

Report to	South West Wiltshire Area Board
Date of Meeting	29 July 2015
Title of Report	Community Asset Transfer

Executive Summary

This report considers an application to transfer land adjacent to Fairview Road (Burdens Ball) known as 'the Sheep Fair Field' under the Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy to the Wilton Town Council.

Proposal

South West Wiltshire Area Board is asked for its views on the application submitted by Wilton Town Council for the transfer of land adjacent to Fairview Road (Burdens Ball) known as 'the Sheep Fair Field.' See map attached at Appendix 1. The applicant's proposal is set out at Appendix 2.

Reasons For Proposal

To follow the Council's policies and procedures relating to Community Asset Transfers.

Purpose of Report

1. South West Wiltshire Area Board is asked to consider an application submitted by Wilton Town Council for the transfer of land adjacent to Fairview Road (Burdens Ball) known as 'the Sheep Fair Field'. See map attached at Appendix 1 and the applicants' proposal is set out at Appendix 2.

Background

2. Wiltshire Council supports 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 Wilton Town Council is attached at Appendix 2.
7. The application was submitted in accordance with Wiltshire Council's application process and meets the requirements for consideration by the Area Board.
8. Local consultation has been undertaken by the applicant and details are provided in the application in Appendix 2.

The views of Council officers

9. On behalf of Wiltshire Council, Strategic Asset Management (who have overall responsibility for the Council's estates and property) has provided the following observation to the Area Board:
10. The asset is not formal open space and is not designated as such. It is currently let to Southern Counties Auctioneers via a Licence and generates an income to the Council.

11. The policy for Asset Transfers of this nature is as set out in the Cabinet Capital Assets Committee meeting of 26th July 2011. The asset is considered to be a 'Category 1' asset meaning that it is defined as 'strategic' in terms of its contribution to the Council's aims.
12. The reason for this is that it is currently included in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA site reference number 254). It is currently being assessed by Wiltshire Council's spatial planning team (along with other potential sites) to consider it's suitability for a housing allocation to support Wiltshire's Core Strategy. The team are still at a relatively early stage with the detailed assessment work for the site (which includes the deliverability of the site in terms of the fact it currently has an interaction with a historical charter market which is held on the land) (<http://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planning-shlaa-appendix-3-wilton.pdf>).
13. If the land is assessed as suitable for this use, planning permission will be required to be sought which will include a statutory period of public consultation.

Main issues for consideration by the Area Board

14. The site is considered to be a Category 1 asset meaning that it is of strategic importance to the Council. In line with the Council's policy on processing the transfer of assets designated as Category 1, the final decision of whether to transfer this asset lies with the Cabinet Capital Assets Committee. However, part of the process requires that the views of the Area Board are sought on the application.
15. The Area Board is invited to either reject the application at this stage and if so to provide the reasons for doing so or to refer it for further due diligence checking and processing. It will then be presented to the Cabinet Capital Assets Committee for a final decision once the outcome of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment has completed its findings.

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