

Cllr Chris Holley
Convener, Service Improvement &
Finance Scrutiny Performance Panel

BY EMAIL

Please ask for Councillor June Burtonshaw
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Our Ref: JEB/HS
Your Ref: ref
Date: 10 April 2019

Dear Cllr Holley

Service Improvement & Finance Performance Panel – 6 March 2019

I refer to your letter dated 22 March 2019 regarding Community Centres and Friend Groups.

I am happy to provide the following response to the issues raised.

1. The report should outline the links with Community Councils and Swansea Council for Voluntary Services.

There is in place a Compact and a Third Sector Strategy between Swansea Council, Swansea Council for Voluntary Services and the wider Third Sector to provide a robust and workable framework for ongoing dialogue. The section work with SCVS in relation to training, both for volunteers and the section's community development officers and volunteer work opportunities across our sites, both for recruitment and advertising. Many of our Committees and Friends of Parks are members of SCVS. We have held sessions whereby the SCVS funding and volunteer bank officers have attended and presented information, advice and guidance to the groups. Links with community councils where there are buildings i.e. Gorseinon and Gowerton have been in place for a number of years. We are currently working with Clydach community council and colleagues in Corporate Property in relation to a CAT for Coedgwilym. We have also provided advice to Community Council's and they are also able to access the section's Interest Free Loan Scheme. Future reports will clarify these links.

2. The license should be clear about the difference between the current arrangement and Community Asset Transfers.

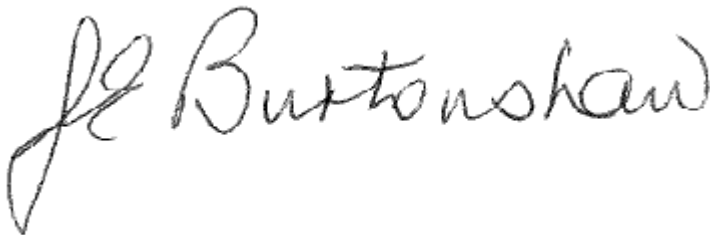
The current license is for the purposes of outlining the responsibilities of the voluntary management committee and the Council in relation to the community building, the licence itself provides both parties with an easy opt in and out option. It clearly states that the Council owns the freehold interest in the Premises and wishes the Management Committee to run them as a Community Building for the benefit of local residents in accordance with their Constitution.

Community Asset Transfer is an established mechanism used to enable the community ownership and management of publicly owned land and buildings, for a CAT to take place a sound Business Plan would be required to be in place which demonstrates the viability and sustainability of the alternative use – both in terms of the availability of capital funding for any conversion/refurbishment costs, and also for the ongoing revenue funding of the project. The Council will only transfer on a leasehold basis and as such is a very different proposition to that of the current license. The section work closely with Corporate Property in relation to any community requests for CAT. The status is explained explicitly to the committees and we continue to monitor the work of the committee or Friends group in fulfilling its terms.

3. The Panel feel that all community functions (including community asset transfers) should sit under one service.

There are many different parts of the Council working in the community for a variety of purposes including Adult and Social Care and the Local Area Coordination which is within the People Directorate due to the need to plug complex and sensitive situations directly in with specialist, qualified officers. The services in the community regarding engagement and development, eg. sports, recreation, libraries, community development, arts and cultural development, all sit under the same service and others such as housing and parks are within the same Directorate. There is a distinctive difference between community development and the function of asset and property management, which is where Community Asset Transfers are best managed due to the strategic assessment needs of property management for the Authority overall. These functions do sit in the same Directorate, under the Directorship of Martin Nicholls. Officers work directly and closely with relevant colleagues and are a first point of consultation in any assessment for CAT, as above.

Yours faithfully



**COUNCILLOR JUNE BURTONSHAW
CABINET MEMBER FOR BETTER COMMUNITIES - PLACE**