



CABINET – 2ND JULY 2014

SUBJECT: FORMER NELSON BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

REPORT BY: ACTING DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE SERVICES AND SECTION 151 OFFICER

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on progress on the proposed development of the former Nelson Boys & Girls Club and to seek Cabinet's agreement to a further Recommendation for a lease beyond the decisions made at their meeting of the 4th September 2012.

2. SUMMARY

- 2.1 At their meeting on the 4th September 2012 Cabinet agreed the following with regard to the former Nelson Boys & Girls Club:
1. The provision of a letter of intent to lease the site of the former Nelson Boys & Girls Club to the Nelson Development Trust for a minimum period of 25 years, subject to the terms of the lease making the Trust responsible for all repairs and maintenance of the existing building. The letter of intent to be issued as soon as practicable following a Cabinet decision.
 2. Subject to the above the following conditions be attached to the letter of intent:
 - The Trust be able to demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the council, that it has sufficient funding to restore the building to a condition suitable for its planned use, with all statutory H&S certificates in place and fully DDA compliant. A progress update be presented to the appropriate Cabinet Member and Head of Service within a maximum of 24 months. (The 24 month period to commence from the date of the letter of intent described in 1 above).
 - The Trust demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the council, that its business projections are realistic and robust and the provision of a youth facility is sustainable. A progress update be presented to the appropriate Cabinet Member and Head of Service within a maximum of 24 months.
 - On the matter of reverting the lease to the Community Council should the Development Trust be wound up it is recommended that this is not considered initially but it is given further consideration at the 24 month review period described above.
 - Should the Trust fail to satisfy the council following that period of 24 months, or are not prepared to consider alternative options for youth provision on the site, the former boys & girls Club building will be demolished and the site offered for development in accordance with the council's LDP.

- 2.2 Limited progress has been made to date and further progress will be dependant upon Cabinet committing the council to entering into a long term lease for the reasons explained in the body of this report.

3. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 3.1 This report relates to the council's priority "Our communities must be safe, green and clean places to live to improve resident's quality of life".

4. THE REPORT

- 4.1 Since the Cabinet decisions described above the Cabinet Member for Performance, Property and Asset Management, together with the Head of Performance & Property have been engaging with Nelson Development Trust representatives to move this project forward.

- 4.2 The trust has submitted a Business case on two occasions, the most recent being 29th November 2013. Officers responded to that Business Case by acknowledging that it was an improvement on the earlier version but there remained weaknesses within it which were, in the main:

- The Business Case focussed almost entirely on the development and occupation of the existing building and did not demonstrate any vision for the use of the site as a whole
- The Committees of the Nelson Community Centre and the Nelson Development Trust do not support an amalgamation of the Nelson Boys & Girls Club with the Nelson Community Centre. They felt "this is not a viable prospect at this time". Officers are of the opinion that any Business Case should explain the reasons why and unless fully explored it is an opportunity missed.
- Financial forecasts, whilst an improvement on the previous Business Case submission, are not sustainable.

- 4.3 In response to the comments raised in paragraph 4.2 meetings have been held with representatives of the Nelson Development Trust who are determined to address the issues raised. In doing so the Trust representatives, along with the appropriate council Cabinet Member (Cllr Hardacre) & Head of Service (Colin Jones) met with the Big Lottery to explore potential funding opportunities open to the Trust. Cllr Sean Morgan was also in attendance in his capacity as a member of the Development Trust.

- 4.4 At that meeting the Trust confirmed their intentions to apply for Big Lottery funding and were advised on the various procedures/guidelines to do so. Crucially the Trust was advised that a Letter of Intent to lease would not be adequate to secure grant funding and that a long term lease would need to be in place. The Trust was also advised that applications take around 6 months to get to an "Approval in Principle" stage and possibly up to 12 months before a final decision is made. This time scale would obviously run from the time of application for funding and the application itself would need to be detailed and hence will take time.

- 4.5 Given this advice and to assist the Trust in making progress Cabinet's former decisions should be re-visited.

5. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no potential equalities implications from this report and its recommendations on groups or individuals who fall under the categories identified in Section 6 of the Council's Strategic Equality Plan. There is no requirement for an Equalities Impact Assessment questionnaire to be completed for this report.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

7. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no direct personnel implications associated with this report.

8. CONSULTATIONS

8.1 The results of all consultations have been incorporated into this report.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 It is recommended that:

1. Cabinet agree to enter into a 25year lease with the Nelson Development Trust for the former Nelson Boys & Girls Club to allow them to pursue funding opportunities. The lease should include a time limit (18 months) after which, if adequate funding has not been secured, the lease will revert back to the council. As previously the lease would also make the Trust responsible for all repairs/maintenance and insurance of the existing building.
2. All other former recommendations be retained but the time limits previously being 24 months from the date of issue of the Letter of Intent being extended to within 18 months of the signing of the lease.

10. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To afford Nelson Development Trust every opportunity to secure grant funding for the project.

11. STATUTORY POWER

11.1 Local Government Act 2001. This is a Cabinet function.

Author: Colin Jones: Head of Performance & Property
Consultees: Nicole Scammell. Interim Director of Corporate Services & S151 Officer
Cllr David Hardacre: Cabinet Member for Performance, Property & Asset Management
Cllr A.Blackman: Nelson Ward Member
Nelson Community Council

Background Papers:
Report to Cabinet "Former Nelson Boys & Girls Club" September 4th 2012