

# **Management Committee**

**17<sup>th</sup> April 2018**

## **Lease to Sparks Trust of the former Southill Play Group premises, Weymouth**

*Appendix -Not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended. The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing it.*

### **For Decision**

#### **Portfolio Holder(s)/ Briefholder**

Councillor Jeff Cant – Finance and Assets  
Councillor Kate Wheller – Community Facilities

#### **Senior Leadership Team Contact:**

M Hamilton, Strategic Director

**Report Author:** Jon Morgan, Senior Estates Surveyor

#### **Statutory Authority**

Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972

#### **Purpose of Report**

- 1 To instruct officers to grant a lease to Sparks Trust on terms described in the report.

#### **Recommendations**

- 2 That member's delegate authority to the Strategic Director to complete Lease negotiations and to undertake works for the sums specified.

#### **Reason for Decision**

- 3 To let a vacant building to a local community trust.

#### **Background and Reason Decision Needed**

- 4 The property is vacant, the proposed tenant leases the adjacent Community Centre from Dorset County Council who lease from WPBC. They seek a lease from the Council and a contribution towards repairs. A copy of the site is outlined in red in the attached Appendix.

- 5 In the Confidential Appendix, the applicant's business case details their match funding aspirations, the service proposed and the works likely to be required to the premises. These will be thoroughly investigated by officers before any lease or expenditure commitments are made.

## **Implications**

- 6 A Lease from the Council dated 22nd October 1998 for the Play Area ended on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2017 because the tenants were not prepared to continue with a play area use. The premises were offered to the County Council for a continuation of a Play Area use but there was no requirement.
- 7 The Sparks Trust, a Registered Charity occupies the neighbouring Community Hall by way of a Tenancy at Will from Dorset County Council. Those premises are used as a Wellbeing Centre (Dance School, etc). The Trust will manage and fund a new Youth Centre in the former play group premises. Their principle costs being the employment of a full time Youth Worker. The Sparks Trust had hoped to secure additional funding of £18,000 in January 2018 from the Council but were unsuccessful potentially due to the size of the request. In consequence the Trust are seeking a rent free period and a contribution towards works as detailed in the Confidential Appendix.
- 8 The premises are vacant and being a combination of pre fabricated buildings they are in a poor state. The premises are subject to vandalism and deterioration due to the weather. Within the last two months the Council Building Surveyors attended for water damage and for replacing windows. We have considered demolishing the building and seeking alternative uses such as residential in addition to other Community uses such as a chemist or other Hall type uses. A residential use may be possible but the plot is small and within the community area for Southill. Other hall type users such as the Scouts or Cadets have larger requirements. There will be ongoing costs for the Council if left vacant including repairs, insurance, business rates and Officer Management of vacant premises. The premises may be demolished at a cost or refurbished for very little gain in terms of income. A refurbished / redecorated building with landscaped grounds will allow the premises to be utilised and provide a Youth Club, to the benefit of the local community.

## **Corporate Plan**

- 9 Building strong inclusive and sustainable communities that empower local people to influence and provide the services that matter most to them
- 10 Enhancing the quality of life of people living and working in the Borough.

## **Financial**

- 11 The Trust will provide a service to the local community and utilise a building that is currently vacant. After 3 years the Council will receive an income as detailed in the Confidential Appendix which also identifies the financial contribution sought towards works.

## **Equalities**

- 12 The letting is in accordance with Council policies.

## **Environmental**

- 13 The proposed letting will allow an existing building to be improved together with the fenced garden area.

## **Economic Development**

- 14 The proposed works may allow income generation and bring jobs in to the area on a longer term basis.

## **Risk Management (including Health & Safety)**

- 15 The Council will work with the proposed tenant to improve the buildings and the fenced in garden area.

## **Human Resources**

- 16 The Council currently pays business rates and manages the vacant building. The new tenant will take on these responsibilities.

## **Consultation and Engagement**

- 17 The proposed letting consultation is limited to relevant portfolio holders.

## **Appendices**

- 18 Confidential Appendix - The Business Case Report and the proposed Heads of Terms from the proposed tenant is commercially sensitive.

## **Background Papers**

WPBC Asset Management Plan **2016-2019**

## **Footnote**

Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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