

SAWTRY YOUTH CENTRE - LEASE OF WORKSHOP AREA TO CARESCO

To: **Commercial and Investment Committee**

Meeting Date: **13 September 2019**

From: **Chris Malyon, Deputy Chief Executive**

Electoral division(s): **Sawtry and Stilton**

Forward Plan ref: **N/a** *Key decision:* **No**

Purpose: **To consider granting a 10 year lease of the workshop area at the Sawtry Community and Youth Centre to Caresco at less than best consideration.**

Recommendation: **a) To enter into an agreement for lease to Caresco for a minimum 10 year term at less than best rent subject to them receiving grant funding for improvements and maintenance.**

b) That agreement of the final terms are delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee.

<i>Officer contact:</i>	<i>Member contact:</i>
Name: Alex Gee Post: Interim Head of Property Email: Alex.gee@cambridgeshire.gov.uk Tel: 07770 283154	Names: Cllr Joshua Schumann Post: Committee Chairman Email: Joshua.schumann@cambridgeshire.gov.uk Tel: 01223 706398/07841 524007

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Sawtry Youth Centre is a concrete framed and brick clad building formerly used by Sawtry Agricultural College. Part of the building (approximately 50%) has been converted into a community space, offices and a library room, while the rear of the unit is currently being used informally as a workshop/food bank, known as “the Mancave” by the local charity Caresco. The space at the front half of the building is occupied at different times of the week by a number of community /charity users. See location plan (**Appendix 1**) and layout plan (**Appendix 2**).



- 1.2 In May 2017, the Asset and Investment Committee approved the relocation of the Library from the adjacent school to the Youth Centre and also the improvement of a Children's Centre office which was already located there (**Appendix 3**).
- 1.3 The workshop area to the rear was not included in this refurbishment. At that time it was vacant but had previously been used for storage.
- 1.4 Caresco now informally use part of the store as a foodbank store, a charitable item store for their local charity work and the remaining space as a workshop area for upcycling of local items bought in together with PAT electrical testing of items prior to sale in their charity shop. This “Mancave” project also serves an important secondary purpose as a place where isolated men in the community can meet up with all the mental health benefits that contact with others brings.
- 1.5 In December 2014 the property was nominated by Sawtry Parish Council to be included on a list of ‘Assets of Community Value’ (in accordance with the Localism Act 2011), imposing restrictions on disposal without first considering disposal to a community interest group, during the subsequent 5 year moratorium period. A lease of the building to the Parish Council was considered in 2015 but the Parish did not follow this through.
- 1.6 Although previously declared surplus by the Service Department since refurbishment in 2017 and the transfer of the library from the school it is now very well used and its future will be reviewed in a refreshed asset strategy review.

2. MAIN ISSUES

- 2.1 Caresco have asked the Council for a formal lease of the storage area which would allow them to apply for grant funding to further improve and develop the space. They would prefer a 25 year term but will accept 10 years. The Council prefers the shorter term while Caresco become more established financially.
- 2.2 The Market Rent for a storage use of this space would be in the region of £9,000. Caresco have asked to pay a peppercorn rent but this is still subject to negotiation, however it is expected that the rent will be agreed at less than best consideration. The lease will be contracted out of S24-28 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 which means that they would not automatically have a right to extend the tenancy beyond 10 years. Repairing obligations are to be agreed as part of the lease negotiations.
- 2.3 Caresco have identified a number of improvements to the premises estimated to cost £17,000, including providing a toilet, kitchen facilities, a water supply and a connection to the sewer. They intend to carry these out subject to obtaining grant funding.
- 2.4 Roof repairs which include the wider building costing £5,000 have been ordered. In addition repairs to gutters serving the whole building and costing £1500 are required.
- 2.5 Repairs and inspections specifically for the Mancave are a new pedestrian door (£1500), a roller door requires servicing (£500), and a fire risk assessment and an electrical installation test each costing £500, in total £3,000.
- 2.6 Estimated running costs payable by Caresco would be £300 for gas, water and electricity and £1,500 for business rates.
- 2.7 It is proposed to enter an agreement for a lease with Caresco which would be conditional on them obtaining grant funding. Without the grant funding, the agreement would need re-negotiation but indications suggest that funding is available would be conditional on an agreement for a lease.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Report authors should evaluate the proposal(s) in light of their alignment with the following three Corporate Priorities.

3.1 A good quality of life for everyone.

By agreeing a lease to Caresco to use the Workshop as a food bank and home for their charity work has the additional benefit of supporting vulnerable or isolated members of the community by providing a regular meeting place and the ability to socialise and make supportive friendship groups.

3.2 Thriving places for people to live

The report above sets out the implications for this priority in 3.1 above.

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire's children
There are no significant implications for this priority

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Resource Implications

The report addresses this at 2 above.

4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications

Procurement for Works carried out in accordance with CCC contract procedure rules.

4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications

Heads of Terms are being negotiated and LGSS Legal will be instructed to complete the lease.

There is a reputational risk to the Council should it decide not to proceed with a lease.

4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

- Sustaining the provision of the foodbank (protected characteristic groups at higher risk of poverty: disabled people, BAME people, sex (women), age (older people and children). Priority group: poverty)
- Sustaining the provision of the 'Mancave' group (protected characteristic groups at higher risk of isolation: disabled people, BAME people, age (older people). Priority group: poverty and rural isolation)
- Providing a (preferably unisex and inclusive design/accessible or – space permitting – changing places) toilet for volunteers and customers to use (protected characteristics: disabled people, women, age (older people, children needing baby change), gender reassignment)
- Recommendation on completing an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)/ Community Impact Assessment (CIA)

4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

The project works well within the Think Communities programme CCC are promoting and it may be possible to link with this.

4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

Cllr Simon Bywater is fully aware of the issues presented. The proposal empowers a local charity to provide beneficial services to the local community.

4.7 Public Health Implications

The "Mancave" project is believed to have a positive effect on local participants' well-being.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Tom Kelly has been sent copy of the report
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes Name of Officer: Jon Collyns who has no issues or concerns to raise
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Mickaela Green
Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?	Yes Name of Officer: Amanda Warburton has commented and include Jennifer Bartlett these are noted above.
Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?	Yes Name of Officer: Christine Birchall has reviewed and raised with THINK Communities comments included above.
Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?	Councillor Bywater has been involved in discussions and has been sent copy of the report
Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health	Yes Name of Officer: Tess Campbell has been sent copy of the report

Source Documents	Location
App 1 – Location plan App 2 - Layout plan App 3 – Assets & Investment paper May 2017	Enclosed Enclosed <u>Assets and Investment paper May 2017</u>