

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Public Protection, Streetscene and Community (Introduced by the Executive Member for Community Services)	Executive Cabinet	22 October 2015

WYMOTT BOWLING CLUB - PROPOSAL

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To inform members of and seek approval for a proposal to purchase the site of the Wymott Bowling Club from Her Majesties Prison Service and to lease the site to the Bowling Club.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. That Members approve the use of £55,000.00 to support the Wymott Bowling Club, the funds to be used to purchase the Wymott Bowling Club site and the remainder to be used as a grant to support improvement works.
3. That Chorley Council enter into negotiation with HMP for the purchase of the Wymott Bowling Club site for a price of up to £50,000.00
4. That Members give delegated authority to the Executive Member for Community Services to agree to the purchase of the Bowling Club site for the price of up to £50,000.00 on terms to be agreed and recommended by the Head of Governance and Property.
5. That Members agree to the granting of a lease to the Wymott Bowling Club of the site for a period of 25 years, at a rent to be agreed and that there be delegated authority to the Head of Governance and Property to agree those terms and sign the lease.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

6. Wymott Bowling Club have successfully run a bowling club at the site for a number of years. The site is owned by Her Majesties Prison Service and consists of an unused building (which requires demolition), bowling greens and car parking area. In addition the club have invested their own monies providing seating, planting and landscaping and tea and coffee making facilities.
7. HMP have indicated a desire to sell the site.
8. The Bowling Club successfully applied to have the site listed as a community asset. This application was approved on the basis it is a valuable community resource in that area, providing not only club facilities for members but also a focal point for the local area. The facility is used by residents who simply come to watch the bowls and use the tea and coffee facilities. There is no similar provision in this area.
9. The Bowling Club have approached the Council with a proposal whereby the Council will buy the site and lease it to the Club. In turn the Club will take on responsibility for the site as is, including the requirement to demolish the existing building. The Club are also seeking a grant from the Council to support their improvement works. The combined amount the proposal from the Club seeks from the Council is £55,000.00.
10. The Club will be seeking grants from other organisations to undertake works to improve the site but their aim is for this facility to be self sustaining.
11. The proposal does have a cost to the Council but does meet the Council's Strategic aims of:-
 - a. Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all;
 - b. Clean safe and healthy communities; and

- c. An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of the residents and the local area.
12. In addition it should be noted that this is a rural community with limited access to similar community provision.
13. The proposed purchase cost can be met from the Council's Play and Pitch Strategy Projects budget.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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Key Decision? Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)
(If the recommendations are accepted)

14. This proposal supports 3 of the Council's corporate priorities and retains a community asset in a location where there are no other similar facilities.
15. It supports the Council's preferred delivery model of local community assets being administered by community groups.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

16. Not pursuing this proposal will lose a valuable community asset in an area that is not served by any alternatives. Further, this will be another bowling club lost to the Borough which may have an impact on other clubs who participate in the league competition.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

17. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all	X	A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities	X	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	X

BACKGROUND

18. Wymott Bowling Club came into operation in 1984. The bowling green was built and funded by the members.
19. The Club have invested in both the green and the surrounds, erecting 2 shelters, a large cabin used for storage and refreshments and another cabin to store the machinery needed to maintain the green. There is also a metal cabin that houses the bowls used for tuition. The Club have also landscaped the area and placed a number of benches around the green.
20. Originally the Club were able to use a club house on the site, however this has fallen into disrepair due to its age and the fact it would be uneconomic to improve it. As a result there has been continued investment by the Club including the purchase of a generator.
21. The Club have 44 members and are involved in a number of bowling leagues as well as providing a venue for social bowling activities for members and non-members. The Club have a history of working with Chorley Council and support our get up and go initiatives including regular tuition sessions on Fridays.
22. The Prison Service have now indicated an intention to sell the site to raise funds. Part of the Condition of the sale will be the new owners are to arrange for the demolition of the club house building. Upon being made aware of this proposal the Club successfully applied for

the site to be listed as a Community Asset and commenced negotiations with the Prison Service for the purchase of the site.

23. The site has a reserve price of £50,000.00 although to support the Club they believe that the Prison Service will accept less. The low valuation of the site is for 2 reasons, firstly the land has little redevelopment value as it is allocated for leisure use and secondly there is the cost of demolishing and removing the old club house.
24. The Council have valued the site at £35,000.00, but this is on the basis of the obligation to demolish the club house building being discharged by the Council. The value of the cleared site is closer to the reserve price.

WYMOTT BOWLING CLUB - PROPOSAL

25. The Club have raised some funds however, they are not in a position to both purchase the site and pay for the demolition and removal of the club house. They have therefore proposed the following:-
 - a. That Chorley make available the sum of £55,000.00.
 - b. Chorley Council use part of the £55,000.00 to purchase the site from Her Majesties Prison Service;
 - c. Chorley Council grant a long lease (25 years) to the Wymott Bowling Club;
 - d. The Wymott Bowling Club will undertake the demolition of the former club house building as a requirement of the lease; and
 - e. The rent be nominal for the first 7 years with a rent review at the end of that period.
 - f. The balance of the sum of £55,000.00 be used as a grant to the Club to assist in the improvement of the site including the demolition of the derelict club house.
26. The proposal has the following benefits:-
 - a. The Club will retain the use of an asset into which they have invested significant time and money;
 - b. The area will retain a community asset that is used not only by members of the Club but also other clubs in league matches and local residents who can play as non-members;
 - c. Residents of Ulnes Walton community also attend to watch the bowls and for the social interaction;
 - d. It supports three Council Priorities;
 - e. It protects an area of green space in a rural location from development for housing.
27. The Club also have plans for future community development on the site. They are investigating obtaining grants which would assist them in providing a replacement club house which could serve as a café location but could also be hired out for other local community uses. They would also look to work with HMP Wymott to provide work placements for prisoners in the café and also working on the greens and landscaping.

COUNCIL SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

28. The Council recognises that this is the only community based centre in Ulnes Walton and the provision of this facility contributes to addressing issues of social isolation in rural areas. It will provide a focal point for community based activities and will be community run which again is an aim of the council for this type of asset.
29. The Council's investment in the site is protected by the reversionary interest at the end of the lease and it will be a condition that the site is to be used as a Bowling Club and community venue. In the event the use ceases the lease will end and the Council will have the site passed back.

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

30. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	x	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	x	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

31. The purchase can be funded from the Council budget for Recreational Pitch/Open Space Strategy. Every effort will be made to limit the initial expenditure on the purchase price through negotiation with HMP and the Ministry of Justice.
32. Following on from the purchase the additional grant funding from CBC to the Wymott Bowling Club to assist in the demolition of the unused building will also be funded from the Recreational Pitch/Open Space Strategy budget.
33. Schemes originally identified in the Recreational Pitch/Open Space budget may still go ahead in the future. Some schemes may require additional requests for capital funding.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

34. There are no legal restrictions on the proposed property deals. Best value can be demonstrated by the continued delivery of a valuable local community club.

JAMIE CARSON

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROTECTION, STREETSCENE AND COMMUNITY

There are no background papers to this report.

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