

Report to the Deputy Leader of the County Council and the Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services
Report submitted by: Head of Asset Management
Date: 7th and 8th December 2016

Title of Report: Community Asset Transfer and Independent Community Libraries

Brief Description:

On the 8 September 2016 Cabinet declared a number of buildings surplus to requirements following the 12 week public consultation on the Council's Property Strategy (Neighbourhood Centres). Cabinet also endorsed the proposed model for an "Independent Community Library Offer" as set out in the report on the basis that these community libraries are in addition to the provision made by the Council to satisfy section 7 of the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

On 6 October Cabinet considered a report summarising the assessment of business cases submitted by community groups or other organisations who wished to take over surplus properties. Cabinet agreed that for those business cases considered to be broadly acceptable individual reports would be submitted to the respective Cabinet Member portfolio holder(s).

This report set out a series of recommendations to the Deputy Leader of the County Council and the Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services in relation to proposed community asset transfers and the establishment of Independent Community Libraries.

Recommendation:

The Deputy Leader of the County Council:

- (i) Approved in principle the community asset transfer of the five properties – Stoops & Hargher Clough Community Centre, Whitewell Bottom Community Centre, Crawshawbooth Library and Community Centre, Oswaldtwistle Library and Trawden Library and Children's Centre subject to each applicant successfully meeting the criteria set out in the Community Asset Transfer Policy including among other items appropriate consideration on an individual case by case basis of method of transfer, VAT implications and clawback provisions subject to final approval of the Director of Governance, Finance and Public Services.
- (ii) Noted the proposal to establish Independent Community Libraries in three of the above proposed community asset transfers – Crawshawbooth Library and Community Centre, Oswaldtwistle Library and Trawden Library, subject to successfully meeting the criteria set out in the Community Asset Transfer Policy, and recommend they be approved by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services.

(iii) Noted the proposal to establish an Independent Community Library by Mercer 1842 at the Arthur Wilson Centre, Hyndburn as set out in the report, and recommended this to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services for approval.

(iv) Approved that the two expressions of interest in possible community asset transfers for Earby Library and Barrowford Library identified in the report be considered not to be acceptable and that the properties be declared surplus to the Council's requirements.

(v) Approved that the Business Case for the possible community asset transfer for Whalley Library and Spring Wood Children's Centre identified in the report be considered not to be acceptable and that the property be declared surplus to the Council's requirements.

Following approval by the Deputy Leader of recommendations i - v, the Cabinet Member for Environment, Planning and Cultural Services:

(vi) Approved in principle the establishment of Independent Community Libraries in three of the above proposed community asset transfers - Crawshawbooth Library and Community Centre, Oswaldtwisle Library and Trawden Library subject to each applicant successfully meeting the criteria set out in the Community Asset Transfer Policy.

(vii) Approved the establishment of an Independent Community Library by Mercer 1842 at the Arthur Wilson Centre, Hyndburn as set out in report.

The full report is not available for publication as it contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972. The report contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). It is considered that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

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