

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

REPORT TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER – FINANCE

Report of: Head of Communities

Subject/Title: Transfer of Assets for community use

Date of Meeting: 13th April 2015

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Peter Raynes

1.0 Report Summary

- 1.1 As a Residents First Council, Cheshire East is building on the success of the work undertaken to date by transferring assets to Town and Parish Councils, allowing communities to take control and be responsible for the delivery of services at a local level to maximise community benefits.
- 1.2 In September 2011, Cabinet approved a list of 49 possible asset transfers, referred to as the Appendix 'A' list. To date, 37 (2 to complete soon) of those 49 asset transfers have successfully been completed, resulting in a raft of benefits being realised to further improve service delivery at a local level. The 12 outstanding assets are still being considered by the relevant Town and Parish Councils, and work continues to progress these.
- 1.3 The main aim of transfers is to strengthen our communities, allowing them to deliver local services. Transferring the assets has realised cost savings to the Council, but more importantly, it has enabled buildings to remain open and become sustainable. It has increased use by local communities, providing a wider range of services and activities, and attracted additional grant funding to improve local facilities.
- 1.4 Asset transfers strengthen our work to develop Community Hubs, working with local communities to identify the right places from which to deliver the right services at the right times.
- 1.5 In 2011, further asset transfer requests were reserved for consideration and placed on an Appendix 'B' list to be approved by the Portfolio Holder on a case by case basis. This report considers outstanding cases, and as part of our ongoing work, looks to prioritise work to progress requests.
- 1.6 The requests below are outstanding.
 - Alsager – Alsager office, Lawton Road
 - Audlem - Car park, playing fields and play area and land at rear of Audlem Public Hall
 - Bollington – Town Hall
Land at front of Town Hall offices
Atax Field, Bollington Cross
 - Disley – Ballcourt, station approach
Land at A6
Bentside Park
Dane Hill

- Knutsford – Town Council Offices
Civic Hall
Ashworth Park
Land at Longridge
North Downs
Booths Garden
Taxi Office, Bexton Road
- Nantwich – Brookfield Hall, Brookfield Lane
The Gables
- Poynton – London Road North Depot
Anson Road Depot
Garages off Barnaby Road
Scout Hut off Coppice Road
Land behind Petre Bank, Middlewood Road
- Middlewich – Brine Pump
Land at Rutland Drive
- Sandbach – Disused playground, Princess Drive
Belmont Avenues
Wheelock playing fields / toilets
Enterprise Centre

1.7 The outstanding Expressions of Interest, are being scored using an Asset Scoring Matrix, of these, 7 sites have been identified as priority based on expected community benefits. The sites each represent an excellent opportunity for local communities to fulfil their ambitions to improve local services and increase benefits for their local communities.

- a) Audlem - Car Park, playing field and playground and land at rear of Audlem Public Hall

Audlem Parish Council wish to take over the management functions of the open spaces and extend the use of the playing field staging regular local events and festivals. The Public Hall Committee have requested additional land to provide new community facilities. Work is ongoing with Audlem Parish Council regarding the transfers. The land transfer to the Public Hall Committee is recommended for transfer, and this will be the subject of a separate report later in April 2015.

- b) Bollington - Atax Field – Bollington Cross

Bollington Town Council wish to take on the field, to expand a very successful leisure facility, and they will oversee future management responsibilities. Decision report is currently being produced.

c) Middlewich - Brine Pump

The Brine Pump is a scheduled monument and the Middlewich Heritage Trust wish to own the asset, so that they can apply for heritage funding to restore it. The current physical state requires immediate emergency work to make it safe, and then significant investment to restore the heritage asset. The Trust's application for Heritage Lottery Funding has been declined due to access issues and potential visitor numbers. In order to reapply, the Trust needs to obtain access via adjacent land. Work is underway to explore options and a decision report will be presented soon.

d) Poynton - Anson Museum

Poynton Town Council are keen to acquire the site and work closely with local people and volunteers to manage and improve the conditions of the site and introduce facilities to benefit the local community. This includes a larger space for the engine museum, improved car parking and storage facilities. The transfer is recommended and a decision report will be presented later in April 2015.

e) Knutsford - Town Council Offices

Knutsford Town Council are interested in taking over the Town Council offices as part of the development of a Knutsford Community Hub. Work is underway to bring a decision report for consideration in April 2015.

f) Nantwich - The Gables

Nantwich Town Council would like to take ownership of The Gables, with the view to selling it and using the funds raised for community benefit, by developing the Civic Centre as part of the development of Nantwich Community Hub. This transfer is recommended and part of a separate report for decision on the 13th April 2015.

g) Sandbach - Wheelock playing fields / public conveniences

Sandbach Town Council wishes to take on the above, as they provide an ideal location for allotments, potentially a community orchard, and play facilities. A decision report is being produced for later in April 2015, recommending transfer of the above.

2.0 Decision Requested

2.1 To agree that the assets listed in 1.7 be prioritised for approval to transfer.

2.2 Decision reports for these assets to be considered to transfer approval as a priority.

2.3 That work continues with Town and Parish Councils to confirm their interest in the other assets listed above which remain outstanding. To then fully assess

the remaining asset transfer requests, and make recommendations for the Portfolio Holder.

3.0 Reasons for Recommendations

The above assets offer extensive community benefits and these will be better realised through local management of them.

4.0 Wards Affected

Audlem, Bollington, Middlewich, Knutsford, Poynton, Nantwich and Sandbach.

5.0 Local Ward Members

All

6.0 Policy Implications including - Carbon reduction - Health

In line with the Council's strategic outcomes and local management of the above will contribute to a wide range of policies such as the Mental Health and Wellbeing plan.

7.0 Financial Implications

To be considered as part of the decision making reports as individual assets are considered for transfer.

8.0 Legal Implications (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)

To be considered as part of the decision making reports as individual assets are considered for transfer.

9.0 Risk Management

Asset transfers to date have realised a wide range of benefits for the Council and local communities. Each transfer will be the subject of a decision report, which will fully consider potential risks.

10.0 Background

This is part of the Council's Asset Transfer and Devolution Programme as agreed in 2011 and considers the next stages required.

11.0 Access to Information

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting the report writer:

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