



## **CABINET – 14TH MARCH 2018**

**SUBJECT: PROPOSED COMMUNITY CENTRE IN TY-SIGN, RISCA TO REPLACE THE CHANNEL VIEW COMMUNITY CENTRE**

**REPORT BY: INTERIM CORPORATE DIRECTOR - COMMUNITIES**

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### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of a proposal presented by a newly created Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), the Ty Sign Community Hall and Resource Centre, to develop a new Community Centre in Tŷ Sign, Risca.
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet's approval in principle to support the delivery of a purpose built community centre on land at Holly Road, Tŷ Sign (shown edged black at Appendix 1) subject to full consultation.
- 1.3 To authorise officers to enter into further discussions and to undertake the necessary consultations.

### **2. SUMMARY**

- 2.1 The Channel View Community Centre management committee currently occupy the building on a licence at a peppercorn rent at Channel View, Risca on the land shown edged black at Appendix 2. This land is in Council ownership through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Access to the site is through the Council's Hafod-y-Bryn Sheltered Housing Scheme. The existing Channel View Community Centre is not fit for purpose. The Channel View site also houses another building (shown at Appendix 2) that is leased to the Scout Association Trust Corporation, which is also in poor physical condition.
- 2.2 The Council has been approached by a newly created CIO, the Ty Sign Community Hall and Resource Centre, to work in partnership with them to explore the feasibility of developing a new purpose built Community Centre in Holly Road, Tŷ Sign, Risca on land also held by the HRA. The Ty Sign Community Hall and Resource Centre are seeking a lease period of at least 21 years (necessary to meet the requirements of the Big Lottery), and at a low, non-commercial, rent. The existing Channel View Community Centre would close under the above proposal. Both existing and proposed locations are shown at Appendix 3.

### **3. LINKS TO STRATEGY**

- 3.1 The Wellbeing of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. It requires public bodies to think more about the long-term, working with people and communities, looking to prevent problems and take a more joined up approach. This will create a Wales that we all want to live in, now and in the future. The Act puts in place seven well-being goals:

- A prosperous Wales.
- A resilient Wales.
- A healthier Wales.
- A more equal Wales.
- A Wales of cohesive communities.
- A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh Language.
- A globally responsible Wales.

The content of this report links into: A healthier Wales, A Wales of cohesive communities, a globally responsible, Wales a more equal Wales.

#### **4. THE REPORT**

- 4.1 The Council has been approached by a newly created CIO, the Ty Sign Community Hall and Resource Centre, seeking the Council's support to develop a new purpose built Community Centre in Holly Road, Tŷ Sign, Risca on land held by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) (on the land shown edged black at Appendix 1). The proposal would reduce the need for residents from Tŷ Sign to travel into the centre of Risca for events and services.
- 4.2 The Channel View Community Centre management committee currently licence the Channel View Community Centre (shown edged black at Appendix 2) on a peppercorn rent. The current site is also held by the HRA. Access to the site is through the Council's Hafod-y-Bryn Sheltered Housing Scheme. The proposed new building would replace an existing facility that is not currently fit for purpose as a result of structural, locational, and functional problems that cannot adequately be addressed by further investment in the building.
- 4.3 The Channel View site currently houses another building that is leased to the Scout Association Trust Corporation. This lease was signed on 1st July 1999 for a 30 year period and would be surrendered should the Scout Group relocate to the proposed new community centre. There are currently 11 years remaining on this lease and the building is in a very poor condition.
- 4.4 By vacating the existing site at Channel View there is an opportunity to redevelop the site, subject to a feasibility study being undertaken. This may provide an opportunity to increase the provision of small unit residential accommodation in the area. It should be noted however that the demolition of the existing buildings at Channel View will need to be costed and, as such, may impact upon any capital receipt achieved.
- 4.5 Subject to valuation, an option exists to dispose of the existing Channel View site to develop affordable housing. The associated capital receipt would go into the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Alternatively the land could be earmarked for future development of Council housing. The HRA is a ring-fenced budget that is funded from tenants' rents to support the delivery of an effective and efficient housing service through maintaining and improving the Councils housing stock.
- 4.6 The Ty Sign Community Hall and Resource Centre have requested that any capital receipt obtained from the sale of the Channel View site is afforded to them to support the proposed new development at Tŷ Sign. Considering the primary purpose of HRA as set out in 4.5 that request cannot be considered. It may also be determined that the site will be retained for the future development of Council housing, in which case no capital receipt would be realised.
- 4.7 To date there have not been any site investigations undertaken and no valuations on the land provided. It is therefore not currently known what additional costs may be needed to ascertain if the site is indeed suitable for development. The findings of this work may result in the site not being deemed viable for future development or any capital receipt being low as a result of the investigatory and development costs.

- 4.8 Ty Sign Community Hall and Resource Centre will be progressing their funding application. This newly created Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) includes the Agape Community Church and the 5th Risca Scouts, and representatives of the Channel View Community Centre management committee and Risca East Community Council acting as trustees. Over the next 3-6 months they will be undertaking the following steps:
- Receive feedback from Risca East Community Council in respect of a funding application to undertake a survey of the Holly Road site in support of a planning application.
  - Prepare a detailed application for the Welsh Government's Community Facilities Grant and re-submit the application to the Big Lottery.
  - Refine the current business plan for the new facility. This is required to support the Welsh Government Community Facilities application.
  - Seek tender submissions for the detailed design of the new facility (when appropriate).
- 4.9 The site of the proposed new community centre in Holly Road, Tŷ Sign is held by the Housing Revenue Account. The Ty Sign Community Hall and Resource Centre are seeking a lease period of at least 21 years (necessary to meet the requirements of the Big Lottery), and at a low, non-commercial, rent. Since the proposed letting of the land is a disposal of land held under the Housing Revenue Account, consent to the disposal under sections 32-34 of the Housing Act 1985 will need to be first obtained prior to entering into any lease. Such consent would be sought from Welsh Government following agreement of Head of Terms.
- 4.10 The area of land at Holly Road identified for the proposed new facility is protected as an area of informal open space in the Adopted Caerphilly County Borough Local Development Plan (LDP). This area however benefits from a significant amount of open space and as such the holistic benefits of the proposed project for the community could be considered to outweigh the potential loss of land for informal community and recreational use. It should be noted that the land was previously allocated for housing in the Adopted Islwyn Local Plan and therefore it could have residential value if the allocation were to change in the next LDP.
- 4.11 Where a council is considering disposing of any land consisting or forming part of an open space they must give notice of their intention to do in in a newspaper circulating in the area in which the land is situated, and consider any objections to the proposed disposal which may be made to them. Should Cabinet be minded to support the proposal in principle any material objections as a result of the public notice procedure will be brought to Cabinet in a further report.
- 4.12 In 2015 a Scrutiny Task and Finish group undertook a review of the Council's support of community centre provision throughout the County Borough and was tasked with making any recommendations necessary under the Medium Term Financial Plan. Following their consideration of the Task and Finish Group findings Education for Life Scrutiny Committee's recommendations to Cabinet included a recommendation to close Channel View Community Centre. At its meeting of 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016 Cabinet resolved to allow Channel View Community Centre more time to develop and increase their usage rather than close at that time. The more recently appointed management committee have been proactive in securing additional use and raising the facility's profile. However, usage remains low at present.
- 4.13 The current Channel View Community Centre is not deemed fit for purpose and it is unlikely that the identified issues can or would be addressed with further investment. It should be noted that services currently provided at Channel View Community Centre will continue until such time that a new facility is developed at the Holly Road site.

## 5. WELL-BEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS

- 5.1 The issues outlined in this report make a contribution across the seven well-being goals, but in particular to the following areas:
1. **A healthier Wales:** There is significant evidence to support the view that undertaking an active lifestyle has significant benefits in terms of reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease along with positive impacts upon mental health and body weight control. The role of community centres is significant in terms of supporting the integration of physical activity into everyday lifestyles.
  2. **A Wales of cohesive communities:** Caerphilly County Borough Council have communicated a vision to place its facilities at the heart of the community, ensuring it's effectively placed to deliver a well-connected, socially inclusive hub.
  3. **A globally responsible Wales:** There is significant evidence to support the positive impact that leading a healthy, physically active lifestyle has upon the economic, social and cultural well-being of Welsh residents.
  4. **A more equal Wales:** There is significant evidence to support the positive role that engaging in community activity can play in supporting people to fulfil their potential from both an educational and socio economic perspective.

## 6. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) will not be required at this stage however should the recommendations outlined below be approved then an EIA will be required in accordance with the Authority's Strategic Equalities Plan.
- 6.2 The proposed development to build a Community Centre will have a positive impact on the wider community and benefitting many different groups through the delivery of various activities and interest groups.
- 6.3 The proposal supports Strategic Equality Objective 3: Improving Physical Access, Strategic Equality Objective 5: Inclusive Engagement and Participation and Strategic Equality Objective 7: Supporting Age-friendly Communities.

## 7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Channel View Community Centre has current fund balances of circa £74,000, however given it's charitable status any proposed use of these funds in support of the proposal would be a matter for the charity in accordance with its own constitution
- 7.2 At present the Council's contribution to Channel View is in the form of caretaker costs, public indemnity insurance and statutory maintenance liabilities (see below) which can be used as future MTFP savings. These costs will transfer to the newly created C.I.O. in the event that the new community centre at Tŷ Sign is developed.
- Caretaker costs - £5,500 per annum
  - Public Indemnity Insurance - £500 per annum
  - Statutory Maintenance Liabilities – £5,000 per annum
- 7.3 The most recent condition survey undertaken at Channel View Community Centre in 2014 outlines £107,479 of outstanding maintenance requirements identified against a priority 1, 2 or 3 rating with 1 being the most urgent. The breakdown is as follows:
- Priority 1: £9,560  
Priority 2: £82,169  
Priority 3: £15,750

## **8. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 CCBC currently employs a caretaker at Channel View Community Centre on a 12 hr per week basis.
- 8.2 Should the proposed development materialise it has been suggested that the existing caretaker will transfer to the employment of the newly created C.I.O.

## **9. CONSULTATION**

- 9.1 This report has been sent to the consultees listed below and all comments received are reflected in this report.

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 It is recommended that Cabinet agree in principle to support the delivery of a purpose built community centre on land at Holly Road, Tŷ Sign and authorise officers to enter into further discussions and undertake the necessary consultations with a further report being brought to Cabinet for final determination.

## **11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 11.1 The land at Holly Road is considered surplus to the Council's operational requirements.
- 11.2 To support the development of a new purpose built community centre in Tŷ Sign, Risca.

## **12. STATUTORY POWER**

- 12.1 Local Government Act 1972.

Author: Rob Hartshorn – Head of Policy and Public Protection

Consultees: Mark S. Williams – Interim Corporate Director, Communities  
Cllr Nigel George – Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services  
Shaun Couzens – Chief Housing Officer  
Jeff Reynolds – Sport & Leisure Services facilities Manager  
Fiona Wilkins – Public Sector Housing Manager  
Kevin Fortey – Housing Development Officer  
Rhian Kyte – Team Leader Strategic and Development Planning  
Allan Dallimore – Team Leader Urban Renewal and Conservation  
Tim Broadhurst – Estates Manager  
Kevin Lodge – Community Centre Services Manager  
Richard Harris - Internal Audit Manager  
Lisa Lane – Solicitor  
Richard Crane - Solicitor  
Anwen Cullinane - Senior Policy Officer (Equalities & Welsh Language)  
Mike Eedy - Finance Manager  
Shaun Watkins - Human Resources Manager

### **Background Papers:**

Cabinet Report – “Community Centres Task and Finish Group” 20<sup>th</sup> January 2016

### **Appendices:**

Appendix 1: Site of Proposed Community Centre, Holly Road  
Appendix 2: Site of existing Channel View Community Centre  
Appendix 3: Location Plan showing both sites







