

**TITLE OF REPORT:** Surplus Declaration and Grant of Lease Barley Mow Village Hall, Bedford Avenue, Birtley DH3 2AJ

**REPORT OF:** Mike Barker, Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance

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### **Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval to (i) the property being declared surplus to the Council's requirements and (ii) the future proposal for the property after being declared surplus.

### **Background**

2. The property known as Barley Mow Village Hall (BMVH), which is shown edged black on the attached plan, is held by the Council for housing purposes pursuant to the Housing Act 1985 and was developed as a community centre for the residents of Birtley.
3. BMVH is the last community centre which was identified as suitable for a community asset transfer in the Community Centre Review which was approved by Cabinet on 26 February 2013 (Minute No C224).
4. The existing management committee were not able to proceed with a community asset transfer throughout earlier phases of the review and the Council has been working with the organisation to build their capacity and develop a business plan which will help sustain and improve both the property and the activities currently delivered. The management committee has now become an incorporated registered charity, Barley Mow Village Hall CIO, and are able to proceed with a long-term lease pursuant to the Council's Community Asset Transfer policy.

### **Proposal**

5. It is proposed that the property be declared surplus to the Council's requirements and a 35-year lease at nil consideration be granted to Barley Mow Village Hall CIO pursuant to the Council's Community Asset Transfer policy.

### **Recommendations**

6. It is recommended that Cabinet:
  - (i) declares the property surplus to the Council's requirements; and
  - (ii) authorises the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance to grant a 35-year lease at nil consideration to Barley Mow Village Hall CIO pursuant to the Council's Community Transfer policy.

For the following reason: -

- (i) To manage resources and rationalise the Council's assets in line with the Corporate Asset Strategy and Management Plan.
- (ii) To ensure delivery of the cost savings identified in the Community Centre Review approved by Cabinet on 26 February 2013 (Minute No C224)

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## **APPENDIX : Barley Mow Village Hall, Bedford Avenue, Birtley DH3 2AJ**

### **Policy Context**

1. The proposed surplus declaration supports the overall vision for Gateshead as set out in Vision 2030 and 'Making Gateshead a Place where Everyone Thrives'. In particular, the Council Pledge to support communities to support themselves and each other.
2. The proposed declaration will also accord with the provisions of the Corporate Asset Strategy and Management Plan 2015 – 2020. In particular, the rationalisation of the estate through the disposal of an uneconomic asset.

### **Background**

3. The property, known as Barley Mow Village Hall (BMVH), which is shown edged black on the attached plan is currently held by the Council for Housing purposes and was developed as a community centre for the residents of Birtley.
4. Cabinet approved the Community Centre Review on 26 February 2013 (Minute No. C224) and BMVH was identified as a transitional property, which is one either surplus to the Council's requirements or considered appropriate for operating independently from the Council. In these circumstances the Council would consider a transfer of the asset to a third party pursuant to the Community Asset Transfer policy.
5. At the time of the Review the BMVH's existing management committee was not in a position to proceed with a community asset transfer, however, they were keen to maintain a service to the local community. In the intervening time they have been encouraging more volunteers to help out at the hall, building their capacity and developing a business plan. They are now a registered incorporated charity and in a position to proceed with a community asset transfer which will enable them to apply for funding to sustain the property and activities for the future. Terms have been provisionally agreed to grant a lease at a nil consideration to Barley Mow Village Hall CIO pursuant to the Council's Community Asset Transfer policy.

### **Consultation**

6. In preparing this report consultations have taken place with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Ward Councillors for Birtley. The Portfolio Holder for Communities and Volunteering has also been consulted.

### **Alternative Options**

7. The option of retaining the property has been discounted as following its assessment as a transitional property as part of the Community Centre Review it fulfilled the criteria for a community asset transfer. If a community asset transfer to the current management committee is not possible, the Council will seek interest from other charitable organisations. If this is not feasible, the asset will be disposed of on the open market which would be expected to generate a capital receipt.

## Implications of Recommended Option

### 8. Resources:

- a) **Financial Implications** - The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that the future disposal of the property is expected to generate revenue savings from the Housing Revenue Account for the Council.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** - There are no implications arising from this recommendation.
- c) **Property Implications** - The future disposal of this property will result in a reduction in the Council's overall property portfolio thus reducing operational costs.

9. **Risk Management Implication** - The future disposal of this property will remove opportunities for vandalism to a vulnerable property.

10. **Equality and Diversity** - There are no implications arising from this recommendation.

11. **Crime and Disorder Implications** - The future disposal of this property will remove opportunities for crime and disorder, especially vandalism and theft.

12. **Health Implications** - There are no implications arising from this recommendation.

13. **Sustainability Implications** - The future disposal of this property will reduce the level of the Council's operational costs, including gas and electricity use, which will subsequently result in a reduction in the Council's carbon footprint.

14. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no implications arising from this recommendation.

15. **Ward Implications** – Birtley

16. **Background Information** - Minute No. C224

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