

# COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL COMMITTEE FOR BARROW

Meeting date: 6 March 2020

From: Executive Director – Corporate, Customer and Community Services

## CENTENARY BUILDING COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER

### **1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**1.1 This report brings a request for a Community Asset Transfer for the Centenary Building on Abbey Road in Barrow.**

### **2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

**2.1 The County Council's vision set out in the Council Plan 2018-2022 is to be "a Council that works with residents, businesses, communities and other organisations to deliver the best services possible within the available resources."**

**2.2 The work of Barrow Local Committee, through its Area Plan and projects helps to achieve the Council Plan 2018-2022 outcomes, which are:**

- **People in Cumbria are healthy and safe**
- **People in Cumbria are well connected and thriving**
- **The economy in Cumbria is thriving and benefits everyone**

**2.3 The development, operation and monitoring of the Council Plan requires a focus on the Council's performance against the identified outcomes, increasingly understood through localities. Barrow Area Plan sets out three targeted priorities for the area, which are:**

- **Improving health and well-being and tackling poverty**
- **To support Cumbria's Early Help strategy which enables support for children, families and young people**
- **Promoting sustainable economic growth and creating jobs**

**2.4 The assets the Council owns in local communities play an important part in enabling voluntary groups to come together and offer communities a range of activities and services that benefit the social and economic wellbeing of an area. Transferring assets to communities is an option where it is felt that this would support the achievement of the Council's priorities.**

- 2.5** *The Council's approach to transferring assets to the community is described in the Community Asset Transfer policy that has been agreed by Cabinet. Consideration is on a case-by-case basis; involving an assessment of any proposals being made against the well-being benefits to the community and whether it presents value for money. The Council's approach is intended to ensure that any transfer of property to the community groups will facilitate the enhancement of community facilities and support the delivery of high quality, customer focused services for the community.*
- 2.6** *In considering the potential for an asset transfer the Local Committee needs to consider its duties under the Equality Act; and in particular how the transfer of any asset would support the Council's aspirations for Equality for All.*

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1** *Local Committee are asked to note the request from Barrow Domestic Appliances for a Community Asset Transfer of the Centenary Building, and to provide their views regarding this request.*

### **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1** Members have previously discussed the request for a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) of the Centenary Building on Abbey Road, to Barrow Domestic Appliances C.I.O., via the monthly property update discussions which takes place at the end of Grants Panel.
- 4.2** Following the ceasing the delivery of Day Services from the Centenary Building, the property became vacant in March 2019, and is now surplus to the County Council's requirements. There is also a significant amount of work required to maintain and improve the building.
- 4.3** Through Area Planning discussions Members considered the potential opportunities for this building. Discussions were then held with Barrow Domestic Appliances (BDA) who expressed an interest in taking on the site in order to further develop and expand their offer to the community, as well as support more local employment, training, and volunteering opportunities. BDA have now submitted a business case ready to go to Cabinet for consideration.
- 4.4** BDA are a locally based Charitable Incorporated Organisation with any profits made put directly back into the company for the benefit of customers and service users. As part of their business model the organisation invest in volunteers providing training and work experience.
- 4.5** They re-use/recycle and refurbish domestic electrical appliances for the benefit of the local community. After refurbishment they then make these goods available to local people at much lower prices than are available on the High Street with further discounts for those on a range of benefits. Since the organisation started, 6 years ago they have refurbished or recycled over 6,500 items ranging from large domestic appliances to small electricals.

- 4.6 BDA have reached capacity in their current premises, and as a result are limited to the number of employment and volunteer opportunities they can offer. In addition demand for their services has increased year on year but they are unable to further develop and expand their services in their current location.
- 4.7 The Centenary Building will enable BDA to grow their organisation and expand their offer. The proposed use of the building by BDA will require planning permission and positive Pre-application advice has been provided by Barrow Borough Council, and BDA have also thoroughly inspected the premises and understand the work that needs to be carried out to ensure that the property is fit for purpose.
- 4.8 BDA have been working on their business case for the CAT, and the proposal is that the property is transferred to them initially on a long lease, which will enable them to obtain external capital funding and give them a secure future for business expansion.
- 4.9 In order to inform Cabinet decision making, Local Committee are invited to feed back on the proposal to transfer the Centenary Building to BDA.

## **5.0 OPTIONS**

- 5.1 Members may wish to support the application or to suggest alternative actions.

## **6.0 RESOURCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no direct resource implications arising from the recommendation requesting that Local Committee note the community asset transfer and seeking its views.

## **7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 In accordance with Part 2D, 5.1.1 (d) of the Constitution, one of the functions of Local Committee is to make representations to the relevant decision maker on proposed community asset transfers in the Local Committee's area.

## **8.0 CONCLUSION**

- 8.1 The Centenary Building is now surplus to the County Council's requirements and requires a significant amount of work to maintain and improve the property. BDA are a key local organisation who need a larger premises to enable them to expand their offer and increase their support for the community. This paper outlines the potential to transfer the property the BDA for Members' consideration.

**Dawn Roberts**  
**Executive Director - Corporate, Customer and Community Services**

*24 February 2020*

## **APPENDICES**

***No appendices***

Electoral Division: Hindpool

Executive Decision

Yes	
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Key Decision

	No
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If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan?

		N/A
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Is the decision exempt from call-in on grounds of urgency?

	N*
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If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained?

		N/A
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Has this matter been considered by Overview and Scrutiny?  
If so, give details below.

	No
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Has an environmental or sustainability impact assessment been undertaken?

		N/A
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Has an equality impact assessment been undertaken?

	No	
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***N.B. If an executive decision is made, then a decision cannot be implemented until the expiry of the eighth working day after the date of the meeting – unless the decision is urgent and exempt from call-in and necessary approvals have been obtained.***

## **PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS** ***[including Local Committees]***

***No previous relevant decisions***

## **CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

***Not considered by Overview and Scrutiny***

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

***Barrow Domestic Appliance Business Case***

## **REPORT AUTHOR**

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