

REPORT TITLE: Community Asset Transfer of PCC former Play Centres

Councillor Nigel North, Cabinet Member for Environment Capital and Neighbourhoods.

November 2014

Cabinet portfolio holder:	Councillor Nigel North, Cabinet Member for Environment Capital and Neighbourhoods.
Responsible Director:	Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Director of Communities
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes If yes, has it been included on the Forward Plan: Yes Unique Key decision reference from the Forward Plan: KEY/02MAY14/01
Is this decision eligible for call-in?	YES
Does this Public report have any annex that contains exempt information?	NO

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S

The Cabinet Member for Environment Capital and Neighbourhoods is requested to:

1. Approve the asset transfer of 5 former play centres following completion of the Community Asset Transfer process as set out in the Community Asset Transfer Strategy 2013-2017, to the recommended organisation from 31st December 2014.
2. Approve the re-designation of 2 former play centres to the status of a community centre
3. Approve the retention of 1 former play centre within Resources, School Team for development as part of the Phoenix School extension

1. SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES

- 1.1 The Council sees community asset transfer as a positive opportunity to encourage and strengthen long term partnerships with the civil society sector that will contribute to enhancing communities and their involvement in Peterborough.
- 1.2 The key drivers are the Localism Act which encourages community empowerment and the Council's commitment to protect locally valued community based facilities through community asset transfer.
- 1.3 In September 2013, Cabinet approved the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Strategy 2013 – 2017 which sets out the principles and process in order to manage applications for the transfer of community based buildings to an organisation from the civil society sector. The CAT Strategy process complies with the Council's Corporate Property Strategy, Asset Management Plan and other relevant council policies.

- 1.5 The process of community asset transfer as set out in the Community Asset Transfer Strategy 2013 – 2017 has been applied to 8 former Council Play Centres.
- 1.6 3 options for continuation are recommended for each of the centres as detailed below
1. Development Opportunity on the site of the former play centre
 2. Re-designation of the former play centre as a Community Centre to be managed by the Community Association managing the adjacent community facility via a standard lease
 3. Continuation to full community asset transfer via long term lease arrangement
- 1.6 The Chestnuts Centre is also recommended for full community asset transfer despite this being adjacent to an existing community centre which would typically fall within option 2. This is because there is more than one interested local group wishing to take on the management of the centre. As a competitive situation has arisen, in line with the procedures in the strategy the successful management group will be determined via a bidding process
- 1.7 The recommendations for each centre are summarised below within one of the above categories depending on individual circumstances:

1. Site Development Opportunity		
Former Play Centre	Community Led Group	Ward Location
The Tunnel	Orton Community Association	Orton Longueville

2. Re-designation as Community Centre. Former play centre to be managed by Community Association via lease on adjacent community building		
Former Play Centre	Community Led Group	Ward Location
Copeland	Copeland Community Association	Bretton South
Charteris	Families First	Dogsthorpe

3. Continuation to full community asset transfer via long term lease arrangement		
Former Play Centre	Community Led Group	Ward Location
Crofts Corner	Bretton Parish Council	Bretton North
Thistle Drive	Thistle Drive Centre CIC	Stanground Central
Paston Farm	Paston Farm Foundation	Paston
The Spinney	Little Miracles	Ravensthorpe
Chestnuts & adjacent Norman Road Community Centre	Saxon Road Community Association	East

2. PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide background information and to seek the Cabinet Member's approval in relation to the recommendations.
- 2.2 This decision is proposed in accordance with the delegations for Councillor North, Cabinet Member for Environment Capital and Neighbourhoods exercising delegated authority under

paragraph 36(b) of Part 3 of the constitution in accordance with the terms of their portfolio at paragraph 3.5(a).

3. **TIMESCALE**

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO
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4. **DETAILS OF DECISION REQUIRED**

- 4.1 Approval is required for Thistle Drive, Paston Farm, The Spinney and Crofts Corner to be subject to asset transfer to the respective recommended organisations.
- 4.2 The recommended organisations have demonstrated via the exploration of the feasibility for transfer process that they meet the required criteria as set out in the Community Asset Transfer Strategy.
- 4.2 The community centre will be subject to asset transfer by 31st December 2014. A Tenancy at Will is to be in place pending agreement of an internal repairing lease on or before 31st December 2014. In addition to the Lease, the Council will enter into a Management Agreement setting out the recommended organisations' management obligations in relation to the centre.
- 4.3 The decision to enter into a Tenancy at Will pending negotiation and agreement of an internal repairing lease and Management Agreement and the approval to enter into the lease will be made by Head of Corporate Property and Children's Resources, acting under delegated authority from the Director of Resources.

5. **CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The Community Asset Transfer Strategy 2013 – 2017 was written in conjunction with relevant senior officers at the Council and Community Action Peterborough (which is a representative body of voluntary groups across Peterborough). The final document was discussed and agreed by Cabinet in September 2013.

6. **ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES**

- 6.1 The recommended organisation will:
- 6.1.1 Occupy the former centre and manage the building in line with the terms and conditions of the lease and management plan.
- 6.1.2 Deliver local services that address local needs through community led and community controlled assets
- 6.2 Assets of key social importance within communities remain open and offer services relevant to the needs of the local residents

7. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS & ANY RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 7.1 Full Community Asset Transfer - The recommended organisation has responded to the request for local groups to come forward and take on the management responsibilities of the centre following the withdrawal of the play service budget from April 2013;
- 7.2 Re-designation as Community Centre - The former play centre is adjacent to an existing community centre which enables the easy extension of an existing standard lease arrangement with an established Community Association;

- 7.3 Site Development Opportunity - The Council has presented an overwhelming case for development opportunities at the site of the Tunnel former play centre that enables broader and positive facilities for the benefit of the wider community.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 To do nothing – This was not an option as the buildings would need to be closed and boarded up.
- 8.2 Sell the former play centres to obtain a capital receipt - This may be considered at a future date if the transfer process is unsuccessful

9. IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Property – The centres not to be transferred will remain in a standard lease arrangement which will have on-going repair and maintenance implications as well as the council retaining responsibility for the structural upkeep of the building. These centres will be formally re-designated as community centres.
- 9.2 Finance – 7 of the 8 former play centres will be leased to the recommended provider with peppercorn rent. Those completing the asset transfer process will be taking on the full repairing and maintenance responsibility for the internal, external and structural upkeep of the buildings. Running costs for The Tunnel will continue to be covered by Communities & Targeted Services until the inevitable demolition of the existing building in preparation for the new school build.
- 9.3 Legal and Governance – The title to the Property does not prevent the Council from entering into the lease. The documentation required is also in accordance with the Community Asset transfer Strategy approved by Cabinet and with existing powers under s.123 of the Local Government Act 1972.

10. DECLARATIONS / CONFLICTS OF INTEREST & DISPENSATIONS GRANTED

N/A

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985) and The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Community Asset Transfer Strategy 2013 - 2017