

Cabinet

5 March 2009



The Transfer of County Council Land at Shaw Bank, Barnard Castle to Teesdale Community Resources to facilitate The Hub Project

Key Decision LLL/CYPS/03/09

Joint Report of David Williams, Corporate Director, Children & Young People's Services and Stuart Crowe, Corporate Director, Resources

[Cabinet Portfolio Member for Children's Services, Councillor Claire Vasey, Cabinet Portfolio Member for Corporate Resources, Councillor Michele Hodgson and Cabinet Portfolio Member for Safer Communities, Councillor Lucy Hovvels]

Purpose of the Report

- 1 To advise of a proposed community development – The Hub – being funded through a £5m Myplace Fast Track award from the Big Lottery.
- 2 To seek approval in principle to the disposal of County Council owned land to facilitate the project.

Background

- 3 Teesdale Community Resources (TCR) is a registered company limited by guarantee and a registered charity serving Barnard Castle and the surrounding area of Teesdale. TCR is staffed by fully qualified and experienced Durham County Council staff and volunteers and has a record of providing high quality youth work and other support for young people throughout the area.
- 4 The organisation is a constituted charity which is managed by a Board of Directors and receives staff, annual grant aid and information, advice and guidance from the County Council in support of its work.
- 5 TCR currently works out of an industrial unit on the Harmire Industrial Estate in Barnard Castle. The Management Board agreed to sell its original premises and site in Birch Road, Barnard Castle to raise capital in pursuit of its ambition to revitalise provision for young people in Teesdale and beyond through its proposed 'Hub' project.

The Project

- 6 The Hub project will provide a world class facility in the Shaw Bank area of Barnard Castle which will offer opportunities for the provision of:
- youth work and positive activities for young people;
 - sport, leisure and recreation activity;
 - training and employment related programmes;
 - arts and cultural activities;
 - residential work and international exchange; and
 - accredited learning.

The project will have its own purpose-built premises and external resources such as cycle tracks, a lake for water based activities, a multi-purpose play area and sites of environmental and educational interest.

- 7 The facilities will be available to all young people.
8. TCR have worked closely with Rights Of Way and the South West Durham Heritage Corridor to ensure that the Hub development will compliment and promote their plans. The alignment of the scheme will not conflict with the corridor of interest regarding the proposed Barnard Castle By-Pass.
- 9 The majority of the funding for the project has been raised by TCR. The validity and viability of The Hub project was recognised in 2009 by the Department for Children, Schools and Families through the award of a £5 million Myplace Fast Track grant from The Big Lottery. The County Council was a signatory to the Myplace bid and will perform the role of public sector partner for the project. A comprehensive Project Profile and Business Plan is in place.
- 10 The implementation of this project will support the Government's National Indicator 110 and policy field 507B from the Education and Inspection Act 2006 as well as the CYPS priority on positive activities for young people delivered through a comprehensive range of things to do and places to go. Local authorities currently have a statutory responsibility to publicise positive activities for young people and The Hub project would not only improve the infrastructure for young people in Teesdale and beyond, but would also assist the County Council in responding to this statutory requirement.
- 11 TCR has for some time been considering a preferred site for the project but it has become evident that this cannot be made available within the grant funding timescales. An alternative site comprising an area of agricultural land held by this Authority for potential future expansion of Teesdale School has recently been identified by TCR. It has been requested that this site, outlined in black on the plan at Annex 1 be transferred to TCR free of charge. TCR has also written to the County Council to request the transfer of ownership of the land to facilitate the planning process (see letter at Annex 2). The transfer of the land rather than the grant of a long term lease is necessary owing to the conditions of Myplace grant and scheduled changes to the planning process from 31 March 2009. Failure to transfer the land will result in the scheme

being called in for re-assessment by Government Office North East with the consequent loss of £5million of investment in the County.

- 12 It is understood that the requirement to create access splays to the access track at the junction of the A688, may require the release of another small area of land forming part of the school site. This will be examined in keeping with Sport England and School Playing Field regulations and land transfer organised possibly under delegated powers.
- 13 Although no final decision has been made regarding the future development of Teesdale School under Building Schools for the Future, the area of land earmarked for The Hub will not affect any future decision to rebuild the school and, consequently, the Headteacher fully supports the scheme.
- 14 It is understood that time limits attaching to the grant require the development to have commenced on site by 31 March 2009 and as an expedient a planning application will be submitted to Teesdale District Council for the development of the site in question. Every effort will be made to ensure that this meeting takes place before 31 March 2009.
- 15 The necessary consultations on the potential release of the land together with title checks details of third party rights and other investigations are being carried out to assist TCR. Discussions on the most appropriate mechanism for land transfer/disposal are also being held.
- 16 In relation to the request to make the site available free of charge an informal estimate, based upon limited information currently available, indicates the site to be worth in the region £35,000. The Authority has powers to make land available at less than best consideration for various purposes, including community use and the proposal accords with the objectives of the Quirk Report 2006.

Recommendation

- 17 Cabinet is asked to:
 - (a) note the proposed £5m community development by TCR; and
 - (b) agree to the disposal of the site in question for the project, free of charge subject to the appropriate consultations and clearances and on the basis of terms to be agreed.

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Appendix 1: Implications

Local Government Reorganisation

(Does the decision impact upon a future Unitary Council?) – N/A

Finance

The cost of the project is £5m. The Authority is being asked to donate the site free of charge – the land would otherwise have been worth an estimated £35,000.

Staffing

Staffing will be maintained at TCR through the Youth Service.

Equality and Diversity

TCR have a good track recording inclusive practice with young people and ensuring young people participation in the work of the organisation. Young people's involvement in the planning and management of The Hub project is significant. Access to facilities will be made available to all young people including disabled young people and young people from ethnic minority groups.

Crime and disorder

The provision of places to go and things to do has a beneficial impact upon community safety in general.

Sustainability

TCR is a well managed organisation with good support and sound financial acumen.

Human rights

See comment above regarding equality and diversity.

Localities and Rurality

This project will have a highly significant and beneficial impact upon service provision in the Dales.

Young people

This project will have a highly significant and beneficial impact upon services for young people in the Dales, the County and beyond.

Consultation

This project has been subject to full consultation with young people, other local people, local authorities and Elected Members from both the County and District Council.

Health

This project will have a significant and beneficial impact upon the physical and emotional well-being of young people.

**Risk
Description
Potential Impacts Treatment Risk Owner**

As this is a continuation of current arrangements, no new risks are envisaged at Park View and the threat from the Charity Commissioners is removed.

Risk Description	Potential Impacts	Treatment	Risk Owner
1. The land is not transfer	(i) The project cannot continue and is timed out for Myplace funding. (ii) The County Council's image as a supporter of community governance of local facilities is damaged.	Transfer of land is agreed.	The County Council
2. Planning permission is not granted.	(i) A new site is required resulting in the project being timed out for Myplace funding.	Planning permission is agreed.	Teesdale District Council