

PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL

Kinross-shire Area Committee

16 February 2023

FORMER BLAIRINGONE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report by the Head of Culture and Communities Services
(Report No 23/56)

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report provides an update to Committee on the proposed transfer of the former School building and Schoolhouse to the Fossoway Community Development Trust (FCDT). FCDT is awaiting confirmation of its application to become a registered charity and is developing a full proposal and business case to take over the management of the assets through Community Asset Transfer.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Committee:
- Note the progress made by the Trust to date
 - Agree that given a period up to 30 June is granted for the Trust to prepare and submit a full CAT Request and business case in line with disposal requirements. Thereafter the Council would seek to dispose of the asset on the open market.
 - Note that following an assessment of any CAT Request, a report with recommendations will be brought to a future meeting of the Kinross-shire Local Committee and Property Sub-Committee.

3. STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The report is structured over the following sections:
- Section 4: Background / Main Issues
 - Section 5: Progress to Date and Future Plans
 - Section 6: Conclusion

4. BACKGROUND / MAIN ISSUES

- 4.1 The former Blairingone Primary School site is located a few hundred yards east of Blairingone, along the A977 towards Powmill. Blairingone is a small settlement located in the western part of Kinross-shire, close to the boundary with Clackmannanshire.
- 4.2 Report 22/10 provided the detail of the assets and confirmed that they had been declared surplus to requirements by Perth and Kinross Council in June 2019. Since then, further deterioration of the assets has been experienced and an immediate cost of in excess of £30,000 was identified to bring them up to a suitable standard. Any CAT Request for the assets will need to demonstrate how this work can be completed as part of the proposals, as well as how ongoing maintenance, repair and upgrade can be sustained over a period of years.

5. PROGRESS TO DATE AND FUTURE PLANS

- 5.1 In mid-2022, community members came together to form Fossoway Community Development Trust (FCDT). Key points in the development of their proposals include:
- Initial community engagement from 2021 to 2022 which identified the desire for a community facility in Blairingone.
 - A public meeting on site in June 2022 attended by 25 members agreed to proceed with a community-led proposal for the assets.
 - FCDT submitted an Expression of Interest in Community Asset Transfer for the assets on 28 July 2022.
 - The Council's Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Team met with members of FCDT on 29 September, where the CAT Team confirmed that they were supportive of FCDT's interest and encouraged them to continue with a full CAT Request.
 - Volunteers were given access to the assets on 15 November to do a general review and tidy up and take delivery of some chairs which had been donated by the Crook of Devon Hall.
- 5.2 As of January 2023, FCDT is in the latter stages of formally registering with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), Companies House and the Development Trusts Association Scotland (DTAS). Once completed FCDT will be registered as a Company Limited by Guarantee with charitable status, making it eligible to apply for a Community Asset Transfer under the provisions of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.
- 5.3 As the assets remain in the ownership of the Council, deterioration and subsequent maintenance costs remain an issue for the Council's Property Maintenance Team. Given the progress to date by the Development Trust, balanced against current budget pressures and the desire to reduce this burden, it is recommended that the Development Trust be given the opportunity to submit a full CAT Request by Friday 30 June. This proposal will be assessed by the Council's Community Asset Transfer (CAT) Team who

can then prepare a report with recommendations for a future meeting of the Kinross-shire Local Committee and Property Sub Committee.

- 5.4 In order for the CAT Request to be valid, FCDD need to demonstrate:
- A clear need and end use for the assets
 - Strong evidence of community engagement and support
 - How their proposals will generate community benefit
 - That their proposals will help the Council meet its strategic priorities
 - A strong and sustainable business plan for their proposals, including the costs of upgrades and ongoing maintenance and repair, as well as running costs
 - Sufficient capacity within the group to deliver their plans
- 5.5 The Kinross-shire Area Committee pilot is due to end in July. Disposal of the asset would be for Property Sub-Committee to consider but a further update will be provided to any future local devolved Committee for Kinross-shire following consideration by Council of the pilot evaluation findings.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The former Blairingone Primary School and schoolhouse were declared surplus to requirements in June 2019 and have remained vacant since. The Fossoway Community Development Trust submitted an Expression of Interest in July 2022 and are working on achieving the requisite legal status to submit a full Community Asset Transfer Request and will set out their proposals for future use of the assets.