

**Wiltshire Council**

**Cabinet**

**22 June 2010**

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**Subject: Recommendation from Trowbridge Area Board:  
Community Asset Transfer – Margaret Stancomb  
School, Trowbridge**

**Cabinet member: Councillor John Thomson  
Deputy Leader and Adult Care, Communities and  
Libraries**

**Key Decision: No**

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**Executive summary**

This report seeks Cabinet approval following the decision made by the Trowbridge Area Board on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2010 to recommend the application for the transfer of part of the Margaret Stancomb School, the old school building at the front of the site together with car parking space, to Wiltshire Rural Music School in accordance with Wiltshire Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy.

Cabinet is asked to consider a proposal submitted to and approved by the Trowbridge Area Board on 13 May 2010 by Wiltshire Rural Music School for the transfer of part of Margaret Stancomb School located at British Row, Trowbridge (site plan Appendix 1). The applicant's Business Plan is set out at Appendix 2.

**Proposal**

That Cabinet approve the transfer of part of Margaret Stancomb School located at British Row, Trowbridge as shown on the site plan at Appendix 1 to the Wiltshire Rural Music School on a leasehold basis.

**Reason for proposal**

This proposal has been made under Wiltshire Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy.

**Niki Lewis**

**Service Director Communities, Libraries, Heritage & Arts**

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### **Purpose of report**

1. Cabinet is asked to approve an application submitted by Wiltshire Rural Music School for the transfer of part of the Margaret Stancomb School located at British Row, Trowbridge - the old school building at the front of the site together with some car parking space (site plan Appendix 1). The applicant's Business Plan is set out at Appendix 2.

### **Background**

2. The report that went to the Trowbridge Area Board is attached (appendix 3)

### **Environmental impact of the proposal**

3. The Wiltshire Rural Music School's use of the building will keep in use and enhance an important community building.

### **Equalities impact of the proposal**

4. The transfer of the asset to Wiltshire Rural Music School will:
- a) Promote cohesive communities as the arts will be made accessible to a wide range of the local community including older people, younger people, Disabled people.
  - b) Provide cultural services to the public
  - c) Promote equality and good relations between different groups.
  - d) Increase access to their services through developing a DDA compliant, fit for purpose building

### **Risk assessment**

5. Strategic Property Services worked with the Wiltshire Rural Music School to ensure that a robust Business Case was put to the Area Board. The risk of

Wiltshire Rural Music School failing to make a success of the project is low as they have been in operation since 1933 as a registered charity; they are financially viable and have support from a wide cross section of individuals and organisations within the local cultural community. In anticipation of a move to the Margaret Stancomb site, Wiltshire Rural Music School has been fundraising since 2003 and now has sufficient reserves to cover the cost of the project in addition to one year's income held in reserve under its operating policy.

6. If the organisation was to close the ownership of the building would revert to the Council

7. If Cabinet refuse the asset transfer the risk to the Wiltshire Rural Music School and the communities they deliver to is that the services provided will stagnate as no expansion is possible in their current premises. (See Appendix 2 Section B) There is particular concern from examiners' reports that there is a decline in the numbers of children taking music exams in Wiltshire which is not found in other areas of the country.

### **Financial implications**

8. The Council's Strategic Property Services, who have overall responsibility for all of the council's estate, have provided the following observations to the Area Board. The Bellefield School extension (built to help accommodate the pupils from the Margaret Stancomb School) was based on a financial contribution from the sale of the Margaret Stancomb School for residential redevelopment. The allocation of the old school building at the front of the site for community use will reduce the capital receipt to the Council. The amount by which the sale proceeds will be reduced is difficult to predict at this stage, as it will depend on the state of the property market at the time of sale, and the exact extent of the site given over to the proposed community use. Assuming that the old school building at the front of the site is transferred to the Wiltshire Rural Music School, together with a small area for car parking (up to 6 spaces,) it is estimated that the reduction in the sale receipt to the Council will be in the order of £150,000. The aforementioned estimated figure is based on the assumption that the Council is successful in obtaining planning permission for residential use of the site. If a transfer is approved, it is recommended that it be on a leasehold basis

### **Legal implications**

9. The report that was taken to the Trowbridge Area Board on 13<sup>th</sup> May was prepared in part by Strategic Property Services who consulted with the relevant legal officers over the transfer of the asset.

### **Options considered**

10. The Area Board have considered the options and agreed to support the proposed transfer

## **Conclusions**

11. The Area Board agreed to recommend that Cabinet approve the transfer of part of Margaret Stancomb School as a community asset to Wiltshire Rural Music School.

**Niki Lewis**

**Service Director Communities, Libraries, Heritage & Arts**

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Date of report: 1<sup>st</sup> June 2010

## **Background papers**

None

## **Appendices**

Appendix 1 – Site Plan of Margaret Stancomb School

Appendix 2 – Wiltshire Rural Music School Business Plan

Appendix 3 – Trowbridge Area Board Report – Community Asset Transfer

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