



COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER REQUEST

**Former Assessors Office
Ferry Road
Dingwall**

February 2018

Prepared By: Ian Donald, Deputy Chief Officer, HTSI.

Our Asset Transfer Request

Who we are:

Highland Third Sector Interface has a primary purpose in advancing citizenship, community development, civic responsibility and volunteering. We are a membership organisation for Highland Third Sector Organisations (TSOs).

At our last Third Sector Census, we recorded some 3360 TSOs across Highland, these vary in size from small groups with a handful of volunteers, to large organisations which provide a wide range of services, delivered by both volunteers and paid staff.

We are a Registered Scottish Charity No: SC043521, and a Registered Scottish Company No: SC425808.

Our membership reflects the wide geography and range of interests in Highland, and is currently free for TSOs to join. We have a commitment within the next five years to further develop the membership services and leadership within the organisation.

At present, the Highland Third Sector Interface has some 167 registered members, who are also eligible to vote at our AGM and be elected as Trustees.

We are currently based in Dingwall in leased premises and have been based here for over four and a half years.

We have confirmed our eligibility to make an Asset Transfer Request, and a copy of our Articles of Association detailing these undertakings has been submitted to Highland Council along with our expression of interest.

Our Service Delivery:

As one of the 32 Third Sector Interfaces in Scotland, we are commissioned by the Scottish Government to deliver the following services to the population of the Highlands;

- Volunteer Development
- Social Enterprise
- Youth Volunteering
- Strong connection with Highland Community Planning Partnership processes
- Community Learning and Development

The current role as outlined above has been in review with the Scottish Government and we have been advised that a revised commission will become more outcome focused with a greater emphasis on the support and development of the Third Sector

as a strategic partner in the ongoing development of all aspects of Highland life, though with specific reference to health, social care, active citizenship and the CPP. The outcome of that review is now anticipated in March 2018 with a commitment from the Scottish Government to continue the total investment to the whole TSI network beyond the current funding arrangements without reduction.

In late December 2017, Scottish Government Third Sector Unit advised TSI's that following the adoption of the budget, the priorities areas for 2018-19 would be;

- ✓ Maximising the impact of the Third Sector in reducing inequality, working with communities to tackle tough social issues at source, and giving pace and innovation to public service reform
- ✓ Providing support to social enterprises and a wider enterprising Third Sector
- ✓ Supporting work to tackle poverty and inequality through ESF programmes
- ✓ Longer term stability of the Third Sector through stable funding and planning and development

HTSI as the recognised strategic delivery agent for Third Sector Interface outcomes, are the accountable organisation for the delivery of these actions, and represents the sector at the strategic level through membership of key committees and groups.

This provides our organisation with the opportunity to facilitate the connection between the implementation of Public Service Reform and the recognition and commission of local Third Sector Organisations, as equal partners in its development and delivery across Highland communities.

To ensure that our communities receive the very best support and connection with the strategic aims of our organisation, we currently commission the services of eight trusted Community Delivery Partners who are embedded within their communities, and who operate in a true community development manner. These delivery partners are;

- Voluntary Action Lochaber
- Voluntary Action Badenoch & Strathspey
- Signpost (Inverness & Nairn)
- Ross-shire Voluntary Action
- Skye & Lochalsh CVO
- Voluntary Groups East Sutherland
- CVS North
- Caithness Voluntary Group

Therefore, the HTSI operates at a strategic level, contributing to, and influencing decision making in Highland to include the Third Sector in Community Planning & Development and setting the local priorities for our Public Services across Highland.

Our Delivery Partners support their communities in participating in this process by utilising their knowledge of their communities, the Community Leaders and local organisations to deliver those strategic aims and objectives through a wide range of initiatives such as supporting local democracy through participation in Setting Local Priorities, supporting Participatory Budget Events, hosting Communications and Engagement Events in the community, and representing the Third Sector on groups such as local NHS / Local Authority redesign groups. By working closely with these groups and organisations, we ensure that local TSO's are well governed, given access to expert advice and support, and make a sustainable contribution to the life of Highland communities.

Our Funding Model:

Similar to other TSIs, HTSI received an annual funding agreement from the Scottish Government directly. This usually takes the form of a 1 to 2 year agreement within a longer term framework.

The level of funding is set nationally using a formula which was devised when TSI's were first considered. The criteria used in the funding formula takes into account;

- Access
- Population
- Unemployment
- Rurality

Currently, the annual allocation to HTSI is £680,000, of which the HTSI currently commits approximately 85% on commissioning local support services; though this figure varies depending on the needs of the organisation.

HTSI also receives income from the work undertaken to manage and host a number of strands of additional work. For example we currently benefit from an agreement for funding from the NHS for a post related to adult health and wellbeing and income from a training contract with HIE.

Additional income comes from office space hire and spot purchases of services generally to public sector partners.

Governance Arrangements:

The HTSI has a board of Trustees/Directors who are answerable to the membership of the HTSI. As an organisations we are relatively young, we have recently celebrated our 5th anniversary, and we are one which is continually growing to meet the needs of our membership and communities.

At present the HTSI is currently implementing agreed changes in its governance around the Board. At present the members of the Board currently are:

Isobel Grigor
John Wilson
Alasdair Christie
Garry Sutherland
James Dunbar
Alex Gilchrist
Val Gale

Chair
Vice Chair

As a Scottish Registered Charity and a Scottish Registered Company, we are subject to the governance regulations of OSCR, the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator and as a company, Companies House.

We are required to make the statutory returns to each regulator as set out in their terms of reference, and we also have well established internal governance arrangements within our Board Structure.

Our Staff Team:

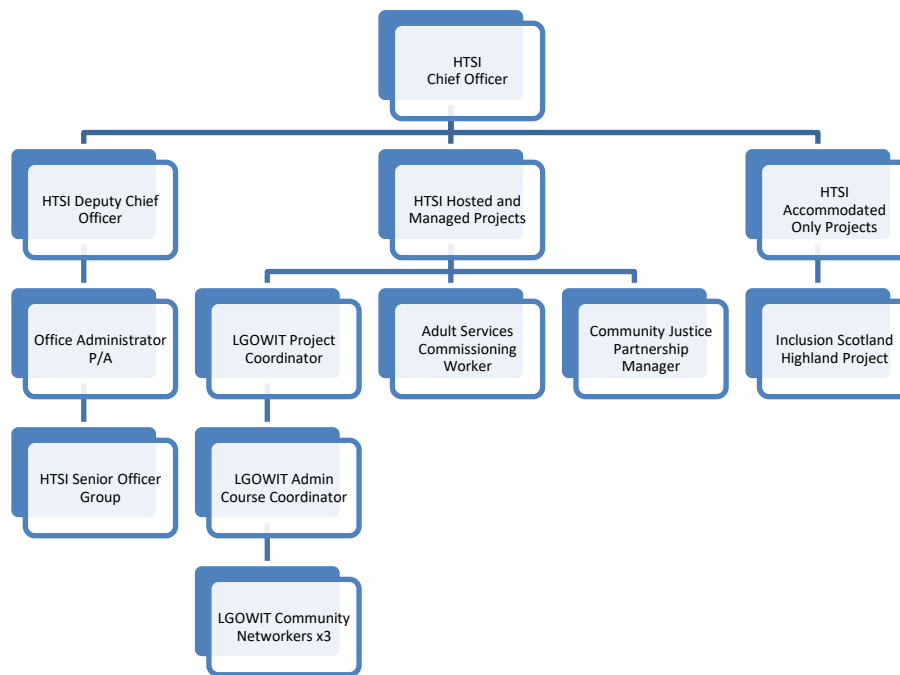
The HTSI staff team consists of our 'core' staff who deliver on primary HTSI functions and a team of staff who contribute to additional projects or activities, usually hosted on behalf of another partnership.

The Core Staff Team includes:

Chief Officer
Deputy Chief Officer
Office Administrator and PA

Our Project Staff include:

Adult Services Support Worker
LGOWIT Project Co-ordinator
3x LGOWIT Community Networkers (+1 Vacant Post)
LGOWIT Admin and Course Administrator
Community Justice Partnership Manager



It is anticipated that additional HTSI and Community Justice posts will come on stream over the next twelve to eighteen months.

Quality Standards:

Highland Third Sector Interface embrace this approach and successfully undertook a series of evaluations from Quality Scotland to achieve the EFQM “Committed to Excellence Award” in 2016, the quality standard which all Third Sector Interfaces are required to reach by 2018.

The Scottish Government and Voluntary Action Scotland, who are the membership organisation for Third Sector Interfaces in Scotland, strongly support the need for Interfaces to demonstrate high standards of quality in their everyday operations.

Following on from the EFQM process work, HTSI agreed on a Peer Review Internal Audit Process, and have put in place, training and documentation to allow this to be fully implemented in the near future.

Purpose of Community Asset Transfer Request:

Our ambition in making this Community Asset Transfer Request is to secure suitable accommodation within Ross-shire, and more specifically Dingwall, from which to run our organisation and ensure our ongoing sustainability.

Whilst this would be our headquarters, the building would also provide affordable desk space and meeting / training room space to the local community, and for TSOs and projects to operate from, either using desk space or hot desking options.

Owning the premises would remove us from the current restrictions and risks associated with being sub tenants of leased accommodation, and would allow us to market space to be made available to clubs, groups and organisations in the Dingwall area.

We already support an Art Group by providing a small meeting space, but as our current accommodation is cramped, the opportunity to extend the offer to other groups is at present, limited. We also host the LGOWIT Self Management Project, the Highland Community Justice Project, the NHS Highland Adult Services Commissioning Post and the Inclusion Scotland Highland Project Office. In recent weeks, our office has supported volunteers who work with Syrian Refugee families who have been allocated housing in Dingwall and are setting up home here.

With its excellent road and rail links, the Dingwall location is accessible for current and potential users of the premises.

Why Dingwall is our Preferred Location:

Highland Third Sector Interface initially operated out of premises in Inverness but due to costs and location/proximity to the rest of Highland decided to move to Dingwall. We are now firmly established in the town, and have developed positive relationships with the town, its traders, services, and population.

It is occasionally said that organisations in the Highlands can be “Inverness Centric” and Highland Third Sector Interface are mindful of this viewpoint, and are pleased to state that with its proximity to the A9 corridor, we have found that being located in Dingwall has worked well for us, as it has proved to be accessible from all points.

In terms of local infrastructure, we have found that Dingwall works well for us. We have access to Broadband to meet our IT and Telephony needs, and have local providers on hand to maintain those services. Similarly, for access to public services, we have established links locally with the Highland Council, NHS Highland and Police Scotland.

Benefit to the Community:

Economic Benefits

The Highland Third Sector Interface currently provide space for 14 workers in Dingwall. As far as is practical, we use local services and traders, and support local Third Sector Organisations and Social Enterprises.

It is our intention to expand on this should our application be successful, as we will have the space and capacity to offer a wider range of meeting and training facilities, and greatly reduce our need to use facilities in Inverness.

Where more space is required, we would utilise local venues such as, though not restricted to, the Strathpeffer Community Centre and the Strathpeffer Pavillion,

bringing business to both facilities and the local food and beverage providers in the area.

Spending Profile - Each year, our organisation hosts a range of events, including our Conference, AGM, Awards Ceremony, Board Meetings and a range of Training Courses for local Groups and Charities. With at least 14 people operating from our base, our staff also spend money in local shops and restaurants, and as Dingwall becomes our base for meetings and training, we will also bring in visitors to the area.

Having reached our 5th anniversary, we will develop a new Business Plan to cover the next 5 year period, we have changed our membership terms, and now seek to firmly establish ourselves in premises in Dingwall, which will allow us to develop our offering to our members and the local community. As the outcome of the national TSI Review emerges, we will build those objectives into our Business Plan.

The following table illustrates the potential economic benefit to HTSI from basing our meetings in Dingwall premises.



HTSI Current Annual Spend on Accommodation / Refreshments

Event	No: Registered	Frequency	Costs Per Annum	Comments
HTSI Annual Conference	60	Annual	£2,000	Currently held in Inverness.
HTSI Annual Awards Ceremony	130	Annual	£3,000	Held in Strathpeffer Pavilion.
Senior Officer Group Meetings	10	Bi Monthly	£360	Currently using Community Centre.
Adult Services Commissioning Forum	25	Quarterly	£250	Using Church Halls / Community Venues.
Saltire Ambassadors Meetings	10	Six Monthly	£100	Currently using HTSI Meeting Room.
Community Justice Forum Meetings	10	Bi Monthly	£250	Currently using HTSI Meeting Room.
HTSI Board Meetings	14	Quarterly	£400	Hire of Church Hall Venue.
LGOWIT Team Meetings	6	Quarterly	£200	Currently using HTSI Meeting Room.
LGOWIT Training Courses (Staff)	6	Annual	£500	Hire of Church Hall Venue.
LGOWIT Training Courses (Volunteers)	20	Annual	£500	Hire of Inverness based Hotel space.
LGOWIT Conference	100	Annual	£2,000	Inverness based venue- Church Hall.
Digital Training Courses	12	Annual	£400	Inverness based venue- Church Hall.
Ad-hoc Project Meetings	12	As Required	£250	Using Church Halls / Community Venues.
Total Spend:			£10,210	

Regeneration Benefits

At present, the Former Assessors Building is unoccupied, having previously been used as office accommodation for the Mental Health Team. There appears to be some degree of unofficial use of its space as car parking, but other than that, there is no use of the premises.

The Ferry Road area of Dingwall is a pleasant one, and whilst at present, there are no indications of intrusion to the building, or any vandalism, it is in the best interests of all concerned to have the building inhabited again, and in purposeful use.

Our vision is to make the building a key element of the regeneration of the area, in a sympathetic manner, but one which will;

- Increase the use of the building
- Maximise its use by the community, in particular, by local groups and clubs
- Become an Incubator Space for fledgling Social Enterprise through the use of the Self Reliant Group Model as applied by the WEvolution project

These actions will support Dingwall in becoming an even stronger, cohesive and sustainable community.

Health Benefits

As stated earlier in this document, our Business Case is based on developing the building and our community offering over a 5 year period.

In the early stages of the project, we would anticipate a moderately slow take up of space to accommodate community groups, clubs and projects. We will utilise the data we already hold through our membership, and that which is generated from groups which we host, such as the Self Management Project, LGOWIT who have a remit to support the development of locally based Self Management Groups, whilst also applying a Community Development based Needs Analysis which will inform our future direction in terms of supporting local groups in developing their service.

Once this has been concluded, we would envisage tangible Health Benefits in the areas of reducing social isolation, supporting local Mental Health Projects and possibly in the area of Community Justice.

Development of 2 Social Prescribing Pilot Projects based in Dingwall

Social Prescribing is an asset based process which enables GP's, nurses and other primary care professionals to refer people to a range of local non-clinical services that are quick, local, flexible and familiar. It works in a way that better supports primary care, people and communities. A partnership steering group is developing a project plan, support, implantation and ongoing development and evaluation, initially there are three pilot projects with the aim of future development across Highlands.

Currently the partnerships involve HTSI, GP input, Public Health and the Community Hospital District Manager.

Two of the proposed pilot projects would benefit by HTSI being relocated to the Dingwall site for the following reason:

Pilot 1 is with Dingwall Medical Centre which is in close proximity. This is where a full-time link worker would be placed with a base at HTSI office also, this would help establish and strengthen links between the two bases and support the development of the link worker role.

Pilot 2 is with the Community Health teams based within the Community Hospital at Dingwall and the development of virtual social prescribing model, so again especially with the early stages, the close proximity would benefit the development of this and support ongoing progress.

Another partnership currently being developed which also forms one element of Social Prescribing is the Green Health Partnership. This comes from a national initiative called Our Natural Health Service Action Programme, led by Scottish Natural Heritage, supported by the Health and Environment portfolios in Scottish Government. The aim is to develop and coordinate approaches to improve both physical and mental health through the use of the natural environment.

The partnership currently consists of Scottish Natural Heritage, HTSI, NHS Highland and Highlife Highland. The first stages of the development would be the recruitment of a Project Worker which could be based within the proposed new HTSI building as the proposed host partner. This will raise awareness of the role and make links to Dingwall, encourage meeting and subsequent development to be based there also.

Environmental Benefits

The current energy rating of the building is the lowest rating. The heating and lighting systems clearly require replacing, and if our application was successful, our Board Business Plan agrees to us undertaking to replace these systems with more energy efficient systems.

One significant environmental issue on site is the presence of Japanese Knotweed which urgently requires removal and site treatment over a five year period.

If we were successful in our application, we have secured agreement from our Board to, as a matter of urgency, commission a company to remove the Knotweed and treat the grounds as part of a removal plan previously drawn up for Highland Council.

Funding for this urgent environmental work has been identified and confirmed.

Tackling Inequality

As part of the new agreement with the Scottish Government, we shall be required to identify and tackle inequality in Highland. Through the Adult Services Commissioning work, our poverty and health inequality streams, we are well placed to make a strong contribution to this work in Highland.

Promotion of Equality

Highland Third Sector Interface is a registered Living Wage Employer and also signed up to the Scottish Government 50/50 by 2010 Working for Diversity in the Boardroom Programme. We encourage our Community Delivery Partners to share these organisational values.

In a more general manner, HTSI adopt as our way of working, an approach which is inclusive, and recognises and supports the cultural diversity of the Highlands.

Most recently, our support for incoming Syrian Refugee Families is a tangible example of how we as both an organisation and staff team have made our new members of the Highland communities welcome, and ensured that they receive the

necessary support, advice and connections to enable them to settle into their new homes and communities and enjoy highland citizenship.

On a strategic level, HTSI are a key member of the Highland Community Planning Partnership and have facilitated several community based prioritising workshops which have informed the wider Highland Outcome Improvement Plan, which has at its core, the need to tackle inequalities and promote equal opportunities.

Any other Benefits

Key to our work is the ability to be connected with our community, whether that is through being able to visit our premises and staff teams, or knowing that we are secure in our premises, and have the potential to develop in the future if needed. Dingwall has become synonymous with HTSI and all that we do, and we are very much supporters and advocates of the area, whilst delivering a Highland wide service.

Capacity to Deliver:

Experience of Organisation

As the Third Sector Interface for Highland, our organisation is well placed to deliver the objectives set out in this Business Case. We are a Key Partner in the Highland Community Planning Board, we are connected throughout Highland with a wide range of statutory, public service, social enterprise and third sector organisations.

Nationally, we are Key Partners in several agendas, and we report to the Scottish Government Third Sector Unit in terms of our Service Delivery.

Although small in numbers, our Core Team have a wide range of experience of delivering a service, and the Deputy Chief Officer has previous experience of Project Managing significant National Public Sector Projects and their Business Cases.

Our organisation also benefits from a Board which brings with it, a wide range of skills and experiences which compliment to work of the Interface.

This includes expertise and experience in the fields of;

- Childrens Services
- Business Services
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Senior Level Management of Public Service Delivery
- Financial Management and Governance
- Employability Programmes

This range of experience ensures that HTSI is always in a position to respond in a professional manner to the need for the Third Sector to be key partners in the local delivery of public service reform, and to develop and promote the sector accordingly.

Access to appropriate Advice & Support

As this is the first time that the Core Team have undertaken a Community Asset Transfer Request, they have utilised the various guides and videos provided by the Community Ownership Support Service of DTAS and are in discussions with their Regional Officers in relation to this application.

Level of Advice & Support Sought during application

As part of our preparation for making this application, we sought the views of COSS on our wish to bid for the building under an Asset Transfer, and whether they thought we met the requirements, and if our bid was appropriate. COSS confirmed that our document was acceptable, and that seeking a “straight transfer” was an option we could seek, and one which could be open to the council to consider.

Appropriate Skills within the Organisation

The HTSI Core Team have a wide variety of skills and expertise which are relevant to operating the building.

The Chief Officer has a clear vision for the organisation and its premises, and enjoys the support of our Board in pursuing those.

The Deputy Chief Officer has many years of experience as a Head of Ambulance Services and managing and maintaining an estate of ambulance stations, control room and workshop premises across Highland, and all that is required to ensure that the premises are always in a good state of repair and operational readiness.

The Admin Officer has wide experience of ensuring that all services are in place, that we have the necessary insurances and policies required, and that we work closely with local service providers and trades.

Access and Level of Volunteer Support

As a community based organisation, we very much believe in making the meeting space accessible to local groups, clubs and organisations, and to our members. HTSI are in the process of revising our membership offering, and we intend the use of the meeting / training space to be a key offering in the revised membership package. Already, we offer, where possible, use of our meeting space for either training, meetings or short term storage to local organisations, including most recently, for the safe storage of donation for the Dingwall Refugee families.

Level of Community Support:

Community Involvement in Developing ATR

The Highland Third Sector Interface are a Highland Wide Organisation who use a network of Delivery Partners to deliver our objectives. Our Delivery Partners support our decision to apply for an Asset Transfer, and should this be granted, we intend as part of our revised membership package, to seek the views of our members across highland on the use of the building.

Community Support for the Request

As a small organisation, and due to the tight timescales involved in seeking Board Approval to make the ATR, and to secure funding for necessary repair and refurbishment work, HTSI have not been in a position to directly poll the community to measure support for the request.

We have however, sought statements of support from Key Stakeholders which are included in the final section of this document.

Sustainability:

Financial ability to support / fund the building in the future

Highland Third Sector Interface recognise the responsibilities of owning and maintaining a building, and will factor this into our forthcoming Business Plan.

Our approach is two fold, the first is to work diligently to make the case to acquire the building on as advantageous a discount as possible, our opinion is that as it is now up for sale, it is redundant to Highland Council needs, but for us, it has a potential to be an important community asset. To that effect, we would strive for a takeover of the asset, in effect, requesting a 100% discount. This places the asset in a value of £120,000 as backed up by the independent assessment carried on our behalf.

Without the recurring revenue costs of servicing a mortgage over a 25 year period, we would be in a position to use a large proportion on what we currently spend in both rental and utility costs to support the day to day running of the building, and to set aside funding to ensure that a rolling programme of improvement works is funded. To ensure that we have the skills to maintain the building, we are confirmed on the standby list for, and waiting list for the next COSS **Professional Facilities Management Training Course**

This Professional 2 Day Facilities Management Training Course, is delivered in conjunction with the British Institute of Facilities Management and will cover the following subjects -

- What is Facilities Management?
- Understanding Buildings
- Property Management
- Workspace Management
- Maintenance Management
- Health and Safety
- Energy and Environment
- Contract Management
- Customer Service in FM
- Professional Development in FM - what's possible

Of all Third Sector Organisations, the Interface is the most secure in terms of income, in that our main income comes from a Scottish Government Grant for us to deliver the services that the Scottish Government require of the Interface Network.

Whilst this places us in a sound financial position, we are not complacent and have over the last five years, developed relationships with Third Sector Organisations and local groups, which allows us to both support them in their work, and earn either a desk fee or management charge. We envisage this to be an area which will continue to expand, and one which will benefit from our owning our own property.

Should our application be successful, we realise that the building will be our most important asset, and that in order to ensure it retains its value, we will utilise local tradespersons to timeously carry out any necessary repairs or preventative works.

Governance / the sustainability of the Organisation

Our role as a Third Sector Interface has always been strategic in nature, with us using our Community Delivery Agents to deliver the objectives set by the Scottish Government on our behalf.

More recently, and particularly since we changed our Articles of Association to have an even greater “membership focus”, we find ourselves in the position where we are keen to offer a greater range of member benefits, and access to meeting & training facilities, and hot desking are benefits which we believe would be welcome.

As a membership organisation, and one which delivers the Scottish Government outcomes for Volunteering, Social Enterprise, Community Planning Partnerships and Youth Volunteering, we are well governed, and are probably the most sustainable Third Sector Organisation in Highland.

Increasingly, our members will influence our future direction, growth and development as an organisation, and this aligned to the objectives set by the Scottish Government, means that we are as sustainable an organisation as is possible in our sector.

Resourcing:

Value of the Asset

Highland Council have placed the premises for sale at £120,000 and HTSI have commissioned both an independent valuation and condition report on the building.

The reports support the valuation, but do highlight areas of repair and or replacement work which require attention in the short to medium term, as well as the Japanese Knotweed which requires immediate action to be taken.

NB: It should be noted that since the valuation and condition reports were produced, we have noticed on follow up visits, signs of water ingress into one of the upper offices, where no such ingress was previously noted. This highlights the value of having the building occupied and maintained as quickly as possible, as if not dealt with, there is the real potential for further deterioration of the building.

Legal Title and relevant information

HTSI are aware of a possible dispute around the ownership of the borderline of the property with the neighbouring property. We would welcome early discussion on this matter, in order that we understand the nature of the dispute, and whether it will have any effect on the possible transfer of the property. We understand that this may require us to arrange legal representation.

For completion by Highland Council

Current Use of the asset and potential impact

For completion by Highland Council.

Please note mention of recent water ingress (p14)

Requested Purchase / Discount Value

The Highland Third Sector Interface wish to take over the building under an Asset Transfer Request. Taking into account the fact that the building is independently valued at £120,000, that it has not been used for some time, and we that we have observed water damage since our independent evaluation was carried out, we seek the maximum 100% discount, in effect, the straight transfer of the building and responsibilities which go along with it, to our organisation in order that we can utilise it for the benefit of the community as described in our ART document.

We note that there is some dispute over boundaries, and await clarification on this. Should an ATR not be possible, the reality is that our organisation will have no other option than to leave the Dingwall area, as our exhaustive search for appropriate rental or purchase property in the area, over several months has proved fruitless.

Ability of Organisation to Pay

Whilst still a relatively young Third Sector Organisation, and one with reasonable reserves, we confirm that we are in a position to be able to;

- Meet all Legal, Conveyancing and Building Survey Costs of ourselves and Highland Council should our bid be successful.
- Fully fund the eradication of the Japanese Knotweed as detailed in the Knotweed Eradication Plan which was commissioned by Highland Council.
- Secure additional funding to meet the costs of replacing the inefficient heating and lighting systems within the building within the first year of ownership.
- Undertake the recommended repairs to the fabric of the building, including pointing, flat roof and windows as detailed in the Condition Report document.

Due to the size of the file, a copy of the audited accounts for our organisation will be emailed along with our Asset Transfer Request. The accounts can also be obtained via the web site of our governing body,OSCR, <https://www.oscr.org.uk/> and also from Companies House.

Ian Donald
Deputy Chief Officer
Highland Third Sector Interface

Statements of Support



SCOTTISH
FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

Working together for a safer Scotland

Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
Scottish Delivery Area North
16 Harbour Road, Longman West
Inverness IV1 1TB
01463 227000
www.firescotland.gov.uk

Mhairi Wylie, Chief Officer
Highland Third Sector Interface
Thorfin House
Bridgend Business Park
DINGWALL
IV15 9SL

Telephone
E-mail
Our Ref
Your Ref
If phoning or
calling ask for
Date

01463 227000
Rab.middlemiss@firescotland.gov.uk
RM/DM
LSO Rab Middlemiss
8 February 2018

Dear Mhairi

HIGHLAND THIRD SECTOR INTERFACE – ASSET TRANSFER REQUEST

Thank you for informing me of HTSI's intention to submit an Asset Transfer Request (ATR) to Highland Council for use of the former Assessors office in Dingwall. I feel that this would represent an opportunity to support the longer term security of your organisation through the provision of a permanent location, whilst also offering improved facilities for partnership working/meetings and Third Sector staff.

As Scottish Fire and Rescue Service's Local Senior Officer for Highland Area I am fully supportive of your submission which would realise these benefits for your organisation and our wider communities in the Highland area. I look forward to our continued work together.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rab Middlemiss".

RAB MIDDLEMISS
LOCAL SENIOR OFFICER

9th February 2013

Highland Third Sector Interface,
Thorfin House,
Bridgend Business Park,
Dingwall,
IV15 9SL



Telephone No. 01463 720219

Dear Mhairi,

ASSET TRANSFER REQUEST

I refer to the above and your request to obtain the former Assessors' Office, Dingwall from Highland Council.

Police Scotland are fully supportive of your desire to obtain a more permanent location for Third Sector Interface and we would view this facility as an enhancement to the premises you currently occupy. These premises would represent an improved resource for your organisation but also an additional resource from which multi-agency and community work could be carried out.

Police Scotland are proud of our association with TSI as can be evidenced by the award which you recently won at the National Police Scotland Excellence Awards. As winner of a Policing Partner Award for your support of Policing in the Highlands you have demonstrated the value we attach to the services you provide and the assistance you give across all partner organisations in the Highlands.

I wish you all the best in your endeavour to secure these premises and look forward to further future work together.

Yours sincerely,

Philip MacRae
Superintendent

Ian Donald
Deputy Chief Officer
Highland Third Sector Interface
Thornin House
Bridgend Business Park
Dingwall
IV15 9SL

18th December 2017

Dear Ian

Highland Third Sector Interface - Enterprise Incubator Space

Thank you for keeping us up to date with your plans to pursue property in Dingwall through an Asset Transfer Request, and which you propose to use as both your base location and a community space.

We are aware of your long standing interest in, and support of the Self Reliant Groups concept, and your hope that in time, you would have space within your premises to support such ventures.

It is good to hear your plans to incorporate an "Incubator Hub" for locally based fledgling enterprises in your new premises, and that you look forward to working collaboratively with us at WEvolution to bring this about.

The WEvolution Self Reliant Groups concept is based on a model of 5 to 10 women coming together to learn skills and support each other to create income generating opportunities in their community, and we are delighted that you intend to support this movement in your proposed new premises.

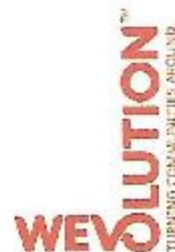
WEvolution are happy to provide this letter of support of your Asset Transfer Request, and look forward to our working together in the future.

Yours sincerely



Noel Mathias
Managing Director

WEvolution
Glasgow Office, 117-119 London Road, Glasgow, G40 1AG
T: 0141 860 3755; F: info@wevolution.org.uk
www.wevolution.org.uk
Scottish Charity Number: SC040984
Oscillar Credit Licence: 1217/7



Statement in Support of Asset Transfer Request

My post as adult services commissioning support worker (third sector) is currently based within HTSI; this has been beneficial in providing links to the wider third sector links, networking opportunities and information sharing which has been invaluable in developing and strengthening links to adult services provision.

Whilst I do utilise the current HTSI meeting room this has limitations in terms of capacity and a larger space would increase the opportunity of having more meetings here. The benefits of having meetings within HTSI meeting space are that it increases the profile of HTSI and informs more third sector organisations of the potential benefits of linking with HTSI. It raises awareness to other sectors and the potential benefits of working with Third Sector. It also means that more project funding can be used in other ways than in meeting / training space hire costs.

By raising the awareness of the HTSI and the meeting space available this would inevitably increase the potential use by other Third Sector groups who are looking for space within the Dingwall area, supporting them to raise the profile of the work they do and enable them to be more efficient by keep these costs to a minimum.

I would be supportive of the proposed property and the increased potential it brings and will be more than happy to transfer as part of that.

Regards

Gwen

Gwen Harrison

Adult Services Commissioning Support Worker (Third Sector) | Highland Third Sector Interface | Thorfin House, Bridgend Business Park, Dingwall. IV15 9SL

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Hi Ian,

Statement in Support of Asset Transfer Request

I would support the move for the following reasons

My role as Community Justice Partnership Manager has had the benefit of being hosted by the HTSI and based within their accommodation as this has allowed me to quickly make links with many third sector organisations that have a role to play within the community justice agenda. The fact that third sector are renowned for their creativity and innovation has also added to a new and unique dimension to the work that I do, particularly as I am the only Community Justice Partnership Manager out of 32 across Scotland who is based in the third sector. The HTSI are extremely important to my project and are a pivotal partner in taking the work of community justice forward.

Being based in Dingwall has the advantage of accessibility across the Highland region especially to the more remote areas in the North. As my project covers the whole of the Highland area, this is important in terms of engaging with the communities, service users and colleagues.

One area that could be improved is the office space, which at present is adequate but there is scope for improvement in this regard. The lack of any substantial size meeting room often leads to incurring costs when arranging meetings. For example, the Community Justice Partnership meets quarterly and there have been instances where it has been difficult to arrange a meeting space that is suitable and in a suitable location. Meeting space would give more flexibility and opportunities to host meetings, focus groups or training that may be required. In this regard, it is important that we have adequate facilities to ensure inclusion of all partners needs when hosting any meetings etc.

I would be willing to transfer to new premises particularly if the office space and meeting space is an improvement on the office space we currently have.

If you need anything further then just let me know.
Margaret



Margaret McShane | Community Justice Partnership Manager | Highland Third Sector Interface |
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My part-time hours are usually Tuesday Wednesday & Thursday, 9am – 4.30pm

Dear Ian

I am writing as a tenant of HTSI and with regard to HTSI pursuit of an Asset Transfer of premises in Dingwall.

LGOWIT has been hosted by and a tenant of HTSI for the past 5 years, being within this space has allowed us access to other projects and learning, which has enabled us to grow and develop as a project. If we had been stand alone in alternative premises it would have been a more challenging environment for a small organisation to develop, hence we are keen to continue with this arrangement.

We cover the NHS Highland area and therefore our team is spread out across the area. For us being located in Dingwall is a key aspect of our service as most services are located in Inverness and our members value the fact we are not following suit. Being located here means we can access our area easily, and geographically it is the middle location for our staff.

With regard to Meeting rooms currently we are having to hire meeting rooms out with the offices as the meeting room capacity does not often fit our requirements, it is also not a suitable venue for Video conferencing due to the lack of soundproofing/privacy and it is too small from an access point of view. The move to new premises will be beneficial in this aspect as hire costs and availability of space is always an issue. We have many of our own groups and many we come into contact with that are always looking for accessible meeting rooms, so I would envisage that this would become a well-used space.

The current office space is fully accessible with accessible parking and we as an organisation would expect this at the new premises. LGOWIT as an organisation supporting people living with long-term conditions and with members of staff who have access requirements, would not transfer with HTSI if this were not the case.

HTSI support our organisation through office huddles where we are able to keep up to date on current activities, projects and any changes to legislation that may impact us. They also share information for us throughout their network and highlight any areas which may link with our project.

In summary LGOWIT supports the pursuit of the asset transfer and would be willing to transfer to the new premises.

Regards

Joanne

Joanne McCoy
Self Management Co-ordinator (LGOWIT)
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