Thriving Council Committee	
Thursday, 24 September 2026	

Subject: Community Asset Transfer – Proposed Freehold Transfer of Site S093 – LL301674, Festival Hall Offices, Market Rasen to Market Rasen Town Council

Report by:	Director of Environment and Cultural Services
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Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the freehold transfer of S093 Festival Hall Offices, Market Rasen to Market Rasen Town Council. The Offices are leased from West Lindsey DC by Market Rasen Town Council and are attached to the main Festival Hall premises which are owned by MRTC. The facilities comprise of a reception area, main office, two interview rooms, back office, two toilets and a kitchen.

Appendices to Report

- Nil

RECOMMENDATION(S):

(a) The committee approves, in principle, the transfer of the freehold interest in site S093 - Festival Hall Offices, Market Rasen to Market Rasen Town Council at nil or nominal consideration, subject to completion of the necessary legal, valuation and property checks.

(b) That the transfer be completed subject to appropriate covenants, restrictions (where applicable) securing the continued community use of the premises

(c) The authority be delegated to the appropriate Director, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer/Section 151 Officer, to finalise the transfer documentation and deal with any consequential matters, subject to agreed terms.

1. Introduction

1.1 Market Rasen Town Council has applied seeking the transfer of the West Lindsey District Council's freehold interest in the Festival Hall Offices (Site S093/LL301674) under the Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy

1.2 The Town Council already owns the freehold of the remainder of the adjoining Festival Hall and occupies the offices under and existing 99-year full repairing lease which ends on 28th Feb 2118

1.3 The proposed transfer would consolidate ownership of the entire building within a single public authority, simplifying ownership, maintenance responsibilities, future investment and operational management.

1.4 The application submitted by the Town Council demonstrates that they possess the governance, financial stability, operational capacity and long-term commitment required by the Community Asset Transfer Policy

1.5 Officers have assessed the proposal against the adopted policy and conclude that it satisfies the policy objectives, provides continuing community benefit and supports the long-term stewardship of an important community asset.

1.6 This report considered the application by Market Rasen Town Council for the transfer of the West Lindsey District Council's freehold interest (LL301674) in Site S093 Festival Hall Offices, Market Rasen

1.7 The proposal is being considered under the Council's Community Assets Transfer Policy 2026 and has been informed by the Town Council's application and findings from West Lindsey's retained Deed Packet (D1635)

1.8 The proposed transfer would move legal ownership to Market Rasen Town Council which already owns, manages and maintains the attached Festival Hall. Such transfer will secure future use of the premises for Town Council and Community use.

2 Background

2.1 West Lindsey District Council currently owns the freehold interest in site S093 Festival Hall Offices, Caistor Road, Market Rasen (Land Registry Title LL301674)

2.2 Market Rasen Town Council owns the freehold interest of the adjoining Festival Hall complex (LL422837) and occupies the office accommodation under a 99-year full repairing lease agreement

2.3 The application received seeks to transfer the office freehold interest to the Town Council, bringing the entire building into single ownership.

2.4 The application confirms that there will be;

- no change to the current use of the building
- no reduction in community access
- no interruption to existing services, and
- continued management by the Town Council

3 Community Asset Transfer Policy Assessment

3.1 The Community Asset Transfer Policy establishes a transparent framework for considering transfers where they deliver of community benefit, support the Councils Corporate Plan and wider strategic objectives.

3.2 The Policy specifically recognises Town and Parish Councils as eligible organisations for Community Asset Transfer

3.3 Market Rasen Town Council is a democratically elected local authority with established governance arrangements, experienced elected members and qualified officers.

3.4 Market Rasen Town Council therefore satisfies the eligibility requirements of the policy.

4 Suitability of the Asset

4.1 The Policy advises that freehold assets owned by West Lindsey District Council may be transferred where the proposal benefits the community and supports Council objectives

4.2 The Festival Hall Offices satisfies these criteria because:

- WLDC owns the freehold
- The asset already supports community activities
- The transfer rationalises ownership of the entire building
- Future management will be simplified and
- Continued public benefit is secured.

4.3 The Policy also confirms that transfers to Town and Parish Councils will normally be by way of freehold disposal.

5 Governance and Management

5.1 The application demonstrates that Market Rasen Town Council has:

- Established governance arrangements
- Appropriate financial controls
- Experienced employees
- Adopted statutory policies
- Experience on managing community buildings

- Appropriate insurance arrangements

5.2 The Officers are satisfied that Market Rasen Town Council possesses sufficient organisational capacity to own and manage the asset on a permanent basis.

6 Financial Sustainability

6.1 The application demonstrates that:

- Maintenance responsibilities already rest with the Town Council through the existing full repairing lease.
- Sufficient financial reserves are maintained
- Future investment will be incorporated within the Town Council's annual financial planning process and
- No additional operational burden will arise from the transfer.

6.2 The proposal therefore represents a sustainable long-term solution

7 Community Benefit

7.1 Although there will be no operational change following the transfer, significant community benefits arise from;

- Safeguarding continued community ownership
- Maintaining an import community facility
- Strengthening local democratic accountability
- Enabling quicker local investment decisions
- Simplifying estate management
- Support the long-term future of the Festival Hall

7.2 The transfer therefore delivers continuing social wellbeing in accordance with the Community Asset Transfer Policy.

8 Environmental Benefits

8.1 The Town Council has identified future improvements including;

- Improved insulation
- Replacement heating systems
- Improved lighting and
- Future replacement of the solar panels.

8.2 These proposals support the Council's environmental objectives and the longer-term sustainability of the building.

9 Conclusion

9.1 Having undertaken a detailed assessment against the Community Asset transfer policy, It is concluded that the proposal satisfies the relevant policy requirements

9.2 The Town Council is an eligible applicant with the governance, experience and financial capacity to own and manage the asset

9.3 The proposal delivers continuing social value, safeguards an important community building and provides a logical rationalisation of ownership by transferring the remaining freehold interest to the Authority already responsible for managing the wider Festival Hall.

9.4 The proposed transfer is considered to represent an appropriate disposal at less than best consideration in accordance with the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 and the Councils Community Asset Transfer Policy.

9.5 Accordingly, Committee is recommended to approve the transfer.

10 Alternative Options

	Option	Rational for not recommending
1	**Approve the transfer (recommended)**	**This secures unified ownership, simplifies future management and supports the long-term sustainability of the Festival Hall**
2	**Refuse the application**	**This would retain split ownership of the building, extend unnecessary management complexity and provide no additional community benefit over the current arrangements**

ASSOCIATED IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

The proposed transfer is consistent with the Councils adopted Community Asset Transfer Policy

Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires local authorities to obtain best consideration unless statutory consent applies

The General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 enables disposals at less than best consideration where the authority considers the transfer is likely to contribute to the promotion and/or improvement of the economic, social and/or environmental wellbeing of its area.

The Officers consider that the proposal satisfies those requirements.

The transfer documentation will also include such covenants and protections as considered necessary to safeguard the public interests.

Existing premises attached to the Festival Hall Officers were transferred by West Lindsey DC to Market Rasen Town Council in March 2006.

Financial: FIN/50/27/SL

The transfer is proposed at less than best consideration under the provisions of the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003

West Lindsey District Council currently receives only a peppercorn rent from the property

As repairing obligations already rest with the Town Council, the proposal does not create additional financial liabilities for the Council

The disposal also removes the future freehold ownership responsibilities whilst securing continued community benefit

A valuation of the property has been obtained to inform the decision-making process and demonstrate the extent of any undervalue.

Since 2012 West Lindsey DC has benefited from a Solar Feed In tariff from an array on the premises. Typical annual payments are approximately £2.2k per annum and these are set to continue until 2037. Transferring the premises could mean that these payments would be made to MRTC in the future. However an agreement with MRTC that WLDC retains ownership of the array until 2037 could protect this.

Revenue costs budgeted for within the Medium Term Financial Plan are property insurance £0.2k pa and Business Rates £2.9k pa.

Staffing: There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report

LGR implications: N/A

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights:

No adverse equality impacts have been identified. Public access to the building will continue unchanged

Data Protection Implications: There are no data protection implications arising directly from this report

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities:

The proposal supports continued investment in improving the environmental performance of the building through local ownership and management

Future energy efficiency improvements identified within the application are consistent with the Council's environmental ambitions.

Section 17 Crime and Disorder Considerations: None

Health Implications: None

Risk Assessment:

The principal risks have been assessed as low:

Risk	**Mitigation**
Future use of the building changes	Addition of restrictive covenants and legal controls
Financial failure	Town Council has established governance and reserves
Poor asset management	Existing operational experience of managing the building
Loss of community benefit	Legal protections and continued Town Council Ownership

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:
West Lindsey District Council Community Asset Transfer Policy 2026 Community Asset Transfer Application – Market Rasen Town Council Deed Packet 1635 – Rear of 20 King Street, Market Rasen (LL301674)

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14.7 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

i.e. is the report exempt from being called in due to urgency (in consultation with C&I chairman)	**Yes**		**No**	**X**

Key Decision:

A matter which affects two or more wards, or has significant financial implications	**Yes**		**No**	**X**