

**To: Infrastructure, Land and Environment Policy Board**

**On: 8 November 2017**

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**Report by: Director of Finance & Resources**

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**Heading: Community Asset Transfer Request – Carbrook Street, Paisley**

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**1. Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to approve the Community Asset Transfer request from West End Growing Grounds Association (WEGGA) in relation to the vacant site at Carbrook Street, Paisley, shown on the attached plan.
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**2. Recommendations**

**It is recommended that the Board:**

- 2.1 Approves the Community Asset Transfer request from WEGGA for the subject site at Carbrook Street, Paisley subject to conditions being detailed within the body of this report.
- 2.2 Authorise the Head of Corporate Governance to conclude the Community Asset Transfer.
- 2.3 Note that should WEGGA fail to secure the necessary funding or the appropriate statutory consents for the site, it will remain with the Council as a surplus asset.

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### 3. **Background**

- 3.1. The subject site is located approximately 2 km from Paisley Town Centre on the periphery of the West End of Paisley. Adjacent to the subject site is 1960's local authority housing. The site is bounded on its north and east side by the high stone wall of Woodside cemetery.
- 3.2. The site extends to approximately 0.80 acres (3,252 sq m). Whilst the site is clear of any structures, it is overgrown with vegetation.
- 3.3. The subject site has been vacant since November 2007. Prior to this it was the site of the former Carbrook Children's Centre. The site is currently being used by Anglian Windows as a temporary site compound as part of the ongoing window replacement programme. Anglian Windows are due to vacate the site early December 2017.
- 3.4. A Stage 2 Community Asset Transfer application has been received from the West End Growing Grounds Association hereinafter referred to as WEGGA, to acquire the site through Community Asset Transfer.
- 3.5. WEGGA was established in 2011 as a constituted sub-committee of Paisley West & Central Community Council. The group are active in the West End of Paisley and currently maintain two West End stalled spaces in Brown Street and Underwood Lane.
- 3.6. WEGGA applied for Scottish Charitable Organisation Incorporation (SCIO) and this was granted on 22<sup>nd</sup> September. WEGGA's charitable number is SC047768.
- 3.7. WEGGA, through their Community Asset Transfer request, propose to convert the site into a community garden. It will be devoted to sustainable local food production and provide a community garden for recreation and contemplation. They have advised that it will contribute to the Scottish Government's health and well-being outcomes, and the themes and high-level priorities set out in the Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Partnership's Strategic Plan. It will also contribute to Renfrewshire Council's Greener initiatives and outcomes.
- 3.8. A development plan has been prepared and costs received. A SWECO mentoring application has been made to assist with mains water installation and ground contamination testing for the site.
- 3.9. The WISH Community Garden project has a two year implementation programme. Stage one will comprise of providing infrastructure to the site, creating accommodation (space for an office and teaching), 23 raised beds and 12 ground level plots. Stage two will comprise the creation of a community garden.

- 3.10. The accommodation within the site will enable educational programmes to be conducted on site, facilitated by partnership organisations. The educational programmes will be available to the whole community, young and old. The site will be managed daily by WEGGA members and this will allow them to provide support and supervision to users.
- 3.11. The two phases are currently estimated at a cost of £295,000 plus VAT. Applications to grant funding bodies will be submitted following confirmation that their Stage 2 application has been successful.
- 3.12. WEGGA have been working with officers to provide a business case which would allow them to acquire the site at Carbrook Street and manage their other property obligations. Additional information is awaited in support of their applications pertaining to funding however the funding applications cannot be submitted until they have written confirmation that they can acquire the site through Community Asset Transfer.
- 3.13. WEGGA has a healthy bank balance which officers have had sight of. They have provided a robust business plan for the period 2017 – 2022.
- 3.14. The subject site, which has been declared surplus, was previously offered to the open market for residential development. The site was well received and a number of offers were obtained.
- 3.15. In 2007 Board approval for the site to be sold to a developer was granted. Once agreement of deductions had been made the final sale price was determined to be £563,529. It should however be noted that this offer was received when residential land sale values were high and there was demand for development sites. Due to the economic crisis of 2007/2008, like many land sales to residential developers, this transaction did not conclude. The site remained available until now with little or no interest.
- 3.16. In terms of an indicative site value, in the current market and reflecting both the location and residential development capacity the Asset Manager has advised that he believes this site could achieve an offer in the region of £250,000 subject to planning being granted. It should be noted however that at this time there are no active developers who have expressed an interest in the site.

#### **4. Provisional Terms & Conditions**

- 4.1. Renfrewshire Council will grant to WEGGA the site known as Carbrook Street as indicated on the attached plan E2507 by virtue of a Community Asset Transfer subject to the following conditions being fulfilled:
  - WEGGA must obtain all statutory consents for their proposal;
  - WEGGA must obtain and provide confirmation of all necessary funding to Renfrewshire Council, for their proposal prior to implementing stage 1;

- Each party will meet their own professional & legal costs with WEGGA meeting any land transaction/stamp duties due for the transfer of the land.

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## Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – None
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None
3. **Community Planning** –
  - Children and Young People** – A vacant site will be improved and developed for the Community at large. It will provide a learning environment as well as a garden for relaxation and reflection.
  - Community Care, Health & Wellbeing** – The creation of associated accommodation, 23 raised beds and 12 ground level beds along with a community garden will offer a place to learn, volunteer, grow food produce and socialise. All these activities will be for the benefit of the local community.
  - Empowering our Communities** – WEGGA will continue to be operated by the community who will be able to improve the subjects for the benefit of the local community both young and old.
  - Greener** – WEGGA will continue to develop their community outdoor growing ground space, only on a larger scale, following their successful projects at Sutherland Street, Paisley and Brown Street, Paisley.
  - Jobs and the Economy** – Whilst no direct employment will be secured WEGGA will be providing members with training and enabling educational programmes to both young and old in the community. Surplus produce will be used for cooking demonstrations and fund raising activities with surplus offered also to food banks.
  - Safer and Stronger** - None
4. **Legal** – Conclude the legal terms of the Community Asset Transfer
5. **Property/Assets** – Conclude negotiations relating to conditions and completion of the property disposal.
6. **Information Technology** – None.
7. **Equality & Human Rights** -

- (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

8. **Health & Safety** – None.
9. **Procurement** – None.
10. **Risk** – None.
11. **Privacy Impact** – None.
12. **Cosla Policy Position** – None.

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### List of Background Papers

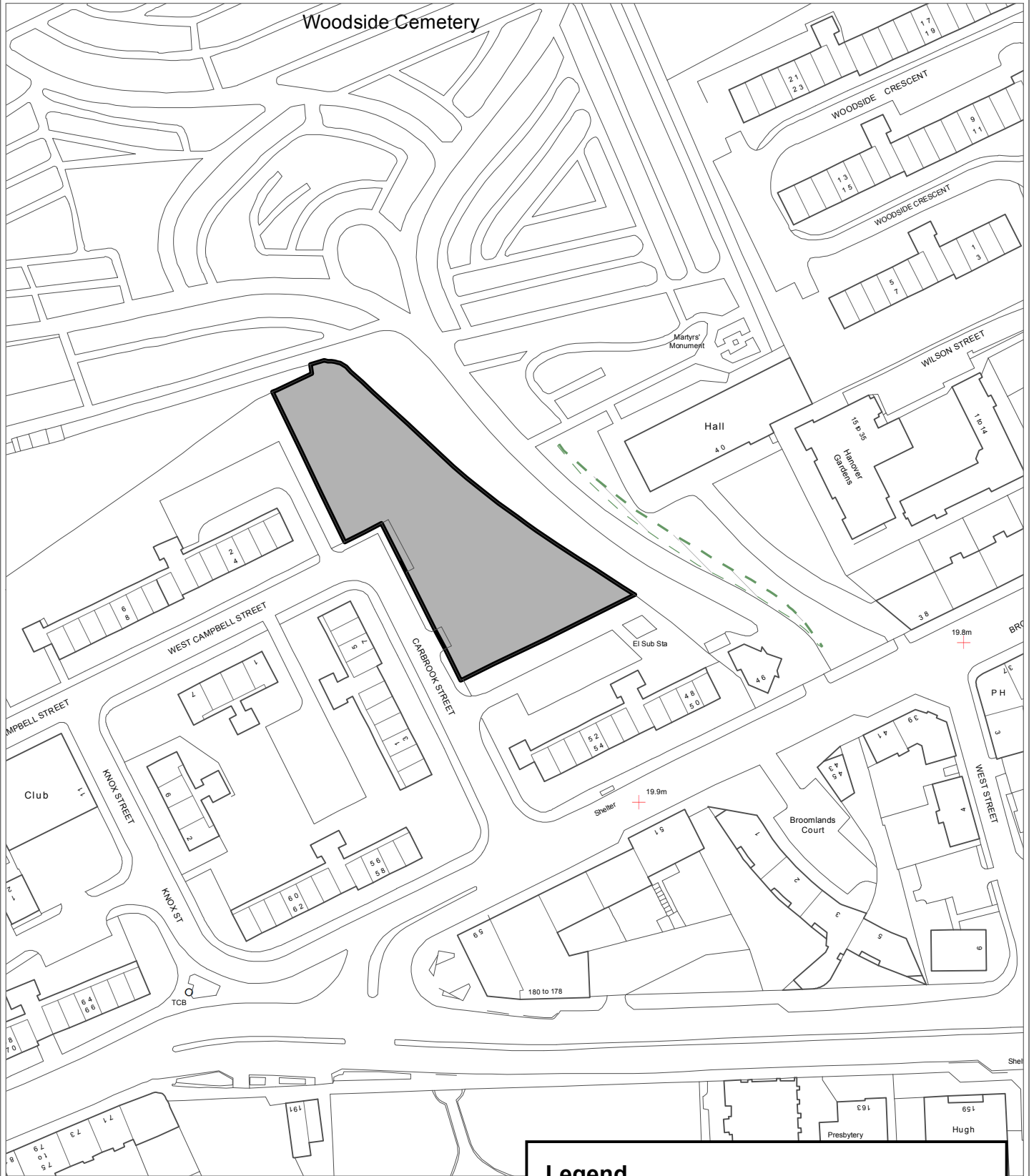
- (a) None

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# Site at Carbrook Street, Paisley Report / Disposal Plan Ref. E2507



**Legend**

 Area to be disposed extends to 0.33 hectares or thereby

Notes: