

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **20TH JANUARY 2015**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER, ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE (IRB)**
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SUBJECT: **COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To provide an update to Members on the development and implementation of the Councils approach to Community Asset Transfer (CAT).

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The Council re-launched its approach to the delivery of CATs in November 2014. Public assets owned by Flintshire County Council are one of its major strengths. However, the Council must balance the requirement to dispose of surplus or underutilised assets to provide funding for its capital programme with the need to regenerate local communities and encourage social enterprise through the alternative use of its buildings and land assets.

2.02 Community ownership can play a part in enhancing the local environment and providing opportunities for all sectors of the community. The Council has land and buildings that are used for a variety of community and public purposes. Benefits can include:

- Buildings used more frequently and effectively
- Extra funding opportunities
- Local decision making

Community Asset Transfers can also help to promote public value through:

- Community empowerment
- Encouraging a sustainable voluntary and community sector
- Encouraging social enterprise
- Delivery of corporate priorities
- Value for money

2.03 Assets that are considered suitable for transfers include playing fields, play areas, community centres, youth centres, allotments, sports

grounds, pavilions, and libraries

2.04 In re-launching its CAT strategy the Council has sought to simplify its approach and methodology into three basic stages:-

- Stage 1 – Expression of Interest: This can be made by an individual or community group.
- Stage 2 – Business Model Application: This can only be made by a community group and is the formal application stage of this process.
- Stage 3 – Completion and Transfer of Asset: The final stage in the process which will be between the Council and an appropriate organisation.

A copy of the guidance notes are included at appendix 1 for information.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 In supporting the delivery of this activity Flintshire has engaged Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC) to support and lead aspects of this process. They are providing a package of flexible, tailored support delivered by FLVC staff with experience of:

- Community Development
- Third Sector Funding & Finance
- Governance
- Administration
- Charity Management

3.02 Specifically FLVCs role comprises:-

The Administrative processes for FLVC to log, assess, signpost and report on CAT enquiries

- A team of FLVC staff to provide bespoke support to community groups in the development of potential Community Asset Transfers
- A programme of surgery/workshop-type events tailored to the needs of interested parties (at least one event per month)
- Participation and support for a multi-disciplinary Panel to filter Expressions of Interest (EOI's) and assess business plans for due diligence by FCC.
- Bespoke training and support for those groups/organisations who's EOIs have sufficient merit to progress towards a detailed business plan submission.
- Partnerships with existing and potential partner organisations within the sector to provide direct and in-kind support to

empower the transferee.

- Monitoring of Expressions of Interest and support for a smooth and efficient transfer process.
- Liaison with FCC to identify potential assets, issues and beneficiary groups.

3.03 In terms of the interest expressed to date a total of twenty proposals for over 40 assets have already been agreed to proceed to the next stage (stage 2), following the first deadline for expressions of interest. The next stage is to produce a business case and is expected to take around six months.

In addition a total of 47 informal enquiries have also been received, relating to 195 assets which cover 21 Town and Community Council areas. Expressions of interest have currently been received from Town and Community Councils, community organisations and individuals.

3.04 The stage 2 decision will be a formal decision that commits the Council to an Asset Transfer subject to completion of legal agreements. Therefore the decision making at this stage needs to be formal and in line with Council policy. It is proposed that the initial mechanism is a recommendation panel with one representative member from the Council and FLVC, supported by Council Officers. Recommendations from the panel will then be brought back for formal ratification by the Council and authority given at this stage to enter into legal agreements. It is proposed that the Portfolio holder for Environment, should be the Council representative on this panel. The panel will meet every three months.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That Members :-

- Support the appointment of the Portfolio holder for Environment to sit on the panel which will make recommendations in relation to all stage two business models.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 As advised the Council are supporting FLVC financially in this process, this support equating to £25,000 per year for the next two years with FLVC providing in kind matched support in the sum of £10k per year for the next two years.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 The development of CATs will have a positive impact on the local community through the increased provision and awareness of CATs and the services which can be delivered from them.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None as a direct result of this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 Positive in that it will enable groups to be supported by and through their local communities.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 None as a direct result of this report.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 Town and Community Councils.

10.02 County Forum.

10.03 Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny (CROSC).

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Town and Community Councils at awareness raising events.

11.02 County forum on the September 2014 and October 2014.

11.03 CROSC through mid-year reports.

11.04 Stakeholder workshop with FLVC in October 2014.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix 1 – CAT Guidance.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Not applicable

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