

WESTBURY AREA BOARD
18TH OCTOBER 2012

COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER

Leigh Park Community Centre, Westbury

Executive Summary

This report deals with the transfer of the Leigh Park Community Centre, Westbury to be transferred to Leigh Park Community Association in accordance with Wiltshire Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy.

Proposal

The Area Board is asked to consider the transfer of a long leasehold interest in Leigh Park Community Centre, Westbury to Leigh Park Community Association.

Reasons For Proposal

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

Recommendation

To approve the transfer subject to the matters referred to in paragraph 9 of the report.

Sally Hendry

Westbury Community Area Manager

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Purpose of Report

1. The Area Board is asked to consider the transfer of Leigh Park Community Centre, Westbury to Leigh Park Community Association.

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 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 proposal before the Area Board

6. Leigh Park Community Centre is currently being built in accordance with conditions attached to a planning permission granted for the development of nearby land by Persimmon Homes. The new facility is to be managed by Leigh Park Community Association. The most appropriate way of allowing this to happen is the transfer of a long leasehold interest to the Association.
7. The proposal 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. 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. Cllr Hawker, the local member, has been apprised.

The views of Council officers

9. On behalf of the Council, Strategic Property Services (who have overall responsibility for the Council's estates and property) has provided the following observations to the Area Board.
 - 9.1 The property is still owned by Persimmon Homes. Ownership will transfer to Wiltshire Council after the community centre has been built. The lease cannot be completed until ownership of the land has passed to Wiltshire Council.
 - 9.2 As the hall has not yet been built, this is a new venture. It is, therefore, considered that the transfer should be on a long leasehold basis rather than a freehold as is normally the case.
 - 9.3 There will be a covenant restricting use of the property to community purposes.
 - 9.4 The property has been designed as a community hall. All running costs will be met by Leigh Park Community Association. Therefore, there are no financial implications.

Recommendation

10. To approve the transfer subject to the matters referred to in paragraph 9 above.

Sally Hendry
Westbury Community Area Manager
