

**WILTSHIRE COUNCIL
TROWBRIDGE AREA BOARD**

13 MAY 2010

COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER

Executive Summary

This report deals with an 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.

Proposal

The Area Board Members are asked to consider a proposal submitted by Wiltshire Rural Music School for the transfer of part of Margaret Stancomb School located at British Row, Trowbridge (site plan Appendix 1.) The applicants' proposal is set out at Appendix 2.

Reasons For Proposal

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

Recommendation

The Area Board consider whether to recommend to Cabinet that the transfer be approved.

Rachel Efemey - Community Area Manager

COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER **DESCRIPTION OF THE ASSET AND LOCATION**

Purpose of Report

1. The Area Board Members are asked to consider 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 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. The Council believes that transferring appropriate public assets to communities leads to more responsive services that better meet local peoples' 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.
6. A report was brought to the 28th January Trowbridge Area Board regarding the proposed disposal of Margaret Stancomb School. At the meeting it was agreed that the proposed disposal of the site be put on hold for three months for the Wiltshire Rural Music School to develop a business case for use of part of the site.
7. The proposal/ business case from Wiltshire Rural Music School is attached at Appendix 2 and relates to the old school building at the front of the site together with some car parking space
8. The application was submitted in accordance with the Council's application process and meets the requirements for consideration by the Area Board.
9. Strategic Property Services have undertaken appropriate consultation with Finance and Legal service departments across the council. Wiltshire Rural Music School have been asked to speak to the Planning department as to whether a planning application for change of use is required.

The views of Council Officers

10. 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

Main issues for consideration by the Board Members

11. The requested transfer will result in an estimated reduced capital receipt to the Council in the order of £150,000. If the Council is minded to approve the transfer, it is recommended that Strategic Property Services be instructed to finalise a leasehold disposal. Furthermore Strategic Property Services be asked to determine the exact boundary of the property to be transferred, in order to mitigate the impact on the remainder of the site to be sold and optimise the capital receipt there from, whilst liaising with the Wiltshire Rural Music School.

Recommendation

The Area Board consider whether to recommend to Cabinet that the transfer be approved

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