

North Lanarkshire Council Report

Communities Committee

Does this report require to be approved? Yes No

Ref SP/LP/GS

Date 28/04/25

Community Ownership and Management of Assets: Application from Deaf Services Lanarkshire for the Asset Transfer of Shawhead Community Centre

From Stephen Penman, Chief Officer (Strategy and Engagement)

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Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to provide the Communities Committee with the details of a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) request made by Deaf Services Lanarkshire for the transfer of Shawhead Community Centre, located at 14 Berwick Street, Coatbridge, ML5 4NH. (as outlined in Appendix 1 of this report) and to provide information on the outcome of the assessment process together with a recommendation to approve the request.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Communities Committee:

- (1) Considers the detailed assessment of the application against approved criteria, included at Appendix 2, of this report
- (2) Approves the recommendation by the Community Assets Leadership Group to approve the Community Asset Transfer request from Deaf Services Lanarkshire for Shawhead Community Centre as described at appendix 1 subject to finalisation of necessary technical details and satisfactory agreement to the conditions set out in Appendix 2, section 3.

The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority	Enhance participation, capacity, and empowerment across our communities
Ambition statement	(20) Improve the involvement of communities in the decisions, and development of services and supports, that affect them
Programme of Work	Resilient People

1. Background

- 1.1 Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 encourages community-based groups to take control of assets to be utilised for positive outcomes as driven and directed at a local level. Qualifying groups can apply to a relevant authority, which includes local authorities, to either lease or purchase an asset.
- 1.2 Upon a formal application being made, the relevant authority is bound to carry out an assessment of the request, establish that the applicant is a qualifying body and assess both the sustainability and likely benefit of the asset transfer. Benefits can include social wellbeing, economic benefit and provision of services and activities that would not otherwise be provided.
- 1.3 In general terms where a group meets qualifying and eligibility criteria, they can apply for almost any asset held by a relevant authority. The asset does not have to be surplus to the council's operational requirements. Exclusions apply in a few circumstances including:
 - NLP mortgaged properties
 - Common Good Assets
 - Where the council has entered into a legal agreement for sale or demolition of an asset
- 1.4 If it is determined that the asset is not surplus the council needs to assess the operational benefit of retaining the asset against the potential community benefits because of approving the transfer. An application can be rejected on grounds such as the business model is not sustainable, the group cannot evidence community support or community benefit, or the group cannot demonstrate that they have the capacity to manage the asset.
- 1.5 In June 2024 the Policy and Strategy Committee approved a new Community Ownership and Management of Assets Policy and associated resources aiming to improve the council's approach to building capacity and opportunity with organisations looking to take on ownership, lease or management of a council owned asset. The aim is to shift the focus to achieving positive outcomes and using available resources and tools to over time increase the pace and volume of successful outcomes while protecting the business of the council, considering any negative impact on the wider community and managing risk levels. The policy and approach can be accessed [here](#) and further information and tools are available on the [council website](#).

2. Report

- 2.1 Deaf Services Lanarkshire (DSL) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), charity number SCO43457. The organisation has submitted a formal request to purchase Shawhead Community Centre, located at 14 Berwick Street, Coatbridge, ML5 4NH. DSL has provided a grid reference (55.84562, -4.02170), a description of the full site including the building, fenced grass area to the rear, and the side car park. They have also included additional adjacent land for potential car park expansion. The organisation has offered to purchase the asset for £30,000. The asset has a commercial value of £90,000.

- 2.2 The proposal outlines a plan for DSL to use the centre as a dedicated hub for the Deaf Community, delivering interpreting and translation services, BSL courses, a drop-in advocacy centre, social groups, deaf awareness training, and community engagement activities. The organisation plans to retain and support existing user groups (e.g. toddler groups, fitness classes, stroke survivors, dance/music groups), and offer room hire for events (e.g. weddings, community functions). And plans to operate the centre 50 weeks per year, from 9am–4:30pm weekdays, with additional evening and weekend access for community use.
- 2.3 A summary of the scores achieved through assessment is outlined in figure 1 below. Additional details of the proposal and assessment of the application can be found at appendix 2 and in the CAT application and supporting documents available on the council's website [here](#)

Figure 1.

Summary Grading	Very Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Very Weak
1.Details of the asset	x				
2.Organisation information	x				
3.Type of Request		x			
4.Link to the NL Plan	x				
5.Community Proposal	x				
6.Support	x				
7.Financial Information			x		
8.Risk/Social Impact		x			

A description of assessment criteria is at appendix 3

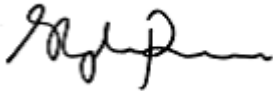
- 2.4 In line with the council's Community Ownership and Management Policy and associated scoring process the findings of the Officer Assessment Panel were reported to the Community Asset Leadership Group for consideration. The Group comprises of:
- Chief Officer (Strategy and Engagement)
 - Chief Officer (Asset and Procurement)
 - Chief Officer (Community Operations)
 - Chief Officer (Legal and Democratic)
 - Chief Officer (Finance and Technology)
- 2.5 The recommendation is that the Communities Committee approve application based on the findings of the assessment attached at appendix 2.

3. Measures of success

- 3.1 Support provided to community groups and organisations as a result of initial CAT or PR enquiries; and
- 3.2 Positive outcomes or referrals because of initial CAT or PR enquiries.
- 3.3 Increased completions for transfer of assets to community organisations.
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4. Supporting documentation

- 4.1 Community Ownership and Management of Assets Policy and approach [here](#)
- 4.2 Further information and tools are available on the [councils website](#).
- 4.3 Full application can be accessed on the [councils website here](#)
- 4.4 Appendix 1 – Map of Asset
- 4.5 Appendix 2 – Assessment of application
- 4.6 Appendix 3 – Description of assessment
- 4.7 Equality Impact Assessment will be published [here](#)



Stephen Penman
Chief Officer (Strategy and Engagement)

5. Impacts

<p>5.1 Public Sector Equality Duty and Fairer Scotland Duty Does the report contain information that has an impact as a result of the Public Sector Equality Duty and/or Fairer Scotland Duty? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?,</p> <p>The recommendation involves the transfer of an asset to community ownership for community use and recognises the associated community benefit that is expected from the proposal. This should benefit the community positively but an EQIA has been undertaken to consider any impact on equalities groups and will be available here If Yes, has an assessment been carried out and published on the council's website? https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/your-community/equalities/equality-and-fairer-scotland-duty-impact-assessments Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>5.2 Financial impact Does the report contain any financial impacts? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant financial impacts been discussed and agreed with Finance? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>As outlined in the assessment at appendix 2, the asset has been assessed as having a commercial value of £90,000. The offered a price of £30,000 to purchase/lease the land represents a significant discount. However, the discount is offset by the expected measurable financial benefits for North Lanarkshire Council as summarised at q 7 of the appended assessment including Revenue and Operational Savings, Avoided Closure and Demolition Costs and Avoided Capital Investment Costs.</p>
<p>5.3 HR policy impact Does the report contain any HR policy or procedure impacts? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant HR impacts been discussed and agreed with People Resources? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p>
<p>5.4 Legal impact Does the report contain any legal impacts (such as general legal matters, statutory considerations (including employment law considerations), or new legislation)? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, have all relevant legal impacts been discussed and agreed with Legal and Democratic? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?</p> <p>The council approach to community Ownership and Management of Assets reflects and supports the requirements of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015. Representatives from Legal and Democratic Services are involved in the</p>

Corporate Community Ownership and Management of Assets Working Group and the Leadership Group.

5.5 Data protection impact

Does the report / project / practice contain or involve the processing of personal data?

Yes No

If Yes, is the processing of this personal data likely to result in a high risk to the data subject?

Yes No

If Yes, has a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) been carried out and e-mailed to dataprotection@northlan.gov.uk

Yes No

5.6 Technology / Digital impact

Does the report contain information that has an impact on either technology, digital transformation, service redesign / business change processes, data management, or connectivity / broadband / Wi-Fi?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

Where the impact identifies a requirement for significant technology change, has an assessment been carried out (or is scheduled to be carried out) by the Enterprise Architecture Governance Group (EAGG)?

Yes No

5.7 Environmental / Carbon impact

Does the report / project / practice contain information that has an impact on any environmental or carbon matters?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

5.8 Communications impact

Does the report contain any information that has an impact on the council's communications activities?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact?

5.9 Risk impact

Is there a risk impact?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the key risks and potential impacts, highlighting where the risk(s) are assessed and recorded (e.g. Corporate or Service or Project Risk Registers), and how they are managed?

There is an inherent reputational risk to the council of transferring an asset for community ownership. The main risks identified are around change management and the potential for displacement of existing users of the asset as well as the financial uncertainty and reliance on grant funding and limited opportunity for income generation that is often present for CVS organisations. The proposal provides sufficient assurance risks are tolerable and/or can be mitigated

5.10 Armed Forces Covenant Duty

Does the report require to take due regard of the Armed Forces Covenant Duty (i.e. does it relate to healthcare, housing, or education services for in-Service or ex-Service personnel, or their families, or widow(er)s)?

Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the provision which has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the particular needs of the Armed Forces community to make sure that they do not face disadvantage compared to other citizens in the provision of public services.

5.11 Children's rights and wellbeing impact

Does the report contain any information regarding any council activity, service delivery, policy, or plan that has an impact on children and young people up to the age of 18, or on a specific group of these?

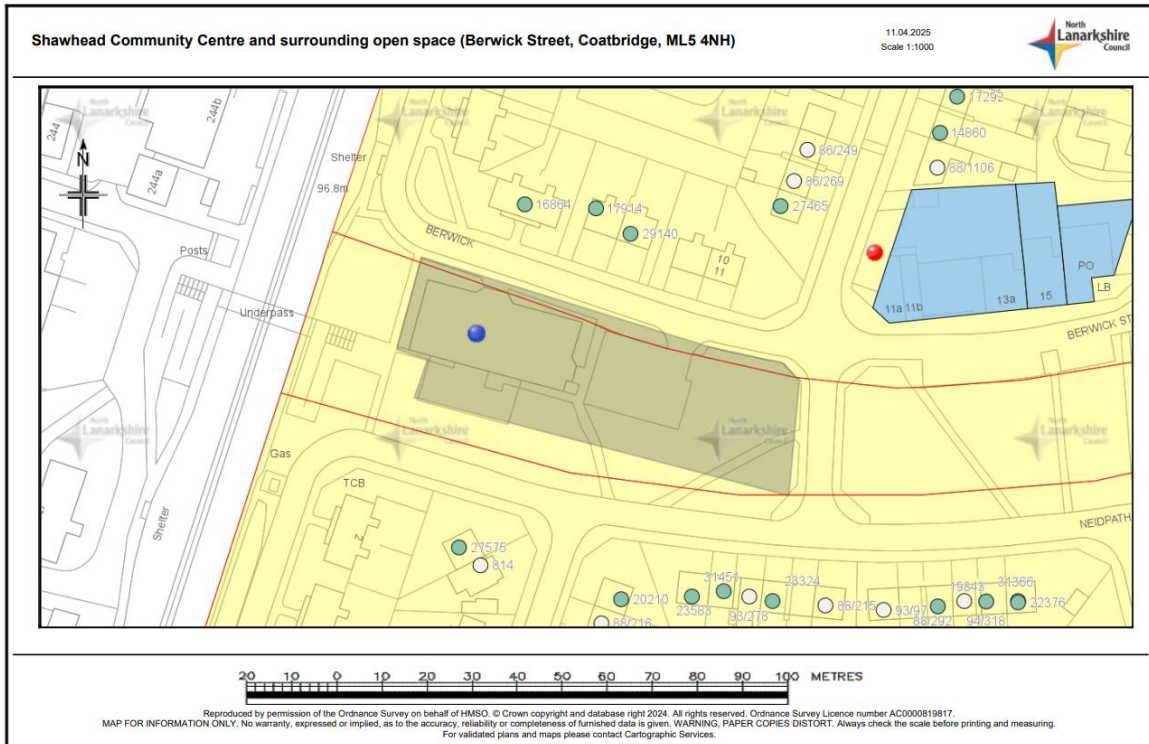
Yes No

If Yes, please provide a brief summary of the impact and the provision that has been made to ensure there has been appropriate consideration of the relevant Articles from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

If Yes, has a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) been carried out?

Yes No

Location Map



**Community Asset Transfer
Scoring Assessment**

Name of Organisation/Applicant	Deaf Services Lanarkshire
Details of the Asset	Shawhead Community Centre
Community Area/Ward	Coatbridge Shawhead (Ward 11 – Coatbridge South)
Date submitted	17 January 2025
Date of Scoring Panel	28 March 2025

Recommendation from Leadership Group	Approve
Summary comments	<p>Deaf Services Lanarkshire (DSL), a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), has submitted a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) request under the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 to acquire ownership of Shawhead Community Centre, Coatbridge, for £20,000. DSL proposes to relocate and expand its services to this site, citing the limitations of their current premises and the growing needs of the Deaf community in North Lanarkshire.</p> <p>Key features of their proposal include: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full ownership of the building, carpark and associated outside space, plus adjacent open space grounds (to allow for an extension to the carpark) • Continued access for existing user groups alongside DSL's daytime service delivery. • Plans to enhance service provision, including drop-in support, British Sign Language (BSL) education, and social and health activities. • Proposed building improvements and long-term community benefit, aligning with North Lanarkshire Council's strategic priorities. <p>DSL originally offered 22% of the £90,000 commercial valuation, based on their own commissioned valuation of the asset. They have since increased their offer to £30,000. which still reflects a significant discount justified by the measurable social value and community benefits this transfer will deliver. While it is some time since this valuation was carried out, and it takes into account only the building and not the wider area of land (which can be assumed to increase the value), it is considered that the benefits align with The Plan for North Lanarkshire and the Coatbridge Local Outcome Improvement Plan.</p> <p>DSL is an experienced and established organisation, already providing services across Lanarkshire, and it has secured community and political support for the proposal.</p>

Summary Grading	Very Strong	Strong	Moderate	Weak	Very Weak
1.Details of the asset	x				
2.Organisation information	x				
3.Type of Request		x			
4.Link to the NL Plan	x				
5.Community Proposal	x				
6.Support	x				
7.Financial Information			x		
8.Risk/Social Impact		x			

1 **Details of the Asset:**
Includes asset status and proposed use. This section asks the council to ensure they are in a position to transfer the asset

Notes:

Shawhead Community Centre is an operational asset owned by North Lanarkshire Council. The property is therefore eligible for community asset transfer. At this time there is no known legal reasons to prevent the consideration of the asset transfer request received.

The asset in question is Shawhead Community Centre, located at 14 Berwick Street, Coatbridge, ML5 4NH. DSL has provided a grid reference (55.84562, -4.02170), a description of the full site including the building, fenced grass area to the rear, and the side car park. They have also included additional adjacent land for potential car park expansion.

They reference a conditions survey (prepared by DM Hall) outlining required repairs, noting issues such as the flat roof's limited lifespan and a total of £161,600 in projected maintenance costs over 10 years, including £11,500 in urgent works within the first year

The proposed use is clearly defined and appears feasible. DSL intends to use the centre as a dedicated hub for the Deaf Community, delivering interpreting and translation services, BSL courses, a drop-in advocacy centre, social groups, deaf awareness training, and community engagement activities. The organisation plans to retain and support existing user groups (e.g. toddler groups, fitness classes, stroke survivors, dance/music groups), and offer room hire for events (e.g. weddings, community functions). DSL plans to operate the centre 50 weeks per year, from 9am–4:30pm weekdays, with additional evening and weekend access for community use.

The proposed use is well-aligned with the current status and condition. The building is already used as a community centre, and DSL's proposal continues and expands this purpose, making fuller use of underused facility. DSL's proposal includes plans to accommodate existing users with minimal disruption, and they have consulted with local groups to support this.

The physical condition of the asset is considered. DSL plans minor reconfiguration for offices and classrooms, routine maintenance, and future improvements (e.g. roof, accessibility, community garden, kitchen upgrades) phased in line with funding and priorities.

Their usage plans take advantage of the existing layout, including social spaces, kitchen, stage, and storage areas, while committing to required repairs and upgrades as outlined in the condition survey.

Assessment:

Very Strong:

The proposal has a cost saving, does not impact on council direct delivery or service and there are no restrictions on the asset transfer

2 Organisational Information – Includes governance and capacity to deliver

Notes:

Deaf Services Lanarkshire is a well-established charity dedicated to empowering the deaf and hard of Hearing community through:

- Advocacy and rights-based support
- British Sign Language (BSL) interpreting and communication services
- Peer support, mental health services, and inclusive events
- Community integration projects and digital inclusion work
- Partnerships with local authorities and third sector agencies

Organisational Strengths noted include

- Strong governance and financial controls
 - Proven delivery track record with public and third sector funders
 - Significant community trust and cultural competency
 - Well established networks across North Lanarkshire's Deaf and wider CVS communities
- Deaf Services Lanarkshire (DSL) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), charity number SCO43457. They are governed by a Board of Trustees which includes individuals with experience in legal requirements, HR, recruitment, health and safety, and financial management.

The Service Manager oversees operations and facilities management, supported by Support/Admin Staff, and SQA Co-ordinator for training-related work. They have been operational since 2011 and has grown year-on-year, providing interpretation, drop-in support, advocacy, training, and awareness services across Lanarkshire and Greater Glasgow. They are an SQA-approved training centre with qualified sign language tutors and verifiers.

DSL currently manages rented premises independently, paying for rent, utilities, insurance, and fulfilling all health and safety and building management obligations. They plan to replicate these practices at Shawhead Community Centre should they be successful.

DSL has produced a phased improvement and maintenance plan for the building, addressing items highlighted in the condition survey and planning potential future developments (e.g. parking expansion, roof renewal, garden creation).

Existing community groups are to be accommodated in the new arrangement, with efforts to minimise disruption, showing understanding of user needs and a strategy for smooth transition.

Some capacity gaps have been identified, and acknowledged with mitigation plans in place around

- Janitorial/Maintenance Role: DSL states the need to recruit a janitor/maintenance worker, acknowledging the importance of building upkeep and user safety.
- Facility-specific skills: DSL will develop or adapt existing policies and procedures to reflect their new responsibilities as property owners, including updated risk assessments and staff training in deaf awareness and building safety.
- Transition Planning: DSL recognises that transitioning to the new space requires attention to operational detail (e.g. room booking systems, event coordination), and they have stated a commitment to meeting with existing users and managing overlaps or changes collaboratively.

The charity has completed an organisational health check supported by Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire and the main policies and procedures have been verified following NLC assessment for grant funding purposes. Including, but not limited to those covering financial management, health and safety, staff training and Protection of Vulnerable Groups and Disclosure checks. Further development and review work has been acknowledged. DSL notes that current procedures will be reviewed and updated as part of the asset transfer process to ensure suitability for managing a multi-use public building. While the application does not include the policies themselves, there is clear recognition of the need to review and adapt them, demonstrating an understanding of their responsibilities as a community asset holder.

Assessment:

Very Strong:

Applicant has clearly evidenced that they are a robust and viable organisation with effective governance arrangements in place.

3 | Type of request, payment and conditions

This section confirms the type of request and seeks and whether or not the price reflects a fair price for the asset taking into consideration community benefit

Notes:

The charity is looking to purchase Shawhead Community Centre, located at 14 Berwick Street, Coatbridge, ML5 4NH. The asset has been assessed as having a commercial value of £90,000. DSL originally offered £20,000. Even considering the social value and community benefit, there was a consensus by the scoring panel members that the offer price was at the low end, and they subsequently increased their offer to £30,000.

A full description of the request has been provided and consist of the full site, including the building, fenced grass area to the rear, and the side car park. Their increased offer also includes additional adjacent land for a potential car park expansion.

Proposed Community Benefits:

Research across the UK (e.g. from MyCommunity.org.uk, Locality, and the Scottish Government's guidance on CAT) identifies that CATs succeed when the value to community wellbeing is demonstrable. DSL's proposal provides strong examples:

1. Tackling Isolation and Health Inequality: Deaf individuals are at higher risk of mental health issues due to exclusion. A Deaf-led community hub provides culturally accessible services and connection.
2. Lifelong Learning and Employability: DSL will provide training and volunteering opportunities, particularly in BSL, communication support, and digital skills.

3. Community Cohesion: By keeping the space open to existing users and other community groups, DSL encourages cross-community collaboration and integration.
4. Asset Sustainability: DSL has committed to invest in and maintain the building, ensuring a long-term, financially sustainable future.
5. Equalities and Rights Realisation: Aligning with the BSL (Scotland) Act 2015, the centre will promote equal access to services and civic life for Deaf individuals.

This asset transfer recognises and redresses historic disadvantage by creating a safe, empowering space for the Deaf community. It promotes rights, wellbeing, and visibility, supporting a long-marginalised group to participate fully in local civic life. DSL's inclusive model ensures continued and equitable access for current users and new local groups. The transfer represents an investment in community collaboration and shared social infrastructure.

While the valuation is for the building and not the wider site (and it can be assumed that the valuation for the whole site would be higher) it is considered that the benefits align with The Plan for North Lanarkshire and the Coatbridge Local Outcome Improvement Plan.

Any agreement to transfer should reflect

1. Inclusion of standard security in favour of the council to reflect any discount agreed.
2. Reserved rights of access for essential repairs, maintenance and access to and utilities.
3. A check on the ownership of the carpark will be undertaken.
4. Full title checks for any burdens
5. The land being requested outside the centre footprint will need to be checked

Assessment:

Strong:

Applicant has proposed terms, with prices reflecting Market/Fair Value.

4 Link to Strategy– How the project links into the vision and ambitions set out in the Plan for North Lanarkshire (TPFNL)

Notes:

The applicant suggests that the proposed asset transfer will contribute to all five complimentary priorities outlined in The Plan for North Lanarkshire. This will be achieved through the provision of tailored programmes in British Sign Language (BSL), literacy, and employment readiness. Taking all submitted documents into consideration, there is evidence to suggest that DSL will: -

- Improve the health and wellbeing of communities - by providing support to enable people to live fulfilling lives, and by encouraging social inclusion for an often-isolated group.
- Enhance participation, capacity, and empowerment: - the Deaf Community Centre will act as a civic anchor for a marginalised community.

The proposal will also allow the charity to effectively contribution to our **Local Outcome Improvement Plan (LOIP) priorities of:** -

- Reducing inequalities: - BSL users and deaf individuals face systemic communication and service access barriers. DSL through partnerships with NLC's Tackling Poverty Team will provide access to much needed advice services.
- Community empowerment: - By offering training, peer support and expanding community engagement opportunities.

- Improving mental health and wellbeing: DSL will continue to address social exclusion issues by providing peer support and opportunities for social connection. Along with counselling and wellbeing support.

Additionally, the charity provides multiple examples of long-term impact, including:

- Community Wealth Building: DSL aims to increase hall usage, offer employment opportunities (especially for Deaf individuals), and generate income through social enterprise activities like catering and events.
- Equality and Inclusion: DSL focuses on accessible service provision in BSL, Deaf-led training and advocacy, and promotes inclusion across both Deaf and hearing communities.
- Economic Development: The expansion of interpretation and training services supports workforce development and community enterprise.
- Environmental sustainability: Is also mentioned through proposed building upgrades and development of green space for community gardening and food production

Assessment:

Very Strong:

Applicant has clearly evidenced that their project links into the key themes of TPFNL

5 | Community Proposal – Includes project aims, community engagement and community benefit/need

Notes:

Deaf Services Lanarkshire is a SCIO and SQA-approved centre with the following primary aims and intended outcomes:

- Improve access to services for Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals.
- Provide a culturally appropriate, language-accessible hub for service delivery.
- Strengthen community cohesion between Deaf and hearing residents in Shawhead.
- Maintain existing community usage of Shawhead Centre while expanding DSL’s offer.
- Intended Outcomes:
 - Social Impact: Reduced isolation through social groups, drop-in advice, and community events.
 - Educational Impact: Accredited BSL courses and Deaf awareness training for both Deaf individuals and the broader community.
 - Economic Impact: Job creation, increased enterprise activity (e.g. venue hire, catering), and enhanced employment opportunities for Deaf people.
 - Asset Sustainability: Investment in the building’s upkeep and development, safeguarding it from closure.
 - Integration: A venue that enables the Deaf and hearing communities to mix and engage through shared activities.

The organisation’s aims and outcomes are clear, realistic and strongly aligned with community need. They reflect a thoughtful, well-scoped ambition to not only meet the needs of the Deaf community but also to enhance community inclusion and protect a valued local asset. The business plan evidences capacity and a phased approach to development, which adds to the realism of their proposals. The alignment with North Lanarkshire Council’s strategic priorities—particularly around inclusion, empowerment, and economic opportunity further strengthens the proposal’s credibility.

Deaf Services Lanarkshire undertook a two-phase community engagement process to support their Community Asset Transfer (CAT) request for Shawhead Community Centre:

- Phase 1 (Summer 2024): DSL commissioned Community Enterprise, a specialist consultancy, to carry out community consultation. This ensured professional, independent feedback from Shawhead residents on the proposed transfer.
- Phase 2 (December 2024): Further engagement was carried out to gather additional responses, including from current centre users, DSL service users, and some statutory partners.
- Deaf Community Engagement: DSL also conducted focused outreach to the Deaf community across Lanarkshire, ensuring accessibility by presenting information in British Sign Language (BSL), offering visuals of the proposed premises, and using a two-tier SCIO model to increase participatory governance.
- Elected Member Engagement: DSL secured engagement and support from local elected representatives, including local councillors and Members of the Scottish Parliament.
- Feedback Mechanisms: The organisation also gathered input on concerns, notably around parking, and have incorporated these into their CAT request (e.g. future plans to extend the car park).

The community engagement methods used by DSL are strong and inclusive, particularly in their accessibility for the Deaf community, an often-underrepresented group in mainstream consultations. The use of BSL and visuals is commendable and demonstrates best practice in accessible engagement. Employing an external agency to lead part of the consultation adds credibility and independence to the findings. The methods reflect a genuine effort to reach a wide audience and to adapt the proposal based on community input (e.g. managing current users' needs, addressing parking).

Overall, the engagement approach is robust, proportionate and well-evidenced.

Evidence of Need:

- DSL has outgrown its current rented premises, which lack natural light and are unsuitable for the visual communication needs of BSL users.
- DSL reports strong demand for its services across Lanarkshire and a growing user base.
- DSL highlights that the Deaf community requires a larger, accessible and permanent space to deliver services effectively.
- Shawhead Community Centre is underused and at risk of closure, which DSL proposes to reverse by making it a fully utilised, 7-day community hub.

Community Benefits and Social Value:

- Improved mental health, reduced isolation and increased social interaction for the Deaf community through tailored groups and support services.
- Expansion of BSL teaching and Deaf awareness training to the broader community to foster understanding and inclusion.
- Continuation and potential expansion of services for existing user groups of the centre.
- Creation of employment and volunteering opportunities, including within the Deaf community.
- Use of kitchen and outdoor space for training, catering enterprise, and gardening projects with potential educational and social benefits.
- Enhanced access to council and NHS services through DSL's translation and advocacy work.

The proposal demonstrates a compelling case for social value and community benefit, grounded in both unmet needs and opportunities for improvement. DSL's existing role as a specialist service provider, combined with its capacity to bring a facility into fuller use, highlights a significant net gain to the community. The social, educational, and health benefits described are specific, relevant, and measurable. DSL also links their outcomes explicitly to the Council's strategic objectives, strengthening the strategic case. Overall, the proposal demonstrates clear, credible and substantial social value calculation of **£54,764.00** for all free to access services per annum. Over five years this amounts to **£273,820.00**.

Inclusivity of the Proposal for Local and Wider Community:

Inclusivity for the Deaf Community:

The Centre will be tailored to Deaf users, offering a safe and accessible space with appropriate lighting and layout for BSL communication. Services will include BSL teaching, drop-ins, advocacy, and support with public services delivered in the Deaf community's first language. DSL's approach includes co-design with the Deaf community and uses BSL and visual communications to involve them in planning and service delivery.

Inclusivity for the Wider Community:

DSL commits to maintaining access for all existing centre users, including fitness classes, community groups, and social clubs. Evening and weekend access will be extended, ensuring broader use across demographics. DSL plans to host joint activities that bring together Deaf and hearing communities to promote integration (e.g., shared social events, Deaf awareness training, open days). Partnership plans include third sector and statutory partners, increasing reach and relevance beyond the immediate Deaf community. The proposal is strong in its inclusivity, with a clear and proactive commitment to both the Deaf and wider Shawhead community. Importantly, it balances the needs of a specialist community (Deaf people) with broader local inclusion. DSL shows sensitivity to existing users and a readiness to facilitate continuity while enhancing accessibility and programming. Their intent to provide bilingual (BSL/English) programming and outreach supports integration and aligns with best practices in inclusive community development. Overall, the proposal is inclusive, equitable, and community-minded, with strong evidence of thoughtful planning to ensure broad benefit.

Assessment:

Very Strong:

Full consideration has been given to the aims, objectives and vision with clear thought to the future direction of the proposal. The proposal provides, for example, social/economic/environmental impact. Comprehensive evidence of need/demand provided including consultations, research and surveys.

6

Support – Includes stakeholder engagement and partnership working
This section looks Including evidence community and stakeholders have been engaged

Notes:

DSL has undertaken a good range of community engagement activity (refer to section 5 above) to gather the views from the local Shawhead community, current users of Shawhead Community Centre, DSL service users, and local stakeholders.

Additional engagement with the Deaf community, including visuals and presentations in British Sign Language (BSL), and the establishment of a two-tier SCIO to improve inclusivity and governance.

Letters and indications of support from Fulton MacGregor MSP, Councillor Duffy, and other Ward 11 councillors. This demonstrates proactive engagement and awareness of local needs.

The application highlights existing and potential collaborative relationships: DSL collaborates with North Lanarkshire Council, Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire, Coatbridge Consortium, and other third sector organisations. They have formal connections with NHS Lanarkshire and Greater Glasgow and Clyde through contracts for BSL interpretation.

DSL states intentions to support current centre user groups (e.g., parent and toddler groups, fitness classes, stroke survivors' group, Bannan Fitness) and develop additional joint initiatives.

There is reference to partnerships around training, employment, and befriending services, suggesting a multi-agency and inclusive approach.

The application refers to the request of letters of support and some have been submitted. The credibility of the findings is reinforced by:

- The involvement of an independent body (Community Enterprise) in managing consultation.
- Explicit identification of stakeholder groups (including local residents, service users, statutory agencies).
- A balanced presentation of concerns raised (e.g., parking issues and continuation of subsidised letting) and proposed mitigation measures; gives confidence in the integrity of the consultation process.

DSL's proposal entails acquiring a building of significant size and function to host a broad programme of services. The level of support gathered aligns with this:

- Engagement spans two consultation rounds, multiple stakeholder types, and a large geographical catchment representing their community of interest.
- Plans to expand community access, building upgrades, and integration with existing user groups show a scalable, inclusive approach.
- The community asset transfer request addresses the underutilisation of the community centre, positioning DSL as a stabilising and expanding force in local service delivery.

The support gained reflects the strategic and community-wide importance of the proposal.

Assessment:

Very Strong:

Applicant has clearly demonstrated links with relevant stakeholders and groups as well as strong local partnership and community engagement. Evidence of joint responsibility for delivery of other projects/service.

7	Financial Information – Includes fundraising, financial planning and management <i>We will seek clarification of funding being in place or any potential delay in funding being in place in time for the final transfer deadline.</i>
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Notes:

DSL provides general descriptions of income sources (e.g. interpreting services, room hire, grants) and outlines likely costs including repairs and maintenance. However, a detailed, itemised budget or cashflow projection is not included in the application documents. A condition survey is referenced with an estimated annual maintenance cost of £16,000, but full cost breakdowns and forecasts are not provided, limiting assessment of completeness and realism.

DSL accounts show the charity to currently be financially stable, generating income from BSL interpreting and training services, and receiving a grant from North Lanarkshire Council to support their drop-in and advocacy services. However, no confirmation of secured capital funding for purchase (£20,000) or planned building improvements is provided. An assumption has been made that these costs will come from cash reserves.

Whilst operating income has been mentioned by the charity. There is also a need for them to seek grant funding. The organisation has listed confirmed grant funding but not the specific details of the funding use. They have also listed potential funding sources but have not confirmed if applications have been submitted at this time or if they have been in a dialogue with the funders.

Confirmed Income Sources:

- People's Postcode Lottery: £50,000 over 2 years.
- Corra Foundation: £8,000 annually for 3 years.
- Coatbridge Deaf Club Donation: For fixtures and fittings.
- North Lanarkshire Council Grant: Ongoing grant supports DSL's drop-in and advocacy services.

Potential/Planned Funding (Unconfirmed):

- Capital grant from NLC.
- National Lottery Community Fund (future projects).
- GAP funding and See Hear Fund (annual opportunities).

DSL demonstrates a general awareness of costs, including the need for major repairs (e.g. roof replacement) and ongoing maintenance. However, no explicit contingency planning for delays, shortfalls, or cost overruns is outlined in the documents. The mention of potential appeals on business rates and phased improvement plans suggests adaptive thinking, such as fallback strategy to focus on core services and pursuing other funding. Precise contingency figures have not been supplied.

In principle, DSL has an established income model from services and plans to expand revenue through hall hires, training, and events. They also demonstrate intent to apply for further grants and make the building available 50 weeks a year, increasing usage and income potential. Nevertheless, this depends on securing external funds and successfully implementing plans, which are not yet evidenced through detailed financial forecasts.

DSL reports holding 6 months of operational reserves and have no debts or loans, and no plans to borrow.

Strengths:

- Established track record: DSL is an experienced charity with consistent service delivery and income streams since 2011.
- Clear income sources: Earned income plus confirmed grant funding indicate financial independence.
- Sound reserves policy: Having six months of reserves is a strong indicator of good financial management.
- Debt-free: No liabilities increase their financial resilience.
- Contingency planning is addressed, with fallback to core income sources.

Weaknesses:

- No formal cash flow or multi-year budget projections included, limiting full assessment of affordability or risk in capital works.
- Lack of quantified costs for planned capital works (e.g. full roof replacement, energy upgrades, internal refits).

The financial information presented provides a moderate level of narrative but lacks detailed financial forecasts, costings and a formal budget. However, the charity shows a solid track record and diverse income base, and the over financial risk of the proposal has been deemed to be at an acceptable level.

Other information:

The proposed transfer of the Shawhead Community Centre to Deaf Services Lanarkshire is expected to generate measurable financial benefits for North Lanarkshire Council. These are summarised below:

Revenue and Operational Savings

The Council currently incurs an estimated £42,000 per annum in revenue and operational costs to keep the centre open — including utilities, maintenance, staffing, and management overheads. With relatively low usage levels, the centre currently runs at a net annual loss, with income from bookings insufficient to offset running costs. Over a 5-year period, the total projected saving in operational expenditure from the transfer would amount to £210,000.

Avoided Closure and Demolition Costs

If the asset transfer does not proceed, and a decision is made to close the facility in the future, the Council would likely incur additional costs in:

- Decommissioning and security
- Demolition and site clearance
- Landholding maintenance pending future disposal

Indicative costings based on recent comparable sites suggest this could range from £40,000 to £50,000 in one-off expenditure.

Avoided Capital Investment Costs

The centre requires investment to bring it up to modern accessibility and fabric standards. If retained in Council ownership, it is estimated that a programme of remedial works, including roof repairs, accessibility improvements, and internal reconfiguration, would cost in the region of £250,000.

By transferring ownership, the responsibility for such capital works would be assumed by Deaf Services Lanarkshire.

Assessment:

Moderate:

Applicant has demonstrated there are some financial resources in place, but all finances may not be available within the timeframe. There is limited evidence of resource planning. Basic income and expenditure and cash flow forecast induced with limited consideration given to contingency planning.

8	Risk/Social Impact – <i>Includes potential impact and barriers/challenges and understanding of managing the asset.</i>
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Notes:

A few risks have been identified:

Property Condition:

The centre is in a deteriorating condition, with a condition survey identifying the need for approximately £16,000 per year in repairs, and potential major costs associated with the flat roof, which has a limited lifespan. DSL acknowledges these challenges but lacks detailed costings and a fully phased capital investment plan.

This risk can be mitigated by DSL accessing the NLC – Capital Support Fund along with its own financial reserves for the priority repairs identified in the conditions survey.

DSL could also utilise community benefit support and goodwill through corporate social responsibility schemes to reduce ongoing maintenance costs through supported labour.

Financial Exposure:

DSL relies on a combination of earned income (interpreting services, room hire) and grant funding (notably from NLC) for sustainability. Should core grant funding be reduced or withdrawn, the organisation may face financial strain.

This risk can be mitigated by DSL broadening income streams through enterprise development and diversified fundraising strategies.

Reputational risk to the council:

Exists in managing current users' expectations throughout the transition into a DSL-led operating model, particularly ensuring minimal disruption and retention of existing community groups.

This risk can be mitigated by DSL setting out how existing bookings will be honoured and centre users supported. They could also where feasible enter into formal user agreements with existing groups.

Similarly, there may be a reputational risk linked to local residents' views on who has the responsibility for parking and accessibility issues.

This risk can be mitigated by DSL moving quickly to increasing parking capacity and by liaising with local residents to publish a code of conduct for visitors to minimise disruptions. All being considered the risks can be mitigated and managed to an acceptable level.

Responsibilities relating to asset management

DSL demonstrates a basic understanding of asset management obligations, including:

- Commitment to planned maintenance, referencing the condition survey.
- Intention to maintain health and safety, fire security, and compliance standards.
- Plans to appoint a janitor/maintenance role and keep local suppliers for repairs.

However, the level of detail around capital improvement timelines, and contingency planning is basic and would benefit from closer look by the charity if their request for ownership is accepted.

Wider social impact (positive or negative)

Positive Impacts:

- Strong potential for social inclusion, particularly for the Deaf community, through accessible services, training, and social opportunities in BSL.
- Broader community benefit through continued support for existing groups and expanded centre availability (7 days/week, 50 weeks/year).
- Opportunities for job creation, especially within the Deaf community.
- DSL has shown willingness to foster integration and support mutual learning between Deaf and hearing individuals.

Potential Negative Impacts:

- Community dissatisfaction if existing users feel displaced or if DSL prioritises its own service delivery over shared access.
- Parking congestion may affect local residents and users if not proactively addressed.

Potential barrier to success

- Operational Demands: Managing a large, multi-use centre with extended hours will place significant demands on DSL's staffing and operational structure.
- Change Management: Ensuring a smooth transition for existing users requires careful planning, communications, and flexibility. This has been acknowledged but the matter would benefit from a comprehensive plan being developed.
- Planning/Regulatory Compliance: DSL notes that future developments (e.g., car park expansion) may require planning consent, this again will need to be factored.

The proposal is broadly viable and offers significant social value. All identified risks can be lowered through mitigations.

Assessment:

Strong:

Satisfactory evidence that applicant has the necessary capabilities to manage the asset.

Sufficient awareness of the potential impact of the transfer on others with consideration given to potential barriers/challenges. Adequate information provided on the anticipated social benefit/transfer.

Appendix 3

Description of Scoring Criteria

	1.Details of the asset; <i>Includes asset status and proposed use. This section asks the council to ensure they are in a position to transfer the asset</i>	2.Organisation information; <i>Includes governance and capacity to deliver</i>	3.Type of Request: <i>This section confirms the type of request and seeks and whether or not the price reflects a fair price for the asset taking into consideration community benefit</i>	4.Link to the Plan for North Lanarkshire: <i>How the project links into the vision and ambitions set out in the Plan for North Lanarkshire (TPFNL)</i>	5.Community Proposal: <i>Includes project aims, community engagement and community benefit/need</i>	6.Support: <i>Includes stakeholder engagement and partnership working. This section looks including evidence community and stakeholders have been engaged</i>	7.Financial Information; <i>Includes fundraising, financial planning and management. We will seek clarification of funding being in place or any potential delay in funding being in place in time for the final transfer deadline.</i>	8.Risk/Social Impact <i>Includes potential impact and barriers/challenges and understanding of managing the asset.</i>
Very Strong	The proposal has a cost saving, does not impact on council direct delivery or service and there are no restrictions on the asset transfer.	Applicant has clearly evidenced that they are a robust and viable organisation with effective governance arrangements in place.	Applicant has proposed acceptable terms, with prices reflecting Market/Fair	Applicant has clearly evidenced that their project links into the key themes of TPFNL	Full consideration has been given to the aims, objectives and vision with clear thought to the future direction of the proposal. The proposal provides, for example, social/economic/environmental impact. Comprehensive evidence of need/demand provided including consultations, research and surveys	Applicant has clearly demonstrated links with relevant stakeholders and groups as well as strong local partnership and community engagement. Evidence of joint responsibility for delivery of other projects/service.	Clear Evidence that sufficient financial resources are/will be in place by the time of transfer and good resource planning for short/ medium/long term sustainability demonstrated. Detailed, realistic and achievable income and expenditure, cash flow forecast provided along with a comprehensive contingency plan.	Full evidence that applicant has in place the necessary capabilities to manage the asset. Considerable awareness of the potential impact of the transfer on others, and barriers/challenges clearly identified. Comprehensive information provided on the anticipated social benefit/impact of the transfer and how this will be measured
Strong	The proposal is cost neutral to the council, it does not impact on council direct delivery of services and there are no restrictions on the asset transfer.	Applicant has provided adequate evidence that they are a robust and viable organisation with satisfactory governance arrangements.	Applicant has proposed terms, with prices reflecting Market/Fair Value.	Satisfactory evidence that the applicant understands the importance of linking to the outcomes of the TPFNL	Adequate description of aims, objectives and vision for the proposal. A good understanding of the community benefits including adequate evidence. Need/demand evidence include some consultation and research.	Applicant has evidenced some partnership working arrangements. Relevant links with groups also evidenced along with strong community engagement activity.	Evidence indicates that sufficient financial resources are/will be in place by the time of transfer and some resource planning has been demonstrated. Satisfactory income and expenditure and cash flow forecast. Some consideration has been given to contingency planning.	Satisfactory evidence that applicant has the necessary capabilities to manage the asset. Sufficient awareness of the potential impact of the transfer on others with consideration given to potential barriers/challenges. Adequate information provided on the anticipated social benefit/transfer.
Moderate	The proposals presents difficulties on the council in terms of one or two of the following – direct cost, council direct delivery of services and or restrictions on the assets transfer.	Applicant has evidenced some signs of being robust and viable and partial information provided on governance arrangements.	Applicant has proposed terms, with prices well below Market/Fair Value.	Limited evidence that the applicant understands the need to ensure the projects reflect one of more of the strands of the TPFNL.	Limited description of the aims, objectives and vision for the proposal. Some understanding of the community benefit but not underpinned by substantive evidence. Some evidence of need/demand provided including limited consultations, research and survey	Applicant has demonstrated limited links with groups and community engagement activity. Some evidence of partnership working provided.	Applicant has demonstrated there are some financial resources in place but all finances may not be available within the timeframe. There is limited evidence of resource planning. Basic income and expenditure and cash flow forecast induced with limited consideration given to contingency planning.	Limited evidence to demonstrate capabilities to manage the asset. Some awareness of the potential impact of transfer on others and consideration given to potential barriers/challenges. Minimal information provided on the anticipated social benefit/impact of the transfer.
Weak	The proposals presents difficulties to the council in terms of cost, council direct delivery of services and restrictions on the asset transfer.	Applicant has shown no evidence of being robust and viable and no/little information being provided on governance arrangements	Applicant has failed to propose terms or prices.	Little or no evidence that the applicant has made a clear connection to the TPFNL	Inadequate or no description of aims, objectives and vision for the proposal. Limited reference to community benefit and associated opportunities. No evidence of need/demand provided	No/poor evidence of community involvement. No/poor evidence of partnership working	Insufficient financial resources currently in place and unlikely to be ready within the Time frame. No evidence to demonstrate resource planning. No income and expenditure and cash flow forecast provided, and no contingency plan outlined.	Inadequate or no evidence of capabilities in place to manage the asset. Little or no awareness of the potential impact of the transfer on others or possible barriers/challenges identified. No social benefit/impact monitoring outlined.
Very Weak	Unlikely to proceed because of ownership restrictions on the asset this would prevent a transfer of responsibility or ownership to another organisation.	Applicant has provided no evidence of being robust or viable. Governance arrangement does not meet the criteria for asset transfer.	Applicant unsure of securing funding to afford costs.	Applicant has no understanding of the TPFNL	No description of aims, objectives and vision for the proposal. No reference to community benefit. No evidence of need or demand provided.	No evidence of community involvement. No evidence of partnership working.	No evidence of financial resources in place. No evidence of resources or financial forecast to predict cash flow.	Applicant has provided no evidence of capabilities to manage the asset. No awareness of the potential impact of the transfer on others. No social benefit or impact monitoring in place.