

# Report

Report to:	<b>Housing and Technical Resources Committee</b>
Date of Meeting:	<b>29 September 2021</b>
Report by:	<b>Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)</b>

Subject:	<b>Land at Birch Place, Blantyre – Asset Transfer to Blantyre Soccer Academy</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to:-

- ♦ advise the Committee of the request for asset transfer, by sale, of the open space at Birch Place, Blantyre to Blantyre Soccer Academy and request approval to the principal terms and conditions of asset transfer as set out in Section 5 of the report.

## 2. Recommendation(s)

2.1. The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the open space at Birch Place, Blantyre be sold to Blantyre Soccer Academy, subject to the terms and conditions outlined in Section 5 of the report; and
- (2) that the Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources), in conjunction with the Head of Administration and Legal Services, be authorised to conclude all matters in respect of the sale and enter into the necessary legal agreements on terms which are in the best interests of the Council.

## 3. Background

- 3.1. In 2019, the Council transferred ownership of the former Rowan Hall, Blantyre to Blantyre Soccer Academy from which it now operates a Community Hub.
- 3.2. The Council owns an area of informal open space adjacent to Blantyre Soccer Academy's Community Hub at Birch Place, Blantyre. The area is "landlocked" and does not have separate vehicular access.
- 3.3. Blantyre Soccer Academy is now seeking to extend its community activities in partnership with other local organisations and create a community food growing area, Covid-19 memorial area, wild growing area and outdoor recreational space. It submitted a request for Community Asset Transfer of the open space, the validation date for which was 24 May 2021.
- 3.4. In addition to placing the application and supporting documentation on the Council's Planning Portal, notices were placed on the property advising that the Council was considering an asset transfer. The closing date for responses was 9 July 2021 at which time no representations were received.
- 3.5. The request was placed before the Community Asset Transfer Assessment Panel on 19 August 2021 when the following matters were taken into consideration.

### 3.6. Property

- 3.6.1. The extent of the land requested, as shown on the attached plan, is approximately 1,943 square metres and is a grassed informal open space.
- 3.6.2. The land is owned by the Council, is not operationally required, has minimal revenue costs and does not feature on any proposed investment plans. It has no independent development potential.
- 3.6.3. Planning and Economic Development have indicated that planning consent will be required for change of use from public open space at which time concerns regarding access arrangements will be considered.
- 3.6.4. The land has been valued by the Council's in-house valuer at £3,200.

### 3.7. Organisation

- 3.7.1. Blantyre Soccer Academy SCIO is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), Scottish Charity No. SCO43613, and has been established since 2014.
- 3.7.2. The organisation has an established board of trustees, 3 employees who carry out the day-to-day management of the organisation, 75 accredited team coaches and over 400 members.
- 3.7.3. The objectives of the organisation are:-
  - To advance public participation in amateur sport of football by promoting the game of football through the provision of recreational facilities and activities and improve the fitness and health of the persons for whom the facilities/activities are primarily intended;
  - To advance community development by providing a safe environment to encourage and promote the development of football, health, self-esteem, health and friendship within the community of Blantyre and its environs;
  - To provide facilities and equipment and it will be available to anyone irrespective of race, colour, religion, sex, sexuality or disabilities, promoting a respect for diversity and encourage people to take pride in themselves and their team mates through the game of football.
- 3.7.4. The organisation has experience in working with other organisations, has been successful in obtaining funding and delivering a range of community-based projects that go beyond football such as a community laundry and Blantyre Bikes Better.

### 3.8. Project

- 3.8.1. The proposal is to transfer the ownership and management to the community who will create a community food growing area, Covid-19 memorial area, wild growing area and outdoor recreational space associated with the existing community hub.

### 3.9. Funding

- 3.9.1. Blantyre Soccer Academy has costed the various elements of its proposals and will seek external funding for the initial set up of the project. The revenue costs for the maintenance of the area are expected to be low, relying substantially on the work of members and volunteers, and will be absorbed into the organisation's overall business plan.

## 4. **Assessment**

- 4.1. Blantyre Soccer Academy is an organisation that has a stable membership and continues to develop its capacity.

- 4.2. The proposal is viable and sustainable; however, planning consent will be required for change of use.
- 4.3. The community benefits derived from the proposal relate to health and wellbeing, education, environmental and recreational.
- 4.4. Within its asset transfer request, Blantyre Soccer Academy requested transfer at £1. The Community Asset Transfer Working Group assessed the potential community benefits and recommended that a discount of 75% be applied to the market value to reflect the benefits to the community.
- 4.5. The risks associated with the asset transfer are considered low.

## **5. Proposal**

- 5.1. It is proposed to dispose of approximately 1,943 square metres of open space at Birch Place, Blantyre, as shown on the attached plan, to Blantyre Soccer Academy, on the following principal terms and conditions:-
  - The purchase price is £800.
  - Date of Entry to be agreed.
  - The sale is conditional upon the grant of planning consent for change of use.
  - A longstop date of 18 months between signing the missives and settlement.
  - Each party to bear their own legal fees.

## **6. Employee Implications**

- 6.1. There are no employee implications for South Lanarkshire Council.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1. The proposed asset transfer removes the future liability for the maintenance of the open space.
- 7.2. Although the disposal is at less than the assessment of market value, it is unlikely that the Council would find a suitable buyer for the land given that it has no vehicular access.

## **8 Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Implications**

- 8.1. There are no issues in relation to climate change, sustainability and the environment contained within this report.

## **9. Other Implications**

- 9.1. In terms of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015, the Council has until 24 November 2021 to provide a notice of its decision whether to agree to or refuse the asset transfer request.
- 9.2. The organisation has a right to appeal to Scottish Ministers should a decision not be made in that timescale or the asset transfer request be refused.

## **10. Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 10.1. Consultation has taken place with the Community, Land Services, Planning, Legal, and Finance Services as well as having been published for public consultation.
- 10.2. This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy and, therefore, no impact assessment is required.

**Daniel Lowe**  
**Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)**

25 August 2021

**Link(s) to Council Values/Objectives/Ambitions**

- ◆ Accountable, effective, efficient and transparent
- ◆ Work with communities and partners to promote high quality, thriving and sustainable communities

**Previous References**

- ◆ Housing and Technical Resources Committee – 21 November 2018

**List of Background Papers**

- ◆ None

**Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact:-

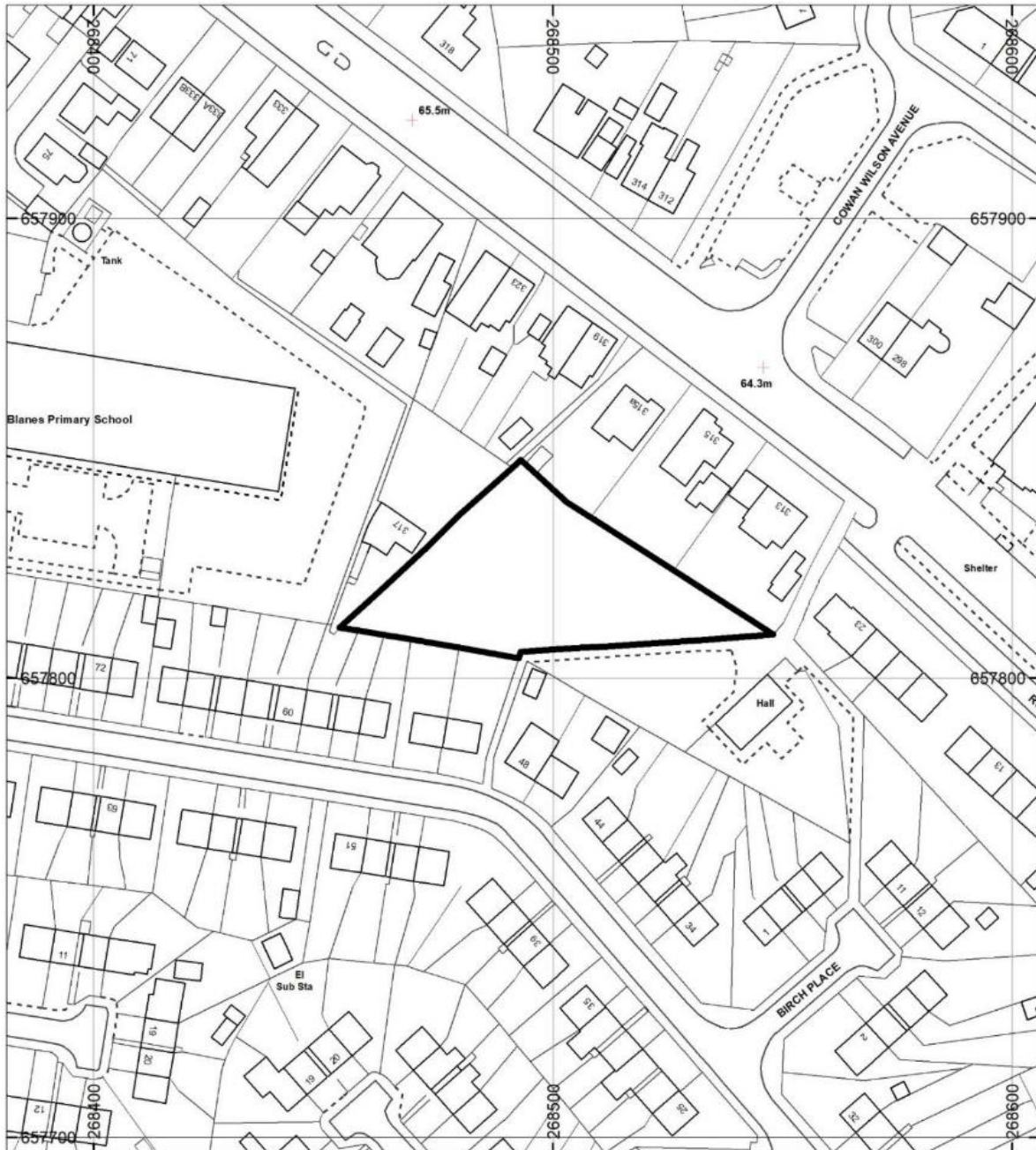
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# LOCATION PLAN - For Committee Purposes Only

Land at Birch Place  
Blantyre



## PROPERTY SERVICES



Contents outlined in Black 1943 square metres or thereby.

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Ordnance Survey 100020730.

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