

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 8 DECEMBER 2020

**TRANSFER OF ST CHRISTOPHER'S SITE FROM GENERAL FUND TO HOUSING REVENUE
ACCOUNT**

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITIES

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this report is to gain approval to transfer the St Christopher's Gypsy Travellers site in Montrose from Angus Council's General Fund Account to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) subject to Scottish Ministerial consent.

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1 It is recommended that the Committee

- (i) Approves, subject to the necessary Scottish Ministerial consent, that the St Christopher's Gypsy Travellers site in Montrose, shown outlined on the plan at **Appendix 1** be transferred from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) at nil value.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN / CORPORATE PLAN.

2.1 This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Local Outcomes Improvement Plan and Locality Plans:

- More opportunities for people to achieve success;
- Safe, secure, vibrant and sustainable communities;
- Improved physical, mental and emotional health & wellbeing;
- An enhanced, protected and enjoyed natural and built environment.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Scottish Housing Regulator has responsibility for the regulation of the landlord, homelessness and factoring functions of local authorities. Protecting the interests of tenants and other service users has been a consistent guiding principle for regulation and inspection in Scotland. This responsibility extends to Gypsy Travellers residing in Council run sites, such as the site at St Christopher's, Tayock, Montrose (shown in the outlined plan in Appendix 1).

3.2 The focus on the interests of tenants and other service users, including Gypsy Travellers on sites owned and/or managed by social landlords, was formalised by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010. The Act set out the clear statutory objective of the Scottish Housing Regulator to; safeguard and promote the interests of current and future tenants of social landlords, as well as people who are or may become homeless, and people who use housing services.

3.3 The Scottish Social Housing Charter which came into effect on 1 April 2012, reinforced the statutory duties introduced through the 2010 Act, and notably set a specific outcome for those local authorities and social landlords with responsibility for managing sites for Gypsy Travellers to ensure that "sites are well maintained and managed".

3.4 The St Christopher's travelling persons site was established in 1978. The site itself is on the General Fund Account with management and maintenance provided by the Council's Housing Service. These services are funded by the rental income paid by residents. The site has developed into a stable residential site with a permanent community of Gypsy Travellers and some of the residents have resided within the site for many years.

3.5 The site contains 18 pitches. Each pitch contains the following -

- its own hard standing for parking a caravan and a car or other vehicle with space for a second caravan;
- an amenity block with toilet/shower/bath, kitchen area, hot and cold water and storage; and
- a hook-up facility for electricity to the caravan.

3.6 Those residing on the site have a tenancy agreement with Angus Council and subsequently pay a weekly rental for their pitch of £58.51 (over 52/53 weeks) to the Council. This is less than the average rent for a 2 apartment property of £64.14. Those residents are also required to pay Council Tax to the Council.

4. PROPOSALS

4.1 Through the provisions of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 and the introduction of the Scottish Social Housing charter, it has been made clear that the provision and management of Gypsy Travellers site is a housing function. It is therefore recommended that the site at St Christopher's, Tayock, Montrose is transferred from the General Fund to the HRA at nil value.

4.2 If approval to transfer the site to the HRA is agreed, any future works and capital spend can be made through the HRA Capital or Planned Maintenance programmes. There will be no change to the structure of services provided to residents.

4.3 The transfer of the site to the HRA will be subject to Scottish Ministers consent and this will be sought if approval by Committee is agreed.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Costs associated with the delivery of services, repairs and capital spends are contained within existing HRA budgets. It is proposed that the site transfers from the General Fund to the HRA at nil value.

6. EQUALITIES

6.1 There will be no change to how services are provided to residents and as such an Equalities Impact Assessment is not required.

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Director of Legal & Democratic Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report

NOTE: No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to any material extent in preparing the above report.

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List of appendices: Appendix 1 Site Plan