

Report of Meeting with Prudhoe Community Partnership regarding Prudhoe East Youth Centre, on Wednesday 26th April 2017, at 6:00 pm
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Present (PTC): Cllr Jennifer McGee, Cllr Bryan Futers, Cllr Eileen Burt, Cllr Gerry Price, Cllr June Rose, Cllr Chris Cuthbert

Present (PCP): George Hepburn, Maggie Phillips, Joan Russell

1. Cllr Jennifer McGee summarised that the meeting was taking place to bring together the organisations, i.e. PTC and PCP, both interested in the future of the youth service and the future of the East Youth Centre, as a building.
2. George Hepburn described that he was alarmed when The East Youth Centre went up for sale without warning, along with everyone else, and in view of this Prudhoe Community Partnership has lodged a 'Community Right to Bid'¹ that acts as a 'failsafe' should this be considered again.
3. George Hepburn went on to outline that PCP believed the most appropriate course of action now, would be to fund a 'Feasibility Study' to ascertain if an 'Asset Transfer' would be sensible; to show a business case and ensure that the building would pay for itself. George questioned the cost factor that prompted NCC to state that the building was 'haemorrhaging money' and referred to the need for the figures involved. George stated that either party could put in a request for an 'Asset Transfer' but that it would make more sense to work together. In response, George suggested around £5,000 would cover the cost of a feasibility study. Cllr Jennifer McGee said she would take it back to the council to consider paying half of this cost.
4. Cllr Gerry Price indicated that the running and repair costs had been requested from NCC. The administrator responded that this request had been acknowledged but the information had not been received (*This information was requested again on 16th May 2017*). The meeting discussed that the information should be readily available as would have been used in order to make a decision on the sale of the building by NCC Strategic Assets.
5. George Hepburn discussed whether NCC will continue to provide a youth service at The East and whether a better option would be to set up a local youth charity, making local decisions about youth service provision. The administrator offered that this had been done in Corbridge and in Hexham.
6. Cllr Eileen Burt stated that she did not believe youth service staffing would be cut. Cllr Jennifer McGee suggested there should be a vision for what the town wanted to happen at The East. George commented that it was a large, prominent site with scope for further development.
7. Cllr Chris Cuthbert asked if the site was leasehold or freehold. It was confirmed that Northumberland Estates did have a covenant on the land and there was a residential property that was part of the overall site. Maggie Phillips suggested that it was important to clarify exactly what was 'the whole site'.
8. The NEXT STEPS were agreed to be:
 - Receive financial information from NCC
 - Arrange meeting of PTC/PCP/NCC
 - Execute a feasibility study
 - Look at who building/site would be transferred to; PTC, PCP or a charity specifically set up for the purpose

¹ The Community Right to Bid allows communities and parish councils to nominate buildings or land for listing by the local authority as an asset of community value. If the asset comes up for sale, the community can 'pause' the sale and take up to six months to find the funding required to buy the asset.