

**Transfer of S106 Asset  
Community Building: Loves Farm  
(Report by the Head of Environmental & Community Health Services)**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To recommend an appropriate arrangement for managing a new community building, when built at Loves Farm, St Neots.

**2. INTRODUCTION**

- 2.1 As part of the section 106 agreement (agreed: 22 March 2006) [between Huntingdonshire District Council, as planning authority, and the developers of Loves Farm] the District Council will receive £310,000 plus land specifically towards the costs of providing a community building for the use by local residents (Plan attached as Appendix 'A'). The land was transferred to the Council in June 2008.
- 2.2 Historically the District Council has taken the view that this type of facility is about local provision and it is preferable if a local arrangement is set up such that the facility is managed locally either by a Town or Parish Council or appropriate community group as, for example, was the recent case of the Ramsey Community Centre.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In the case of Loves Farm there was a preliminary approach to St Neots Town Council in February 2008. During discussions it became clear that the Town Council did not consider that the funds being provided would be sufficient and were not inclined to take on the management of the asset. Latterly, now that the community is beginning to grow at Loves Farm, an active Residents Association has been established who have indicated that they would wish to work with the District Council on the planning and design of the facility. They have also suggested a willingness to try to attract additional external finance to support the build programme and to enhance what can be provided with the Section 106 funds. They would then be prepared to manage the facility. Any transfer to the Residents' Association would be by leasehold so Huntingdonshire District Council would retain the freehold rights.
- 3.2 Members have already received a report outlining some general principles for asset management (Cabinet Report: 29 January 2009). This report referred to the government sponsored report (the Quirk Report) which was published in 2007. Issues relating to the transfer of local authority assets to community based organisations were considered. In January 2009 there were limited opportunities for further transfers to the community but the report concluded that community ownership should be considered as part of the strategic approach to asset management.

- 3.3 Meanwhile at their meeting on 2 December 2009 the Town Council approved a recommendation that they “adopt the community building in Loves Farm and the asset including Title Deeds be transferred to St Neots Town Council on completion”. It is understood however that they do not wish to participate in the specification or procurement or seeking any additional funding should that be required.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 The community building at Loves Farm is yet to be designed or built. The S106 agreement between the developer and Huntingdonshire District Council provides both an identified site and c£310,000 to construct a building for the benefit of Loves Farm residents. From 1 April 2010 Loves Farm forms part of the Priory Park ward of St Neots Town.
- 4.2 There have now been two expressions of interest for the management of the building when complete - one is from St Neots Town Council and the other from the Loves Farm Residents Association. The Town Council provides an option of freehold transfer on completion, while the residents’ association would be granted leasehold interest. The Residents association have indicated that they would wish to be involved in both the design and raising supplementary funding for the building.
- 4.3 This Council has already accepted that community ownership, for example by a Resident’s Association should be considered as part of the strategic approach to asset management where such offers are made as in the case of Loves Farm. The community there are very keen to be involved at the earliest opportunity to shape their local provision of community facilities.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 Members are recommended to approve Loves Farm Residents’ Association as the managing organisation for the Loves Farm Community Building. The granting of the lease would be subject to Loves Farm Residents’ Association establishing an appropriate charitable trust to be responsible for the community building and providing a 3-5 year business-plan demonstrating how ongoing management of the building can be sustained.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Loves Farm S106 Agreement dated 22 March 2006  
Minute 146 of St Neots Town Council Meeting held on the 6 February 2008  
Minute 132 of St Neots Town Council meeting held on 2 December 2009  
E Mail dated 1-3-10 from Mr C A Jones, Chairman, Loves Farm Residents Assoc  
Asset Management report to HDC Cabinet 29 January 2009  
Transfer of S106 asset report to COMT 30 March 2010  
The Quirk Report – Making Assets Work, May 2007

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## Appendix A

Map provided by Loves Farm Residents Assoc

The Community Building site is identified with the red boundary

