community purposes, the property will transfer back to Wiltshire Council in the sum of £1.00.

Recommendation

22. 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) The 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:	<p>Appendix 1 - Map Appendix 2 – Community Asset Transfer application</p> <p>Also appended:</p> <p>Report to the Chippenham Town Council Strategy & Resources Committee, 19 October 2011</p> <p>Minutes extract of the Chippenham Town Council Strategy & Resources Committee, 19 October 2011</p>
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Report Author	<p>Victoria Welsh, Community Area Manager Tel: 01249 706 446 E-mail: victoria.welsh@wiltshire.gov.uk</p>
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