

Bath & North East Somerset Council

MEETING:	Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel
MEETING DATE:	17 September 2012
TITLE:	Community Asset Transfer – Update and Next Steps
WARD:	ALL
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	
List of attachments to this report: APPENDIX: Background and Briefing Materials relating to Community Asset Transfer and Assets of Community Value	

1 THE ISSUE

1.1 This report updates the Panel on progress made since the previous meeting in relation to community assets. It also sets out opportunities and materials for members to be updated on developments nationally and from work in other authorities.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel is asked to agree that:

- 2.1 The update information contained in the report be noted
- 2.2 Members note the materials and links on this subject set out in the report and Appendix
- 2.3 The members of the Panel's Community Assets sub-group be delegated to finalise the details of any visits or other research arising from this material
- 2.4 Any comments on the Assets of Community Value provisions be made to the Economic and Community Development Panel

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

4 THE REPORT

4.1 The Panel at its July meeting received a report and presentation on Community Asset Transfer and resolved to establish a group to discuss the policy development implications of this, to consist of Councillors Manda Rigby, John Bull, Colin Barrett and Paul Myers

4.2 Since that meeting there have been a number of key developments in this field which it is considered timely to bring to the full Panel during this cycle. These are

- After some delay, the national regulations arising from the Localism Act on “assets of community value” have now been published. This provision places a duty on authorities to maintain a register of such assets, using criteria laid down in the Act and regulations. Once an asset is placed on the register specific provisions apply when there is a proposal for sale in order to provide an opportunity for the community to prepare a “bid” for the asset. A report on the provisions of this aspect of the Localism Act is being presented to the Economic and Community Development panel on 27 September. A report will be presented to Cabinet on 10 October. In particular, the Council will need to be clear on the process and criteria for placing assets on the register.
- A Council Project Group on Community Assets has now been established and the first meeting arranged. It will be important to ensure that opportunities presented by the Localism Act provisions are linked with the Council’s overall approach to community assets as identified by the Panel in July. The Project Group will therefore receive reports on the Council’s approach to community assets and on the provisions within the Localism Act.

4.3 The Council’s approach to community assets is also linked to its wider approach to community engagement and localism. Different councils exemplify particular approaches to these issues and there are potential opportunities to engage with and learn from these through visits or other research. Examples include:

- Wiltshire Council, which is developing “[Community Campuses](#)” to bring together facilities in local communities
- Exeter- where the City Council is establishing “[Community Hubs](#)” and the County Council has transferred the Exeter community centre to a local trust.

4.4 Chapter 2 of the booklet [Localism in Action](#) sets out more detail on how Community Assets are being used in councils in the South West to improve community involvement.

4.5 In addition, the following councils have entered into the Government’s “multiple asset transfer” programme, which means that they are pursuing transfer of a number of assets to meet a particular policy goal or approach.

- **Herefordshire County Council** – planning to transfer multiple heritage properties in Ledbury town centre to provide a coordinated “Heritage Offer” and a sustainable future for significant heritage buildings.
- **Cheshire West & Chester Council** – planning to work with a housing association to progress the transfer of a number of assets to a “special purpose vehicle” as part of its approach to neighbourhood management. Over the next 3-5 years, the aim is to develop a community enterprise that is capable of delivering locally integrated public services in the area.
- **East Sussex County Council** - exploring collaborative approaches to property ownership with public services and the VCS through its SPACES - Strategic Property Asset Collaboration in East Sussex- working group
- **Leeds City Council** - reviewing its portfolio of community buildings
- **Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council** - developing a scheme to enable interim ownership with subsequent onward transfer to community organisations, when barriers to ownership and management have been addressed.
- **Wakefield Council** - implementing a systematic approach to multiple asset transfer.
- **Bristol City Council** - mapping community assets, other community resources and local needs/wishes/aspirations

5 RISK MANAGEMENT

5.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

6 EQUALITIES

6.1 An EqIA has not been completed as this report provides update information only

7 CONSULTATION

7.1 Consultation in this report take place with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Panel, the Strategic Director - Resources and the Divisional Director, Policy and Partnerships

8 ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN REACHING THE DECISION

8.1 *Social Inclusion; Customer Focus; Sustainability; Property; Corporate; Other Legal Considerations*

9 ADVICE SOUGHT

9.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer (Divisional Director – Legal and Democratic Services) and Section 151 Officer (Divisional Director - Finance) have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

Contact person	Andy Thomas, 01225 394322
Background papers	Community Asset Transfer- Presentation Resources Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel, 16 July 2012
Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format	

APPENDIX Background and Briefing Materials relating to Community Asset Transfer and Assets of Community Value

1. Localism Act and Assets of Community Value

[Bath & North East Somerset Council Quick Guide to the Localism Act](#)

Locality Website- [community right to bid](#)

2. Supporting materials and information relating to Community Asset Transfer

[“Making Assets Work”](#)- the Quirk review

[Asset Transfer Unit](#)

Asset Transfer Unit – [Example Asset Transfer Strategy](#)

[Multiple Asset Transfer Programme](#)

[Community Organisations Controlling Assets: A Better Understanding](#) (Summary of report from Joseph Rowntree Foundation)

3. Examples of Asset Transfer Policies from other Councils

[Bristol City Council](#)

[Ashfield District Council](#)

[Portsmouth City Council](#)