

COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER

The Assistant Director - Special Projects introduced the report of the Director of Resources which made recommendations in relation to the following Community Asset Transfer (CAT) matters: Former Libraries, Brackenwood Golf Course, Bromborough Civic Centre, and in addition to an Asset Transfer (AT) matter: Former Public Toilets in Moreton

Members thanked officers for their hard work throughout the Community Asset Transfer Process.

Members considered the recommendations individually.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Mike Collins that the Director of Resources be authorised to conclude the transfer of assets of Pensby Library to Pioneer People and Prenton Library to St. Stephens Church on the basis of the terms reported in the exempt appendix 1 to the report. This was agreed by assent.

Members discussed that this was a good use of a community asset being introduced and re-opened to the community.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Jenny Johnson that the Director of Resources be authorised to enter into negotiations on the basis of the re-submitted business plans contained in the exempt Appendix 2 of this report to agree Heads of Terms for the transfer of the former library assets at Wallasey Village to the Wallasey Village Library and Community Centre, Irby to the Friends of Irby Library, and Higher Bebington library to the Co-op Academy Bebington. Once agreed these Heads of Terms are to be reported back to this Committee for a decision or onward recommendation to Policy and Resources Committee. This was agreed by assent.

The Chair noted that the additional 9 weeks that had been added to the timeline had been beneficial for small businesses as creating a business plan could be a daunting task. Members noted the importance of keeping as many libraries open as possible and welcomed this recommendation.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Mike Collins that the Director of Resources be authorised to market the site of the former Hoylake Library for sale or commercial leasing on the basis that it is surplus to the requirements of the Committee. This was agreed by assent.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Tony Smith that the removal of the former Woodchurch Library asset from the CAT process be approved. This was agreed by assent.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Judith Grier that Policy and Resources be recommended to agree that Higher Bebington Library be appropriated by the Council for educational purposes. This was agreed by assent.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Tony Smith that Policy and Resources be recommended to agree that the former Woodchurch Library asset be appropriated by the Council for educational purposes. This was agreed by assent.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Jenny Johnson that Policy and Resources be recommended to agree that the site of the former Hoylake Library be marketed for sale or commercial leasing. This was agreed by assent.

A discussion ensued around officer recommendation 5, where Members agreed that both interested parties for the Bromborough Civic Centre should be invited to bring a business plan.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Jenny Johnson that both interested parties for the Bromborough Civic Centre, Neo and Bromborough Community Group, be invited to bring business plans on the basis of their submitted expression of interest, incorporating their vision for the library element. This was agreed by assent.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Ivan Camphor that the former public toilets in Moreton which had been declared surplus to requirements be transferred to Moreton in Bloom, based on the information in the exempt appendix 7 of the report. This was agreed by assent.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Paul Martin that £52,000 of the surplus revenue amount allocated to Community Asset Transfer be used to meet the holding costs of the former libraries in 2023/24 prior to transfer. This was agreed by assent.

It was moved by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Sue Percy that the remaining revenue balance of £62,417 be retained to support the library element of Bromborough Civic Centre if members decide to transfer this asset at a future point in the financial year 2023/24. This was agreed by assent.

The Assistant Director – Special Projects outlined that in relation to Brackenwood, two business plans had been submitted and there was one that could potentially be taken forward, the considerations around the Council's local plan and brownfield strategy were set out in the report. It was reported that the work done so far on Brackenwood was preliminary due it being part of the CAT process.

A discussion on officer recommendation 1c around Brackenwood Golf Course ensued with Members querying the suitability of the land for sports pitches and the competing priorities of the brownfield first strategy and Biodiversity Net Gain. The Assistant Director - Special Projects clarified that whilst not all of Brackenwood could be used for playing pitches due to the slopes of the land and existing drainage issues, parts of the site were suitable, and the idea was to provide a hub of playing pitches with one centralised changing and servicing facility. Members made it clear that they were not in support of the officer recommendation.

On a motion by the Chair, seconded by Councillor Tony Smith it was –

Resolved – That under section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A (as amended) to that Act. The Public Interest test has been applied and favours exclusion.

Following the exempt session, the press and public were invited back into the meeting.

The Chair moved a motion, seconded by Councillor Naomi Graham that the Director of Resources be authorised to start negotiating with Brackenwood Community Golf Club Ltd on the basis of their business plan, to seek to agree Heads of Terms to transfer the course and report back on the outcome of the negotiations and options, which support Local Plan priorities for decision by this committee. This was agreed by assent.

Resolved - That

- (1) the Director of Resources be authorised to conclude the transfer of assets of Pensby Library to Pioneer People and Prenton Library to St. Stephens Church on the basis of the terms reported in the exempt appendix 1 to this report.**
- (2) the Director of Resources be authorised to enter into negotiations on the basis of the re-submitted business plans contained in the exempt Appendix 2 of this report to agree Heads of Terms for the transfer of the former library assets at Wallasey Village to the Wallasey Village Library and Community Centre, Irby to the Friends of Irby Library, and Higher Bebington library to the Co-op Academy Bebington. Once agreed these Heads of Terms are to be reported back to this Committee for a decision or onward recommendation to Policy and Resources Committee.**
- (3) the Director of Resources be authorised to market the site of the former Hoylake Library for sale or commercial leasing on the basis that it is surplus to the requirements of the Committee.**
- (4) the removal of the former Woodchurch Library asset from the CAT process be approved.**
- (5) Policy and Resources be recommended to agree that Higher Bebington Library be appropriated by the Council for educational purposes.**
- (6) Policy and Resources be recommended to agree that the former Woodchurch Library asset be appropriated by the Council for educational purposes.**
- (7) Policy and Resources be recommended to agree that the site of the former Hoylake Library be marketed for sale or commercial leasing.**

- (8) both interested parties for the Bromborough Civic Centre, Neo and Bromborough Community Group, be invited to bring business plans on the basis of their submitted expression of interest incorporating their vision for the library element.**
- (9) the former public toilets in Moreton which had been declared surplus to requirements be transferred to Moreton in Bloom, based on the information in the exempt appendix 7 of this report.**
- (10) £52,000 of the surplus revenue amount allocated to Community Asset Transfer be used to meet the holding costs of the former libraries in 2023/24 prior to transfer.**
- (11) the remaining revenue balance of £62,417 be retained to support the library element of Bromborough Civic Centre if members decide to transfer this asset at a future point in the financial year 2023/24.**
- (12) the Director of Resources be authorised to start negotiating with Brackenwood Community Golf Club Ltd on the basis of their business plan, to seek to agree Heads of Terms to transfer the course and report back on the outcome of the negotiations and options, which support Local Plan priorities for decision by this committee.**