Orchard Community Centre

Expressions of interest sought to manage the community building at Orchard Community Centre Columbine Way, Lewisham Road, London SE13 7LQ
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Please read all of this document carefully before completing the application form.

Thank you for expressing an interest in the Community Asset Transfer of the Orchard Community Centre. We invite you to submit an Expression of Interest for the management of the building and provision of community services.

Affinity Sutton recognises that a local, non-profit organisation would be better placed to manage the building as they could use this a base to deliver their own services, generate income which can be invested into the centre, and increase opportunities for local people to use the facility.

**Invitation to open event**

We are holding an open event, week commencing 23rd May 2016 (date tbc).

Orchard Community Centre  
Columbine Way  
Lewisham Road  
London SE13 7LQ

This will be an opportunity for you to visit the building and meet the Community Assets Team from Affinity Sutton to answer any questions you may have.

An application form is available by emailing sophie@valewisham.org.uk

*Although you are welcome to submit your application before the open event, we recommend you visit before doing so.*

The deadline for submitting your application is Friday 10th June 2016.
About the building

Background

Orchard Community Centre is a new build facility located in Orchard Gardens Estate, in South East London. The centre is surrounded by around 66 Affinity Sutton affordable homes. The estate is located near many other social housing estates and owner occupier homes. Affinity Sutton has many hundred properties across Lewisham.

The site is in close proximity to central Lewisham and Lewisham Shopping Centre, which has a good range of shops, and only a 3 minute walk from Lewisham train station.

This facility is a new build property. Affinity Sutton is seeking a community partner with similar aims and objectives to operate the building and increase the benefits to the local community. The centre is well position on the corner of the estate, attached to some new build homes.

On the estate there is an active Residents Association that has been involved in the development of the community centre and will require some usage of it. They will be involved in shortlisting of applications and represented on the interview panel.
Facilities

The centre is a two-storey building, with the layout as follows.

Ground floor 132m² comprising:

- Meeting room (38m²)
- Storage room
- Kitchen
- Toilets

First floor 107m² comprising:

- Meeting room (40m²)
- Floor area (63m²)
- Toilet
- Store

The centre also has outdoor space with storage.

The precise Fire Safety Capacity will be determined on completion, but is thought to be in the region of 50 people.
About the offer

Affinity Sutton, who owns the building, recognises that a local organisation or organisations would be better placed to manage and operate the building on a day-to-day basis as they could increase the opportunity for local people to use the facility and social impact.

Applications are being sought from non-profit organisations, to operate the building in a way that would be beneficial to both themselves and the wider community.

Affinity Sutton has a portfolio of 50 Community Assets across the country, and seeks partners with the aspiration to grow the use of their centres and operate sustainably by generating income through hire, grants or other fundraising. All organisations managing Affinity Sutton Community Assets receive support from the Hub Connect programme, which offers free training and networking to support the development of community facilities. This includes guidance and peer support on fundraising, business planning and facilities management.

Affinity Sutton would retain the freehold. The managing organisation will initially be offered a licence agreement, with a view to offering a more secure lease once the asset is self-sufficient and providing community benefits. This gives both partners the flexibility to test the relationship and the asset before making a long-term commitment and incurring the legal costs of a lease.

Potential usage and links

Affinity Sutton has a vision for this centre to become a hub delivering activities for all members of the community, offering social, educational, health and wellbeing and events that bring the community together. This will also include the opportunity for groups or organisations to hire the centre for delivering activities, and private hire.

Other community buildings in the area rent similar space at an hourly rate between £10 and £25, depending on the nature/eligibility of hire. Most organisations have a transparent, equitable hire charge structure.

Running costs

The building will be available on peppercorn rent.

As this is a new build centre we do not have running costs for gas, electricity, water or waste removal at this time. Business rates are subject to application to Lewisham Borough Council, but charitable organisations qualify for at least 80% rate relief, and some relief is often extended to other non-profit organisations. For utilities and rates, a typical community asset might cost between £250 and £550pcm.

During the period of the licence, Affinity Sutton will retain repairs responsibilities. It will also meet costs for Statutory Compliance requirements such as gas certification; testing for asbestos, water
hygiene, electrical testing; and fire safety equipment. These are subject to negotiation when entering a longer term lease.

Other costs you will need to think about are cleaning, phone and broadband, insurance (e.g. public liability, contents), disposable items (e.g. kitchen supplies, stationery) and your staff, volunteer or activity costs. The centre will be equipped with some IT facilities once the managing partner is identified, for example laptops and an interactive whiteboard, to enable training courses and activities to be delivered.

About the area

Orchard Community Centre is situated in Lewisham Central ward, with a total population of 16,331. Lewisham Central ward has a young demographic, with 60% of the population aged 20-50, 20.2% aged 0-19, 11.7% aged 50-64 and just 8.3% aged over 65.

Orchard Gardens is located within one of several areas of Lewisham Central ward that feature in the index of multiple deprivation. Affinity Sutton has around 66 homes within Orchard Gardens; from our estate data we know the following statistics about people in the area:

- high levels of children are living in poverty (34%), many in lone-parent households
- below average numbers have no qualifications (21%)
- 39% aged 17-74 are in full time employment
- there are higher than average levels of job seekers and other working age benefits
- there is a lower than average (across England) level of satisfaction with the neighbourhood
- the estate has a mixed ethnic profile, with 69.9% Black or Minority Ethnic, and high levels of non-English speakers

Eligibility

We are inviting applications from all organisations that have an intention to operate the building for community benefit or charitable purposes. We have previously also awarded Community Asset Transfers to newly forming organisations, such as Residents Associations.

When managing a community building, it is important that organisations have suitable governance arrangements, policies and procedures, robust financial systems and a clear plan for the centre’s use. Organisations should submit documents to evidence these are in place, or demonstrate a commitment to having these in place by point of transfer. Guidance and template documents are available.

Organisations will need to be non-profit distributing, and there must be an asset lock, which means the centre and any surplus earned remains for community benefit.
COMMUNITY ASSETS

We highly recommend organisations are incorporated so they have a legal entity and can enter a license or lease in its name. Being an incorporated organisation also limits the liability of trustees or directors, reducing their personal liability. Based on these criteria, an organisation might be one of the following:

- Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
- Company Limited by Guarantee combined with charitable status
- Community Interest Company (CIC) Limited by Guarantee
- Statutory
- In rare instances we may consider a CAT with a Charitable Community Benefit Society with an asset lock, but this is only granted by the Charity Commission where a CIO is not suitable

The majority of trustees/directors must be unconnected (broadly the Charity Commission defines this as family members or those connected by business). Organisations with less than three directors must demonstrate their intentions to expand this, to cope with any unexpected circumstances.

The application process

Voluntary Action Lewisham will host a visit to the building to explain the offer, process and answer any questions you may have.

Organisations that want to express an interest or gain further information should contact Voluntary Action Lewisham and book to attend the site visit, week commencing 23rd May 2016.

Full applications should be received by Friday 10th June 2016, via the Affinity Sutton application form. This will be emailed to you on request to sophie@valewisham.org.uk

Shortlisted applicants will be notified by 27th June 2016.

In the shortlisting process the panel will review your application and supporting documentation. Shortlisted organisations will then be invited to an interview. A number of supporting documents are outlined in the application form. Please supply as much information as you can as it will strengthen your application. However, in the event that you do not have these at the time of applying, you are recommended to submit your application anyway. The panel may choose to grant a period of time during which any missing information can be supplied, if you are selected as the preferred partner for the centre. This will impact on how quickly the Community Asset Transfer can be completed.

If you have any further questions please contact Voluntary Action Lewisham:

- Email: sophie@valewisham.org.uk
- Tel: 020 8314 9411
About Affinity Sutton

Affinity Sutton is one of the largest independent providers of affordable housing in England and a business for social purpose.

With over 56,000 properties in more than 120 local authorities Affinity Sutton provides a range of housing and community focused services to 161,000 residents.

With a 100 year history, Affinity Sutton is committed to creating places for communities to thrive and maximising life chances of residents. Affinity Sutton believes that providing good quality homes is only part of that job and that at a time when the country is in recession they can and should be doing even more.

By helping to create safer, stronger and more sustainable communities, the central aspiration is to enable residents to benefit from the interventions provided and become healthier, more engaged and more positive individuals and communities – this will lead to an enhanced local sense of place and lead to valuable outcomes.

Affinity Sutton is proud to be a business for social purpose and remains committed to maximising life chances for their residents and creating places for communities to thrive.

Affinity Sutton has a national portfolio of over 50 community facilities ranging from community centres to rooms, cafes, gardens and gyms. We also have a network of fully equipped community hubs which aim to be focal points and meet community needs.