

**WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**

**Report by the Strategic Lead - Regeneration**

**Infrastructure, Regeneration and Economic Development Committee:**

**15 May 2019**

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**Subject: Community Asset Transfer**

**1. Purpose**

**1.1** The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee on the outcome of Community Asset Transfer Application submitted by Westbridgend Community Hall Development Association and seeks Committee approval for processing the application and progress design and build of a new Community Hall.

**2. Recommendations**

**2.1** It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) Approve the application submitted by Westbridgend Community Hall Development Association for the site of the former West Bridgend Community Centre detailed below.
- (ii) Authorise the Strategic Lead, Regeneration to progress with the design and build of a new Community Hall.
- (iii) Authorise the Strategic Lead, Regeneration to conclude negotiations in relation to the Community Asset Transfer Application.
- (iv) Authorise the Strategic Lead, Regulatory to conclude the transaction on such conditions as considered appropriate in relation to the Community Asset Transfer Application.

**3. Background**

**3.1** Over the past few years, legislation and national policy in Scotland has shown increased support and recognition for strong and resilient communities and the part that community ownership can play in building those communities.

**3.2** The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act was proposed in the Scottish Parliament in June 2014 and received Royal Assent on 24 July 2015 and came into force on 23 January 2017.

**3.3** West Dunbartonshire Council's Community Asset Transfer Procedures and Policy were approved by the Infrastructure, Regeneration and Economic Development Committee on 15 March, 2017.

**3.4** Following decision at Council on 22 February 2017 Westbridgend Community Centre was demolished with a view that a Community Asset Transfer Application with a detailed business plan would be submitted by a community group for future use.

#### **4. Main Issues**

**4.1** An application was submitted by Westbridgend Community Hall Development Association including a detailed business case on 4 February 2019.

**4.2** The application contains a detailed business case to sustain a suitable new build community facility to be built at a later date on the site of the former West Bridgend Community Centre.

**4.3** A plan showing the extent of the transfer request is attached as Appendix 1.

**4.4** Key target groups will include children and families, young people, people with disabilities, older people, people who have become isolated through a variety of issues.

**4.5** The group are proposing to open the centre as a community hub. It is proposed that the community hub will include a community café space open to all, an after school and evening clubs for children and people of a variety of ages, parent and toddler groups, elderly lunch clubs, arts and fitness clubs. They envisage that this will bring a positive impact on the lives of all residents in the area.

**4.5** It is proposed that a detailed design phase for a new community hall on the site of the former Westbridgend Community Hall is progressed, Planning Permission submitted and thereafter progress to tender to appoint a contractor to undertake the build which will follow a tender process to be conducted in accordance with the Procurement Reform (Scotland) Act 2014 and Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations relating to Contracts.

**4.6** Approval is sought to enter into negotiations with the group for the transfer of a future new build facility subject to the normal conditions applied for a transfer of this type namely exhibition of:

- an audited annual report;
- an annual report demonstrating community benefits; and
- financial evidence of sustainability of the site.

#### **5. People Implications**

**5.1** Other than the Officers time involved in progressing the design face, tender activities and concluding the proposed transfer there are no other people implications.

#### **6. Financial and Procurement Implications**

**6.1** The price/rent to be paid for an asset is a key issue relevant to local authorities and to community bodies. The Act does not specify what should be paid, whether the price should be at market value or at a discount, nor does it offer any guidance as to how the non-financial benefits of a proposal are to be assessed. The regulations will not provide further direction in this respect, however, the Scottish Government has set up a working group to provide guidance on the valuation and assessment of non-financial benefits associated with asset transfer.

**6.2** Council on 22 February 2017 granted a budget allocation of £675,000 to fund both the demolition and subsequent new build facility. It is believed that the project can be delivered within budget allocation available.

## **7. Risk Analysis**

**7.1** The community group may withdraw from any proposed transfer and a new build facility is built without any processes in place to run the facility.

**7.2** There is also a risk that the transfer may proceed but not to the originally envisaged community ownership.

## **8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

**8.1** An Equality Impact Screening was undertaken, which identified that the positive impact of a Community Asset Transfer Policy and Procedures was the delivery of clearer direction and greater reach to protected groups.

**8.2** An Equality Impact Screening did not indicate any further action required in relation to this transaction.

## **9. Consultation**

**9.1** Preparation of the Community Asset Transfer Policy and Procedures was undertaken in consultation with external bodies such as West Dunbartonshire Community and Volunteering Services (WDCVS), West Dunbartonshire Equalities Forum, Development Trust Association Scotland and West Dunbartonshire Community Alliance Group.

**9.2** The Council's Legal and Regulatory Services have provided advice and recommendations along with various other Council services including Finance, Economic Development and Regeneration, and Corporate and Community Planning.

**9.3** No further consultations were deemed necessary.

## **10. Strategic Assessment**

**10.1** The Community Asset Transfer Policy and Procedures reinforces the Council's commitment to community empowerment. By noting this policy and

approving subsequent asset transfers the Council will assist in the improvements to local community bodies and provide them with opportunities to develop local services and activities which will enhance their local area.

**Jim McAloon**  
**Strategic Lead of Regeneration**  
**Date: 15 April 2019**

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**Appendices:** Appendix 1 – Site Layout Plan.

**Background Papers:** Report by the Executive Director of Housing,  
Environmental and Economic Development to the  
Housing, Environment and Economic Development  
Committee on 13 February 2013: Property and Land  
Asset Disposal Strategy 2013 - 2018

Report by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and  
Regeneration to the Infrastructure, Regeneration and  
Economic Development Committee on 18 June 2014:  
Progress Report and updating of Property and Land Asset  
Disposal Strategy 2013 – 2018.

Report by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and  
Regeneration to the Infrastructure, Regeneration and  
Economic Development Committee on 18 March 2015:  
Update on Property and Land Asset Disposal Strategy  
2013-2018

Report by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and  
Regeneration to the Infrastructure, Regeneration and  
Economic Development Committee on 25 November  
2015: Update on Property and Land Asset Disposal  
Strategy 2013-2018

Report by the Executive Director of Infrastructure and  
Regeneration to Community Planning on 15<sup>th</sup> April 2015:  
Community Asset Transfer Policy and Procedures

Report by the Strategic Lead of Regeneration to  
Community Planning on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2016: Community Asset  
Transfer Policy and Procedures.

Report by the Strategic Lead, Regeneration to the Infrastructure, Regeneration and Economic Development Committee on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2016: Community Asset Transfer Policy and Procedure's.

Report by the Strategic Lead, Regeneration to the Infrastructure, Regeneration and Economic Development Committee on 15 March 2017: Community Asset Transfer Policy and Procedures.

Report by the Executive Director of infrastructure and Regeneration to Council: 27 February 2017.

**Wards Affected:**

Ward 3