
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

17 March 2020

Cabinet

Title: Community Asset Transfer Application – Arran Youth Centre – Arran Youth Foundations

Purpose: To agree the transfer of ownership of Arran Youth Centre and its grounds from North Ayrshire Council to the Company Limited by Guarantee “Arran Youth Foundations”.

Recommendation: That Cabinet:

- a) Agrees to the asset transfer of Arran Youth Centre and its grounds from North Ayrshire Council to the Company Limited by Guarantee, “Arran Youth Foundations”;
- b) Authorises officers to conclude the associated legal and community asset transfer process; and
- c) Approves the recommended terms of transfer on this occasion at 1% of the property valuation of £20,000 (£200 in total).

1. Executive Summary

1.1 The report proposes the community asset transfer of Arran Youth Centre and its grounds from North Ayrshire Council to the Company Limited by Guarantee “Arran Youth Foundations.”

1.2 The transfer of the Arran Youth Centre will provide a sustainable base for the local youth provision in a facility which has been declared surplus to service requirements by North Ayrshire Council. The proposed uses include a range of events and activities which contribute to their key objectives:

- To provide a safe, warm environment in which young people can meet.
- To build the capacity of young people by involving them in management and decision making.
- To develop educational, physical and social skills and foundations of friendship through a variety of activities and events.

- 1.3 This report recommends that Cabinet agrees to the transfer with an associated 1% of the valuation costs applied and that officers should be authorised to conclude the process under these terms.

2. Background

- 2.1 Under the terms of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, community asset transfer provides an opportunity for people to be involved in developing and providing opportunities or services for their local communities. It may also allow groups to develop commercial ventures, which will support community benefit. Asset transfer may also mean that public assets get used more frequently and more effectively. Community-led ownership may also allow additional opportunities for groups to secure extra funding or resources. policy as aligned to the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
- 2.2 Arran Youth Foundations has been providing a high-quality youth provision on the island since it was established in 2008. This arrangement was formalised in 2014 when North Ayrshire Council developed a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Arran Youth Foundations for the delivery of youth work on the island. The organisation has been recognised in Youthlink national awards for the quality of their provision. Arran Youth Foundation currently use the facility as their base and through the SLA, are fully responsible for the care and maintenance of the facility
- 2.3 Arran Youth Centre is a portacabin and is located at the rear of Arran High School in Lamlash. It is easily accessible to the c. 240 young people who attend the school. The asset complies with the Disability Discrimination Act. The cabins are well equipped to provide a conducive space for young people to meet.
- 2.4 Once the transfer is complete, the asset will continue to be used to for the delivery of youth provision. This currently includes 16 weekly sessions including activities that support young people to learn new skills, make friendships, increase their social circle, grow in confidence and increasingly take on responsibility through active engagement. Activities help tackle social isolation and feelings of exclusion and support with wellbeing and good mental health. Many young people attend to discuss issues including depression, stress, grief, bullying, sexual assault, sexual orientation and many other issues.
- 2.5 Currently, the local Duke of Edinburgh group, HSCP, an arts & crafts children's group and sign language classes all use the centre. It is anticipated that these will not only continue but external partners will make more use of the facility and widen the scope of events and activities on offer on the island whilst supporting Arran Youth Foundations with income generation.
- 2.6 The temporary nature of the portacabin means that, at a point in the future, a replacement will be necessary. Arran Youth Foundations are keen to ensure that they acquire ownership of the portacabins and land. This will provide them with the autonomy to develop plans for a "fit for purpose" facility.
- 2.7 The transfer of the Arran Youth Centre offers a long-term solution to the sustainability of permanent accommodation from which to deliver their work.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:

- a) Agrees the asset transfer of Arran Youth Centre and its grounds from North Ayrshire Council to the Company Limited by Guarantee, "Arran Youth Foundations";
- b) Authorises officers to conclude the associated legal and community asset transfer process; and
- c) Approves the recommended terms of transfer on this occasion at 1% of the property valuation of £20,000 (£200 in total).

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

4.1 Through the transfer of the Arran Youth Centre, the Council will achieve a capital receipt of £200 (which is 1% of the valuation figure), a reduction in revenue expenditure and, in the longer term, there will cost-avoidance in the capital budget due to the temporary nature of the buildings. The sum proposed reflects the community benefit.

Human Resources

4.2 None.

Legal

4.3 The Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 places a statutory obligation on the Council to obtain the best price or the best rent when it disposes of any asset by sale or lease. These regulations permit a disposal at less than the best price achievable where either (a) the property is valued at less than £10000, or (b) the Council has compared the financial cost of transfer against the community benefits and determined that the transfer is reasonable and promotes either economic development or regeneration, health, social well-being or environmental well-being.

Equality/Socio-economic

4.4 There will be considerable socio-economic benefits from the transfer, hence the 1% figure proposed. These include a variety of positive impacts for the young people on the Island of Arran, described at paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5.

Environmental and Sustainability

4.5 The transfer seeks to provide sustainable community facilities.

Key Priorities

4.6 The proposals contained within the report support the following North Ayrshire Council Plan priorities:

- Active and strong communities
- Inclusive, growing and enterprising local economy
- People enjoy good life-long health and wellbeing.

Community Wealth Building

4.7 This proposal supports the following pillars of community wealth building:

- Advancing community enterprises;
- Advancing local ownership of underused land and buildings; and
- Supporting local business activities and increasing the variety of ownership models.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The consultation required in terms of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 for a community asset transfer application has now concluded with no objections received.
- 5.2 Consultation has taken place with Education and Legal Services. Both parties are happy in principle with the asset being transferred on the understanding that the formal offer includes the need for discussions to take place agreeing rights to ongoing access and the separation of costs such as utility and broadband.
- 5.3 As part of the process of applying for a Community Asset Transfer, Arran Youth Foundations created a survey in order to ask members of the Arran community if they supported the bid to own the youth cabin. The survey was promoted by word of mouth, social media and email. Arran Youth Foundations visited Arran High School to provide any high school pupil who wished to respond the opportunity to do so. 292 people took part in the consultation which had only 2 negative respondents.

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For further information please contact **Rhona Arthur, Interim Head of Connected Communities**), on **(01294) 324415**.

Background Papers

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