



CABINET - 25TH JUNE 2025

**SUBJECT: COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER PROPOSAL OF THE LAND
AT DAN Y GRAIG RISCA**

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF ASSETS AND DECARBONISATION

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's approval for an in-principal Community Asset Transfer (CAT) through the grant of a long-term lease. The proposal involves transferring the underutilised land at Dan Y Graig to a newly formed cooperative.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 Community Asset Transfer (CAT) aims to empower communities by transferring assets to safeguard services and facilities. This proposal forms part of several pilot projects that are being progressed under the refreshed CAT approach.
- 2.2 The Bee Well Cooperative is a community-led initiative that brings together six independent organisations and a local landowner acting as an ambassador for the site to create a sustainable, multi-purpose well-being space in South Wales.
- 2.3 Each cooperative member delivers a unique yet complementary project, focusing on mental health, environmental conservation, outdoor education qualification, and social inclusion. By securing this land, the cooperative will establish a long-term community hub offering accessible services and sustainable development.
- 2.4 The proposed services will benefit both the community of Risca and further afield as the Cooperative address gaps in the current local provision of Community well being and mental health services, education and skills development, support for the veteran and vulnerable community, whilst they work towards environmental restoration and sustainable economic development of the area.

- 2.5 The Council is facing significant financial challenges and simply cannot afford to deliver all current services. This scheme offers an opportunity to transfer a site that is currently not in use and develop a safe and accessible community space where services will be provided for children, families and vulnerable groups ensuring equitable access to well-being and educational opportunities. The transfer will relieve the Council of some responsibilities and costs associated with managing the asset.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 To endorse:

The proposed transfer of the land at Dan Y Graig Risca to the Bee Well Cooperative via a lease agreement. Subject to planning requirements and provision of a sustainable business plan. The terms of the lease to be agreed and approved under delegated powers.

4. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To bring back into use the underutilised land at Dan Y Graig for the benefit of the local community. The proposal forms part of a pilot scheme to assess the refreshed Community Asset Transfer approach.

5. THE REPORT

- 5.1 Community Asset Transfer may take a variety of forms but fundamentally, it entails transferring management and/or ownership to community groups. It serves as an alternative to private sales, safeguarding community buildings and spaces for the long-term. This approach enables councils and communities to maximise local value while minimising public sector costs.
- 5.2 The proposal detailed in this report involves the leasehold transfer of the Land at Dan Y Graig located in Risca, to a local Cooperative, the constitution of which makes them a suitable candidate for the asset transfer process.
- 5.3 Pilot schemes are underway to assess the revised Community Asset Transfer approach and timelines. This project presents the opportunity to transfer a site that is currently not in use, returning it to an occupational use. The proposal will fill an identified gap in service provision within the Risca area, bringing benefits to the local community.

The Proposal

- 5.4 The Bee Well Cooperative, which consists of six independent organisations seek a Community Asset Transfer of the Land at Dan Y Graig which they plan to restore, develop, and manage the site for environmental conservation, education, and community well-being.

Cooperative Members & Their Contributions

1. **BWORKZ CIO** (Lead Organisation) – UK-registered charity focused on environmental conservation and beekeeping education. Plans to establish a honey farm and accessible educational apiary to increase local biodiversity and provide low-cost training in sustainable beekeeping.
2. **Wellies Farm and Garden CIC** – A family-run farm delivering forest school activities for children and adults, promoting outdoor learning, environmental awareness, and life skills. We are now registering to work with Agored offering qualifications in everything and more that we offer at Wellies.
3. **Thorgrim's Hall LTD** – A Viking-style settlement project teaching bushcraft, survival skills, and foraging to support mental well-being, social connection, and outdoor education.
4. **Wood Chill Wellness CIC** – A community wellness initiative offering contrast therapy, eco-therapy, and holistic well-being activities, supporting mental health through nature-based therapies and social prescribing partnerships.
5. **Veterans Support Group Risca** – Provides mental health support, advice, and social reintegration opportunities for veterans and their families using outdoor therapy and peer support models.
6. **Remember2Care CIC** – A complementary therapy organisation offering holistic health interventions, community resilience projects, and educational workshops on mental, physical, and emotional well-being.

Together, these organisations will restore, develop, and manage the site in a way that benefits the environment, local economy, and community well-being.

- 5.5 The group operate under a collaborative governance model ensuring that all member organisations contribute to decision making. The structure has been designed to be inclusive transparent and community focused with each member organisation responsible for a key aspect of the project.
- 5.6 The group has a clear Business Development Strategy with key activities outlined for the project design and establishment, launch and initial operations phase through to sustainability and growth plan for years four and beyond.
- 5.7 The proposal includes market analysis, demographic information, and target market data. The business case outlines the cooperatives plans to expand services, attract a broader customer base, collaborate with other local organisations, and enhance community engagement.
- 5.8 The group propose to offer a comprehensive range of services, accessible pricing options, and community focused initiatives. They aim to bridge the gap in access to mental health and Wellbeing services in Risca and surrounding areas. Their commitment to promoting overall health and well-being aligns

with the needs of the local community, and they are dedicated to supporting children, families, and vulnerable groups.

- 5.9 Funding streams have been identified by each of the organisations with commitments for set up funding costs agreed. Additional funding streams will be approached throughout the life of the project to develop and further enhance facilities and services provided.
- 5.10 The group have engaged with Cwmpass for support in establishing as a Cooperative and for guidance in relation to funding and the CAT process in general.
- 5.11 The proposed services offered by the Cooperative will include environmental restoration and conservation workshops and activities, outdoor education, and skills development along with community wellbeing and mental health support services.
- 5.12 The Environmental Restoration and Conservation benefits through the reforestation of the land, increasing the biodiversity of the area, and restoring pathways will be measured through the number of trees planted, biodiversity surveys, and footpath restoration progress.
- 5.13 The Education & Skills Development benefits of the project through teaching bushcraft, beekeeping, outdoor survival, and mental health resilience will be measured through the number of educational sessions delivered and community participation levels.
- 5.14 The Community Well-being & Mental Health Support benefits through the provision of outdoor therapy, contrast therapy, and holistic well-being support will be measured through the number of participants in social prescribing initiatives and well-being workshops.
- 5.15 The economic Regeneration & Sustainable Business Growth from the creation of eco-tourism opportunities and small business growth within the cooperative will be measured through revenue generated, business partnerships, and cooperative job creation.

The Land

- 5.16 The land identified as a potential Community Asset transfer at Dan y Graig Risca, site plan attached at appendix 1.
- 5.17 The proposal involves transferring a site that has been out of use for many years. The cooperative plans to develop the woodland and open fields for biodiversity projects, outdoor learning, and community engagement spaces. The existing footpaths and waterways will be restored and maintained for safe public access and eco-therapy sessions, and potential water sources maintained to support sustainability efforts, irrigation, and eco-friendly infrastructure. Site usage plan attached at appendix 2.

- 5.18 The proposed change will require a Planning change of use application. Comments from the Planning Dept on the business plan have been requested.
- 5.19 The site comprises of one title and is registered with freehold absolute ownership. Legal services will engage with the Cooperative as part of the lease process.
- 5.20 To support community initiatives, certain asset transfers may be approved at below market rent. These transfers recognise the significant social and community benefits provided by the recipient organisations. Each case will be evaluated on its merits, ensuring the community value justifies the reduced or zero rent. This approach aligns with our commitment to fostering resilience and empowering communities. The current rateable value (1 April 2023 to present) is £7,500. Therefore, if granting a community asset transfer at a peppercorn rent, the council will forgo a potential revenue income of £5,500 per annum in exchange for the community value and benefit that the project brings to the community.
- 5.21 The carbon sequestration of the site is currently reported annually to Welsh Government as 33,605 kgCO₂e per year. Up to date aerials, estimate that 60% is wooded and 40% is grassland leading to a more accurate estimated carbon sequestration of 23,841 kgCO₂e per year. The least impactful option for sequestration and biodiversity for the site would be to leave it as it is with improved maintenance and management. There could be opportunities to further the sequestration of the site by planting further trees and/or border hedgerows. The impact of clearing the identified areas to develop the site would lead to an emissions differential of between ~35,000 kgCO₂e and ~57,000 kgCO₂e per year utilising current Welsh Government reporting methodology. It should be noted that as a leased asset this would not be added to the Council's footprint, however, there will be a reduction in reported sequestration as the current sequestration will no longer be counted. Through proper maintenance and management of the site, this differential alongside the impact of biodiversity could be minimised. Appendix 2 details areas of the site which are being prioritised for reforestation, rewilding and habitat creation for biodiversity which will work to remediate impact of other works.

6. ASSUMPTIONS

- 6.1 The tenant will need to submit a planning application for change of use. The proposal assumes that the application will be submitted once the lease proposal is approved and that the planning change of use is granted.

7. SUMMARY OF INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A full Equalities assessment was undertaken on the proposed Communities Asset Transfer of Dan Y Graig.

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8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 If supported, the proposal, will reduce the Council's management responsibilities and holding costs.

9. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 N/A

10. CONSULTATIONS

- 10.1 The report and associated documents have been circulated for comment within the CAT Delivery Group, Planning, Decarb and Finance teams.
- 10.2 During the review process the draft policy and associated documents have been circulated to Leadership and Portfolio board. Further consultation is being undertaken as part of the reporting process and comments will be included in the report.
- 10.3 Comments from the Decarbonisation team have been included in section 5.21

11. STATUTORY POWER

- 11.1 Local Government Act 1998. Local Government Act 2003.

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Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (GAVO)

Appendices

Appendix 1 Site plan

Appendix 2 Site plan identifying project usage