

Executive Member for Finance and Performance Decision Session

Report of the Assistant Director of Finance, Asset Management and Procurement

Applications for Community Right to Bid under the Localism Act 2011

Summary

1. This report presents applications to list the following assets as Assets of Community Value (ACV), for consideration by the Council
 - a. Costcutter Shop, 58 Main Street, Wheldrake, York, YO19 5RY.
 - b. Wheldrake Woods, Broad Highway, Wheldrake, York, YO19.
 - c. White Rose House, 73 Main Street, Wheldrake York, YO19 6AA.

Background

2. On 6th March 2014 the Cabinet Member approved the proposals for the implementation of a process for the Community Right to Bid legislation to ensure the Council has a process in place for dealing with any applications and the establishment and maintenance of a list of Assets of Community Value. Three applications have been received under this legislation, for a decision by the Executive Member in the Council's statutory capacity as ACV listing authority.
3. The purpose behind these provisions is to ensure that property (land and building) assets which are currently used (or have been recently been used) to the benefit of the local communities are not disposed of without the local community being given a fair opportunity to bid for these assets when they are put on the open market. This right is not simply to accommodate 'public assets' but also private assets, the test is whether such assets are viewed as 'assets of community value'. These assets therefore could be currently owned by the public, private or voluntary sector.

4. The definition of 'community value' is set out in the regulations and can be summarised as

- The actual current principal use of the building/land furthers social well being or the social interests of the local community and there is a realistic prospect that a principal use of the property (not necessarily the same use as present) will also further the social well-being or social interests of the local community (whether or not in the same way as at present)

OR

- In the recent past a principal use of the property has furthered the social well-being or social interests of the local community and there is a realistic prospect that within the next 5 years a principal use of the property (not necessarily the same use as previously) will again further the social well-being or social interests of the local community (not necessarily in the same way as previously).

5. There is no exhaustive list of what is considered to be an asset of community value but cultural, recreational and sporting interests are included. Excluded specifically are residential type properties (such as hotels, housing in multiple occupation and residential caravan sites) and operational land of statutory undertakers.

The process

6. The regulations set out how potential assets can be listed which in brief is as follows:

- **Nomination** – this can be by a voluntary or community body with a local connection. Includes parish councils, neighbourhood forums, charities, community interest groups but excludes public or local authorities (except parish councils). An unincorporated association that is not registered a charity must have at least 21 members registered to vote in the local area before it is eligible to submit a nomination.
- **Consideration** – the local authority have 8 weeks to make the decision which is decided by an 'appropriate group'. It is suggested that this 'appropriate group' is the Capital and Asset Board (CAB) which is already in operation and has cross-Council representation at a senior level (the Board is chaired by the Director of CBSS). A report is then written to the Executive Member for Finance and Performance who will then formally take the decision. If the nomination is successful the asset details are entered onto the 'Community Value list' – see below – and

also the local land charges register. If unsuccessful then the details are entered onto an 'unsuccessful nominations' list for a period of 5 years to prevent repeat nominations. The owner can request a review of the decision which must be completed within 8 weeks and the owner can further appeal within 28 days of the review outcome to a Tribunal.

- **The 'Assets of Community Value' List** – this needs to be published and reviewed regularly and must be accessible in electronic and paper format.
 - **Disposal of assets on the list** – if a building or piece of land which is on the list is going to be sold with vacant possession then the owner of the asset needs to give notice to the local authority. There is then a 6 week moratorium period for any community group to express interest in writing and if they do then a 6 month period for that group to prepare it's bid. After that period the owner can market the property and any bid from the community group will be considered with bids from other interested parties. There is no guarantee that the offer from the community group will be successful as the owner of the asset will dispose of the property in accordance with its own criteria for disposal. There are a number of exceptions contained within the legislation that mean that this moratorium period does not apply and the owner does not need to give notice of it's intention to sell. This includes sale of the property to a party pursuant to a formal contract for sale which was entered into before the listing of the property as an ACV.
 - **Compensation** – the presence of the land or building asset on the community value list may result in additional expenditure or a loss to the owner and therefore the owner can apply for compensation from the local authority. The figure is limited to costs or losses incurred only whilst the asset is on the list and could include such items as legal expenses for appeals, costs relating to the delay in the sale (such as maintenance, security, utility costs, loss of value). This compensation is determined by the local authority (it is suggested that this is carried out by the Capital Asset Board) and the owner can have the compensation reviewed within 8 weeks and appeal to a Tribunal if still not satisfied. It should be noted that compensation can only be claimed by private owners (no compensation for public authorities) and the government has not provided any funding for this compensation (or for any costs associated with any of these provisions).
7. Three applications have been received under this legislation, for a decision by the Executive Member

8. To list an asset as an ACV the asset needs to meet the definition as set out in the Localism Act 2011 which states that the local authority has to ask itself
 - a. whether an actual current use of the building or other land that is not an ancillary use furthers the well-being or social interests of the community, and
 - b. whether it is realistic to think that there can continue to be non-ancillary use of the building or other land which will further (whether or not in the same way) the social well-being or social interests of the local community.

If the Listing Authority considers that both elements of this definition are met and the applicants are a valid organisation or group to make the nomination then the Listing Authority must list the asset.

Costcutter Shop, 58 Main Street, York

9. The freehold of Costcutter is owned by Costcutter Supermarkets Group Ltd. Legal Services have confirmed that a nomination must be considered by the Council if the nominator is someone who meets the eligibility criteria specified in the relevant legislation and if the nomination form includes the information specified in regulation 6 of the ACV Regulations 2012. In accordance with the regulations, the freehold owner, and the occupier of the property have been informed in writing, that the application has been made. They have been invited to make representations regarding the nomination.
10. The nomination is being made by Wheldrake Parish Council on the basis that the Costcutter shop provides a valuable service to the local community. It provides not only essential provisions, but also post office services. This shop is open from early in the morning until late in the evening. Should it ever be put up for sale with a proposed change of use, then the Parish Council should have the right to bid on behalf of the community with a view to continuing the shop services.
11. The application meets the basic criteria for listing and no objection has been raised by the owner or occupier to the nomination.

Wheldrake Woods, Broad Highway, Wheldrake

12. The freehold of Wheldrake Woods is owned by The Forestry Commission. Legal Services have confirmed that a nomination must be considered by the Council if the nominator is someone who meets the eligibility criteria specified in the relevant legislation and if the nomination form includes the information specified in regulation 6 of the ACV Regulations 2012. In accordance with the regulations, the freehold owner occupier of the property has been informed in writing, that the application has been made. They have been invited to make representations regarding the nomination.
13. The application is being made by Wheldrake Parish Council on the basis that, while the woods are used for timber production, the Forestry Commission, as part of their remit, see it as important to protect biodiversity within the woods. Visitors have been encouraged to use the woods for outdoor activities including running, rambling, cycling, horse riding and dog walking, and so promote the wellbeing of the local community.
14. The application meets the basic criteria for listing and no objection has been raised by the owner to the nomination.

White Rose House, 73 Main Street, Wheldrake.

15. The freehold of White Rose House is owned by The Girlguiding Association. Legal Services have confirmed that a nomination must be considered by the Council if the nominator is someone who meets the eligibility criteria specified in the relevant legislation and if the nomination form includes the information specified in regulation 6 of the ACV Regulations 2012. In accordance with the regulations, the freehold owner occupier has been informed in writing that the application has been made. They have been invited to make representations regarding the nomination.
16. The property is used for a broad range of community purposes including as an outward bounds centre for the Girl Guides who use it for courses at weekends. The regulations exclude from listing any residential accommodation but the judgement is made that the overnight accommodation provided here is not residential (nobody lives there) White Rose House is used by the local community during the week and also at weekends when not being used by the Girlguides. Activities includes yoga classes, coffee mornings, Women's Institute meetings,

toddler groups birthday parties, ward meetings and for meetings of local community groups. It is also registered as an emergency station.

17. The application meets the basic criteria for listing and no objection has been raised by the owner to the nomination.

Implications.

18. **Financial** – Compensation may be payable by the Council to the owner of any property which is listed. The figure is limited to costs or losses incurred only whilst the asset is on the list and could include such items as legal expenses for appeals, costs relating to the delay in the sale (such as maintenance, security, utility costs, loss of value).

Human Resources (HR) – none

Equalities, Crime and Disorder and IT - none

Legal – Organisations falling within any of the following categories are eligible to submit an ACV nomination relating to property within their local area:

- (i) a parish council
- (ii) a charity, non-profit making company or community interest company with a local connection to the nominated property
- (iii) an unincorporated association which has at least 21 members registered to vote in the local area

The organisations who have submitted the nominations covered by this report fall within the above criteria and are therefore entitled to submit their ACV nominations.

Paragraph 7 of the report contains the statutory definition of 'land of community value'. If the listing authority considers that a nominated property falls within that definition then it must include the property on its ACV register.

Property – All property issues included in the report

Other – none

Risk Management

19. There are no significant risks to this application.

Recommendations

20. The Executive Member is asked to.

- a. Agree to the listing of The Costcutter shop, Wheldrake as an asset of community value for the reasons outlined above.
- b. Agree to the listing of Wheldrake Woods as an asset of community value for the reasons outlined above.
- c. Agree to the listing of White Rose House, Wheldrake as an asset of community value for the reasons outlined above.

Reason: To ensure the Council meets its legislative requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and promotes community access to community facilities.

Contact Details

Author:

Tim Bradley
Asset Manager
Asset and Property Management
Tel No.553355

Chief Officer Responsible for the
report:

Tracey Carter
Title - AD Finance Property
Procurement

Report
Approved



Date 1 July 2016

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Implication Legal
Name Andy Docherty
AD Governance and ICT
Tel No. 551004

Wards Affected: Wheldrake

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex 1 – Wheldrake Costcutter Shop – Application to add to the list of community assets.

Annex 2 – Wheldrake Woods – Application to add to the list of community assets.

Annex 3 – White Rose House Wheldrake – Application to add to the list of community assets.

Annex 4 – Current list of assets of community value.