

ASSET TRANSFER UNDER THE COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT ACT

NOTICE OF ASSET TRANSFER REQUEST REVIEW 2

An asset transfer request has been made to North Lanarkshire Council under Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, Section 86 (1)(b) subsection iii. Airdrie Harriers are now requesting review of their application to North Lanarkshire Council, on the basis of a decision to reject our application was made at the Communities Committee on 28 April 2025. This is in addition to the earlier review requested by Airdrie Harriers for no decision notice within the required period.

The request has been made by Airdrie Harriers and relates to Coatbridge Outdoor Sport Centre which includes the running track, grass pitch, grass terracing within the perimeter fence and the car park adjacent to the entry gate, situated on Langloan Street, Langloan, Coatbridge ML5 1HH. The request is for purchase of the land, which includes the running track and surrounding area. The proposed use of the land is for outdoor sports and to build up a community centre.

Airdrie Harriers would like to formally request a review from the council as we do not agree with the decision to reject our Community Asset Transfer. Within the Communities Committee on Monday 28th April there were five CAT applications on the agenda. Our scoring in the report is 4 'strong' and 4 'moderate'. This is the same scoring, as the Chapelhall Community and the Rochsoles Palm Church, both of which were accepted. However, the Airdrie Harriers application has scored the same, but the outcome was different, and our CAT was rejected.

Summary of Reasons provided for Refusal:

"While Airdrie Harriers demonstrated strong governance arrangements and a longstanding presence in the community and a positive track record in delivering community activities, the proposal to take ownership of the entire Langloan site represented a step change in scale and complexity. The organisation has limited demonstrable experience of operating or maintaining a site of this size or nature."

- Airdrie Harriers feel that on the board and through the support helper group we have extensive experience as business owners, directors and managerial roles, running many projects and operations which are not only of this scale but also much larger. In addition to this our new treasurer is a Head of Service for a neighbouring council and has many years' experience overseeing leisure facilities. Over the last few years, we have taken on more and more care of the site as the council has reduced their involvement. Since the fire in 2019 which destroyed the building we used; we have built up multiple containers for storage, put a toilet on site, have temporary lighting for winter training, do lots of maintenance tasks ourselves and recently added a changing facility for the kids. This is all done through our own collective drive and costs, while working with local businesses willing to help a local charity with expertise, gifts and discounts. We understand the full site is another step up from this, but we feel fully capable of making that step and do not see why this would be a reason to reject our application.

"Financial projections were not sufficiently robust and did not fully account for the scale of investment required and lacked evidence or contingency planning."

- Our application was submitted in April 2024 and included contingency planning and provided two full financial projections. We could see that there was a distinct possibility that the Janet Hamilton Centre may not be a going concern and this contingency, which we had the foresight to include, has now become reality with the demolition of the Janet Hamilton Centre. We do not feel that the council were very supportive or transparent when the applications were being submitted, although changes to the process and guidance came late for our application, we welcome the councils recent review of their processes to help CAT applications.

"The scale of capital investment needed to realise the project's ambitions — including resurfacing the running track, installing modular units, and developing additional community infrastructure is significant. The group's business plan assumed access to large-scale external grant funding, but no confirmed funding commitments were provided, nor were timescales for applications and outcomes clear."

- Yes, the scale of capital investment is significant, and we are under no illusion that it will take a lot of effect on our part. Regarding confirmed funding and timescales, we have had very positive meetings and communications with funders however through this particular CAT process there has been a great deal of uncertainty; with three different CAT applications for the site and multiple buildings in varying states of disrepair on the site it was very difficult to put to funders our exact needs. We were provided very limited access so did not know if the buildings would need to demolition, structural work or decoration. To be successful with key funders we needed to be clear on what was required, and we feel it was better to wait to be clear on our requirements.

"The very high discount requested (purchase offer of £1 for an asset valued at £1 million) increased the risk to the Council, especially given uncertainties around fundraising and financial viability. Given the potential for alternative strategic uses of the site (e.g. social housing or mixed-use redevelopment), the case for transfer at this level of discount was not considered strong enough."

- The £1 offer was made on the valuation received at the start of this process which was the site had negligible value due to the dilapidated state and in the application we stated we would happily work with the council to explore a fee if that was required. On a procedural basis, it seems like the other more recent applications have been given clear and transparent valuations they can work with. We have only received a redacted paragraph from the council which does not provide clarity on the true value of the site. We believe there have been three different types of valuations considered for the site: 1. Commercial Value, 2. Social Housing Value, and 3. Valuation for Current Use. Our application is for current use, however in the paragraph provided by the council we have seen the value is for a 'developer' therefore we assume we are being judged against a commercial valuation, while the two other 'accepted' applications were given

significantly different valuations of approximately £70k for what seems to be current use.

We have requested to see the district valuer full valuation and would still like to see a copy, as this is significantly different to the valuation we received for the current usage of an Outdoor Sport Centre, the site has negligible value due to the dilapidated condition of the facilities that were on the site. If the valuation is for a commercial developer, then the value needs to consider the industrial history of the site, the track is on the old Langloan Iron and Chemical Works. The site has been marked as contaminated and likely will need remediation before a developer can build on it, this will reduce the valuation. Has that been considered?

To get a true valuation with the industrial history of the site, we were informed at the start of this CAT process an 'Intrusive Site Survey' is required and bore holes need to be taken to establish the type and levels of contamination. Can the council confirm if this has taken place? If not, then I would argue the valuation we are being held to, is not valid and therefore our application being rejected on the basis of the valuation should not be valid. This large commercial valuation does not seem fair to us and was not the procedure described to us when we submitted our application. We are also under the impression that to be used for housing the site would need to be on the Local Development Plan or the Social Housing Plan, which can set out plans for up to 10 years. To the best of my knowledge the site is not on these lists and should not be transferred to a housing remit during an active CAT application, therefore I would expect the fair valuation should be for 'current use' not a hypothetical housing opportunity.

"Although there was evidence of community engagement and potential community benefits, the extent of wider community support beyond the athletics community was described to a lesser extent. The proposal remained largely athletics-focused and membership-based, raising questions about inclusive access, wider usage, and the scale of social impact."

- Our application is to retain the Coatbridge Outdoor Sport Centre for the people of Coatbridge and surrounding areas. We are the lead club submitting the CAT because our need for a running track is more unique and without this track our club, established in 1933, is likely to cease to exist. The application however is for many other local groups who need an outdoor sport centre as stated in the business plan, more notably Monklands Archery and Waysiders Rugby. The community really needs these facilities to be a thriving community, adding more houses but less facilities to live together and bond people will in the long run make this town less of a desirable place to live.

We believe there is very strong support by the local community not just the athletic community. We work very closely with the Local Residents and Housing association, and they have always been very supportive of our application. I would urge the councillors to read some of the community representations (an abridged copy was provided as part of the review) of the nine representations picked out, from the many

positive representations, only two are actually members of the club but they show the broad range of support and the respect Airdrie Harriers is held within the community.

Airdrie Harriers have applied for funding based on the council's valuation and plan to follow this request for a review, with an improved financial offer for the site. We really hope the councillors see our worth in saving this much-loved facility for the people of Coatbridge and surrounding area. However, if the councillors do not believe we are at the stage to fully take on the site, I hope it may be possible to be granted a lease for the site over the next few years, while we continue to build up confidence in our ability and work to confirm funding. In granting a lease, it would offer some protection for the club, that we will not be denied access to the site at short notice, which has happened multiple times since the Coatbridge Outdoor Sport Centre fire in 2019.

The documents relating to this request are the same as listed out in our initial request for a review on 21st February 2025. All the documents and representations are available by contacting Gary Stark on StarkGa@northlan.gov.uk or NLCCCommunityOwnership.gov.uk. I would also be very willing to speak with anyone who is interested in our application and happy to share any of the submitted documents, please feel free to contact me on [REDACTED] with any questions.