
NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

29 November 2022

Cabinet

Title: Community Asset Transfer Application – Ardeer Quarry Football Ground and adjacent land

Purpose: To seek approval for the transfer of ownership of Ardeer Quarry Football Ground and adjacent land.

Recommendation: That Cabinet:

- a) Agrees to the asset transfer of Ardeer Quarry Football Ground and adjacent land from North Ayrshire Council to Scottish Incorporated Charitable Organisation (SCIO), "TASS Community Sports."
- b) Approves the recommended terms of transfer on this occasion at 10% of the property valuation of £25,000 (totalling £2500); and
- c) Authorises officers to conclude the associated legal and community asset transfer processes for Ardeer Quarry Football Ground and adjacent land.

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report proposes the community asset transfer of Ardeer Quarry Football Ground and adjacent land from North Ayrshire Council to the Scottish Incorporated Charitable Organisation (SCIO) "TASS Community Sports" (TASS).
- 1.2 The transfer of the land will provide a sustainable base for local community activity focusing on football and physical activity. The proposed uses include a range of events and activities which contribute to the Club's key objectives.
- 1.3 This report recommends that Cabinet agrees to the transfer of Ardeer Quarry Football Ground and adjacent land with an associated 10% of the valuation costs of £25,000 (£2500 in total) applied. This reflects the condition of the facility, savings made against current upkeep and the potential social return on investment. The report also recommends 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. Furthermore, community-led ownership may allow additional opportunities for groups to secure extra funding or resources.
- 2.2 The transfer of Ardeer Quarry Football Ground and adjacent land will provide a sustainable base for the local youth football provision. The asset recently came back into the Council's operational responsibility after its lease was relinquished by KA Leisure and is not required for service delivery by North Ayrshire Council.
- 2.3 The proposed uses include a range of events and activities which contribute to TASS Community Sports (TASS)'s charitable objectives: *"The aim of the Club is to use football to provide a fun, educational leisure time activity for boys and girls and so to help develop their physical and mental capacities and social skills."*
- 2.4 TASS has been successfully running a football club in the heart of the local community for over 37 years. Securing the ownership of their own ground will allow TASS to further develop in a variety of ways to better serve the community. These include the opportunity to:
- develop a modern football facility, allowing the Club to expand and grow;
 - increase membership by at least another 150 children, thus widening their involvement with the local community; and
 - encourage more children and families to be involved with the Club's activities and engage in healthy lifestyle while having fun through playing football.
- 2.5 Sport is a fundamental way to develop community connection, and a sense of place and belonging. A sports club is a focal point where children can attend activities regularly, building friendships and influenced by positive role models. Parents can interact and start to extend their role into volunteering and, local people can meet with each other to build local support and friendship networks. People feel safer, valued and part of the community where there are clubs, activities, and facilities. The ownership of the asset will support TASS to contribute towards this community cohesion.
- 2.6 TASS is requesting the ownership of the current football field to deliver better outcomes. The request includes Ardeer Quarry Football Ground and two areas of land that form part of the overall recreational area (Plan of Ardeer Quarry Football Ground and adjacent land – Appendix I). The Club proposes to continue to play on the existing football field, taking on its care and maintenance, as well as facilitating bookings for other clubs and groups to make increased use of the asset. In addition, the Club intends to start to maintain the adjacent land and use it for training. In time, TASS hopes to use the land to create an all-weather playing surface to assist with training all year round.
- 2.7 Securing ownership, enhancing the assets and increasing the range of events and activities within an improved facility will encourage a wider range of people to get involved. Participants will benefit from being more physically active and engaged in sport. This will support several strategic and policy areas relating to the delivery of North Ayrshire's Active Communities Strategy, the Local Outcome Improvement Plan's

Wellbeing priority, the National Performance Framework's priorities of physical activity and positive mental health and wellbeing, and Public Health Priority 6, Diet and Healthy Weight. Opportunities for local volunteering will increase, stimulating involvement in shaping and regenerating community life, building self-esteem and confidence.

- 2.8 The Club have a well-developed business plan, which has been reviewed by officers from across the Council as part of the community asset transfer process. The business plan highlights key areas for investment in order to continue the improvements on site, as well as deliver an increased range of activities across age groups and socio-economic groups.
- 2.9 The statutory consultation required by the community asset transfer process has taken place, with no objections received. In addition, consultation has taken place with the current, key stakeholders who have premises adjacent to the assets being requested and who share the access road. Council officers have been supporting TASS and key stakeholders as the operational details are agreed. This will be concluded during the legal process to conclude the community asset transfer process, which would follow Cabinet approval. The stakeholders will be encouraged to seek independent legal advice with an appropriate contribution towards their costs.
- 2.10 The Community Empowerment Act provides that while relevant authorities have a duty to secure Best Value in their operations, including when disposing of or letting property, it has long been recognised that best value does not always mean the highest possible price. All authorities have the ability to dispose of property at less than market value where there are wider public benefits to be gained. This is set out in the Disposal of Land by Local Authorities (Scotland) Regulations 2010, and in the Scottish Public Finance Manual for other relevant authorities.

The financial and non-financial impacts, both positive and negative, of the different options must be balanced. The price proposed reflects the ground's condition, the investment the club plans to make, and full community ownership will facilitate the implementation of comprehensive business plan proposals for envisaged development. All Community Asset Transfer agreements are safeguarded with 'claw-back' provisions.

3. Proposals

3.1 It is proposed that Cabinet:

- a) Agrees to the asset transfer of Ardeer Quarry Football Ground and adjacent land from North Ayrshire Council to Scottish Incorporated Charitable Organisation (SCIO), "TASS Community Sports"
- b) Approves the recommended terms of transfer on this occasion at 10% of the property valuation of £25,000 (totalling £2500); and
- c) Authorises officers to conclude the associated legal and community asset transfer processes for Ardeer Quarry Football Ground and adjacent land.

4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

Financial

- 4.1 Through the transfer of the assets, the Council will achieve an overall capital receipt of £2500 (which is 10% of the valuation figure of £25,000), a reduction in revenue expenditure and, in the longer term, there will cost-avoidance in the capital budget due to the need for future investment in replacement of the pitch and maintenance of the adjacent land. 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 £10,000, 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 for children, young people and the wider community in the Ardeer area of Stevenston and the value proposed reflects the community benefits.

Climate Change and Carbon

- 4.5 The transfer seeks to provide sustainable community facilities through securing the open space in Stevenston for recreational purposes.

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. The outcome is outlined in section 2.9.
- 5.2 Consultation has taken place with, Streetscene, Finance, Estates, Property Maintenance and Investment, and Legal Services. All parties are supportive of the proposal for the listed assets.

Audrey Sutton
Executive Director (Communities and Education)

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

Background Papers

Plan of Ardeer Quarry Football Ground and adjacent land - Appendix 1



Garnock Rd

Garnock Rd

Ardeer Rifle
& Pistol Club

Ardeer Recreation
Bowls Club
Ground - home

Hillcrest Dr

Hillcrest Dr

Hillcrest Dr

