

AGENDA ITEM 3**RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL****CABINET****27th AUGUST 2015****RCT TOGETHER PROCESS****REPORT OF THE GROUP DIRECTOR, CORPORATE & FRONTLINE SERVICES**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

This report provides Members with the recommendations of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Steering Group in respect of :-

1.1 Promoting RCT Together: 'Community Asset and Service Transfer Expressions of Interest' on the following public domains, to assist in establishing an open, equitable and transparent process for service and asset transfers:

- i. RCT Together Webpage
- ii. Sell2Wales/Online Journal European Union (OJEU)
- iii. Voluntary Sector Liaison Steering Group Websites

1.2 Progressing the identified Expressions of Interest for further consideration.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet:-

2.1 Endorses the Voluntary Sector Liaison Steering Groups recommendation to provide a '30 Day Window of Opportunity' for 'Promotion of Assets' that have been identified by the Group; and to

2.2 Endorse that those Expressions of Interest already identified by the Voluntary Sector Liaison Steering Group (as identified in Appendix A of the report) can be considered further for Community Asset and Service Transfer.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The RCT Together Approach for progressing Community Asset Transfers was launched on 25th March 2015.

3.2 To date sixty Expressions of Interest have been received from a variety of existing and newly established community and voluntary groups with proposals ranging from taking over a small paddling pool to taking on the partial leasehold of a Leisure Centre. We have also received a number of service transfer requests for which we have yet to fully consider as to their suitability and viability.

- 3.3 Working collaboratively with RCT Officers from the Community Asset and Service Transfer Panel and members of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Steering Group (A Cabinet Steering group created under the Leaders Scheme of Delegation) we have been looking to refine the current Community Asset Transfer processes in line with good practice and guidance obtained from the Welsh Government, and other local authority areas, and also to reflect the service transfer requests we have received.
- 3.4 The current Best Practice Guidance on Community Asset Transfers in Wales from the Welsh Governments National Assets Working Group states:
- "Where appropriate, assets identified as suitable for community transfer should be flagged through a "Window of Opportunity" process to ensure fairness and transparency. The National Assets Working Group and the Welsh Government's land transfer protocol recommend highlighting availability on e-PIMS. Interested organisations should be offered the opportunity to submit an Expression of Interest (see below) within a defined time period. The time period will be dependent on the asset and nature of transfer. This may be on a restricted basis to specific organisations, particularly if an element of service delivery is to also be transferred. However, there will also be circumstances where the Local Authority wishes to engage with one organisation only such as a Town Council or Community Council and the Policy should make provision for such cases.*
- 3.5 The Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member of Tackling Poverty, Engagement and Housing and the relevant Group or Service Directors have been advising the Community Asset Development Officer and Land Review Manager on what specific Expressions of Interest can be progressed to a Business Plan Stage.
- 3.6 To date several Expressions of Interest have been recommended by the Voluntary Sector Liaison Steering Group for progression and endorsement by Cabinet Members is sought. (Appendix A provides a summary of the Expressions).
- 3.7 A transparent and equitable process to promote these opportunities to a range of audiences who may also wish to submit an Expression of Interest is therefore needed.
- 3.8 At the joint meeting of the Voluntary Sector Liaison Steering Group and the Community Asset Service Transfer Group on the 30th July 2015 it was agreed that a recommendation be put to the Cabinet to approve the process for agreeing a 30 day 'Window of Opportunity' whereby all RCT Together Expressions of Interest proposals for Community Asset and Service Transfers that have Received agreement to progress to the Business Plan stage should then be promoted for a 30 day period to allow other Community and Voluntary Organisations a fair and equitable opportunity to submit their own proposals, which could enable complementary and collaborative approaches in maximising use of Council Assets.
- 3.9 Promotion of the Expressions of Interest would be in respect of publication on the RCT Together Webpage; Sell2Wales/Online Journal European Union (OJEU) and the websites of the Voluntary Sector Members, sitting on the Voluntary Sector Liaison Steering Group.

4 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The decision to propose a '30 Day Window of Opportunity' will allow Organisations sufficient time to submit an initial expression of interest, ensuring the principles of openness, fairness and transparency are complied with. These timelines would also satisfy any potential Procurement/OJEU considerations, reducing the risk of challenge.
- 4.2 Appendix A outlines a summary of the Expressions of Interest, which would be promoted on the RCT Together Webpage at the earliest opportunity.

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Appendix A**RCT Together - Window Of Opportunity**

RCT Council has received the following Expressions of Interest from community organisations who:

- Are interested in running a Council service or taking over a Council building in their local community.
- Have offered creative solutions on how local services could be run differently in partnership with the Council or directly by them or members of their community.
- Are interested in safeguarding services and maximising use of community buildings.

We will provide a "30 day Window of Opportunity" for any community groups wishing to submit their own proposals for the following asset(s) and/or service(s) transfers in order to ensure equity of opportunity and fairness to all community groups.

If you wish to submit an Expression of Interest for the following asset(s) or service(s), please complete our Expression of Interest Form (which can be found at the bottom of our RCT Together Webpage www.rctcbc.gov.uk/rcttogether) and submit by the closing date shown below either by post to Debra Hanney, RCT County Borough Council, Ty Elai, Dinas Isaf, Williamstown, RCT, CF40 1NY or email to RCTtogether@rctcbc.gov.uk. If you wish to discuss your proposal before completing the Expression of Interest form, please contact Debra Hanney on 01443 425715 or 07880 044520.

Equally if your group have your own ideas for running or managing a service or building which are not listed below, you are still able to submit your own Expression of Interest. We will then advise you separately if your proposal can be progressed.

Asset or Service	Proposals Received to Date
Maritime Recreation Ground	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To provide an upgraded facility for local sports clubs in the area featuring a 3G pitch and also a 5 a-side football pitches which can be used as training facilities for other sports eg. Hockey, rugby 2) Feasibility study looking at the range of potential development opportunities for the Maritime Recreation Ground
Tennis Courts at Wattstown Park	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To promote, support and encourage physical activity within the communities of Wattstown, Ynyshir and surrounding areas by upgrading to a polymeric rubber multi sports play facility on the existing tennis courts area at Wattstown Park.
Space within Llantwit Fadre Leisure Centre	<p>This Expression of Interest is to use free space within Llantwit Fadre Leisure Centre to develop a nursery provision. The proposal does not affect the wider Leisure Delivery Programme at the Centre and will complement the existing provision.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) To develop a nursery to support local children with wraparound childcare. 2) To support the increased use of the Leisure Centre

Community Buildings Asset Holder	1) To develop a Community Buildings Trust which could hold community assets in one place. To take on responsibility for property maintenance and running costs, liaising with local groups for the sub-letting of space. To provide expertise to reduce running costs for the buildings and reduce council tax exposure creating savings which could, in combination, provider for lower running costs and increase the appetite of local groups to establish community use as they are not required to assume the responsibilities for the buildings.
Community Sport Consortium Bid	1) To consider the potential to develop a consortium bid to respond to new arrangements for commissioning under the current consultation document issued by Sport Wales.
Maerdy Paddling Pool	2) Proposal to take over the management of Maerdy Paddling Pool to offer social activities for the children as well as support local training and volunteering. To reduce Anti-Social Behaviour, improve community cohesion, increase skills and qualifications to support employability.
Gelligaled Paddling Pool	1) To take over the management of our paddling pool. We would also like to utilise the space for community activity outside of the normal pool season. This will offer community activity which aims to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour, mountain fires and support overall community cohesion.
Land adjacent to Porth Fire Station	1) We propose to construct a closed circuit multi use cycling facility tying in to Route 881 of the current national cycling network, this would create the very first cycling centre of excellence in Wales. With the circuit being based in Porth it would serve the Rhondda, surrounding valleys of RCT and the whole of South Wales by offering traffic free all year round activities for schools, sporting groups and individuals in the surrounding regions. One of the main aims of the track is to create a safe relaxed environment for Children and beginner level riders to come and ride bikes with the support of the clubs British Cycling trained coaches. Due to RCT being one of the most deprived regions in Wales we would aim to offer bikes and required kit at little to no cost to those most at need in the surrounding areas.

NB. Where possible RCT Council will favour complementary and collaborative proposals which demonstrate maximising the use and sustainability of community assets and services.

Groups will be advised in writing if their Expressions of Interest can be progressed (or not) to the Business Plan Stage.