

REPORT FROM: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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WATERSIDE COMMUNITY CENTRE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To explore the options for the future ownership and use of the Waterside Community Centre.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:

- (1) Reaffirm the decision taken by the Executive, i.e. to transfer the responsibility and running costs of the building to Positive Action in the Community to extend their current service provision, and to explore the scope to work with Lancashire Sport Partnership Ltd (CSI).
- (2) grant delegated authority, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to the Chief Executive to negotiate the terms on which the building is transferred to Positive Action in the Community, and
- (3) agree that should the negotiations conclude with a proposal that the building be disposed of at a discount that the matter be referred back to the Executive for confirmation.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1), (2) To ensure the future use of the building as an asset to benefit the community.
- (3) To comply with Contract Procedure Rules.

BACKGROUND

As a result of the Waterside community building being empty there have been reports of increased vandalism and antisocial behaviour. Concerns have been raised at the Colne Community Safety Partnership meeting.

As a valuable community asset it is important that options for its future use be considered. Through the Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Council for Voluntary Service, groups/organisations were encouraged to submit initial Expressions of Interest to take on the responsibility and running of the building. This would be a 'whole transfer' and organisations would be taking on the full running costs of the building and/or providing any services.

A report to explore the options for the future ownership and use of the Waterside Community Centre was presented to a meeting of the Council's Executive in March 2018.

Two Expressions of Interest were received and considered

- Positive Action in the Community
- Lancashire Sport Partnership Ltd (CSI)

Based on the information received from the two organisations the proposal from Positive Action in the Community (PAC) offered the most realistic prospects for a sustainable future for the centre. PAC has a trusted track record in delivering services for the community and their proposal reflected a clear understanding of how a resource of this type could be run.

Their proposal would extend their current programme of support for vulnerable people and include term time youth club and youth based activities at the site.

PAC also indicated that they would like to explore the potential of allowing other groups where appropriate to use space within the centre.

ISSUE

Members should note, however, that a third Expression of Interest was received in time but inadvertently was not included with the afore-mentioned report. This proposal is to create a business offering flexible childcare. Full details can be found in Appendix 3

Having considered this proposal, it is still the view of Officers to work with Positive Action in the Community.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: There are no policy implications arising directly from the contents of this report.

Financial: Councillors are advised that local authorities are generally under an obligation to dispose of land for the best consideration possible (as per s123 of the Local Government Act 1972). However, the General Disposal Consent (Circular 06/03 – Local Government Act 1972 General Disposal Consent (England) 2003) does permit a local authority to dispose of land/property at less than the best consideration (i.e. at an undervalue) where doing so will help secure the promotion or improvement in the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of its areas. This applies to undervalues up to a maximum of £2m.

The building is listed on the Council's asset register in the current year with a value of £48,134. The land is valued separately at £2,260.

The Council's Contract Procedure Rules permit the disposal of land/property at a discount subject to the approval of the Executive following consideration of a report which sets out the unrestricted and restricted values of the property together with the level of discount and reasons for the discount being granted.

At this stage the likely terms and basis of transfer are not known so to comply with the above (if applicable) would require a further report to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Legal: There are no legal implications arising directly from the contents of this report. Should Councillors agree to dispose of the site, the necessary legal steps will be taken to transfer the premises to Positive Action in the Community.

Risk Management: There are no risk management implications arising directly from the contents of this report

Health and Safety: There are no health and safety implications arising directly from the contents of this report.

Sustainability: there are no implications arising directly from the contents of this report.

Community Safety: There are no community safety issues arising directly from the contents of this report.

Equality and Diversity: there are no equality and diversity issues arising directly from the contents of this report.

APPENDICES:

- Appendix 1: Proposal from Positive Action in the Community
- Appendix 2: Proposal from Lancashire Sport Partnership Ltd (CSI)
- Appendix 3: Proposal for flexible childcare business

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS: Report to the Council's Executive 15th March 2018