



CABINET – 4TH SEPTEMBER 2012

SUBJECT: FORMER NELSON BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB

REPORT BY: DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to amend a decision taken by Cabinet on 2nd August 2011 to develop the site of the former Nelson Boys and Girls Club and to issue a letter of intent to lease the site for 25 years to the Nelson Development Trust, subject to appropriate conditions.
- 1.2 The Nelson Development Trust was established to be the management group for the Nelson Boys & Girls Club. The Trust “has at its core a very community focussed team of both long standing County and Community Councillors and dedicated interested community entrepreneurs”.

2. LINKS TO STRATEGY

- 2.1 This report relates to the council’s priority “to raise awareness to the benefits of a healthy and active lifestyle”.

3. THE REPORT

- 3.1 At its meeting of 2nd August 2011 Cabinet agreed that “the former Nelson Boys and Girls Club be appropriated out of the HRA for development purposes”. The reason for this recommendation was to allow the site to be brought into beneficial use, it having been unused since circa 2005.
- 3.2 At the request of the Nelson Community Council the Cabinet Member for Performance, Property and Asset Management together with the Head of Performance & Property attended a meeting on the 14th June 2012 to discuss the Trust’s ambitions for the development of the site and its supporting Business Plan.
- 3.3 The Trust is determined to re-open the Boys & Girls Club building and develop the adjacent land to enhance youth provision within the village. Their aspirations are commendable although at this time, in the opinion of both the Cabinet Member & Head of Service, the supporting Business Plan lacks solid evidence to support many of the business projections quoted.
- 3.4 The Community Council accepted the concerns raised and were keen to point out that in the absence of any sort of commitment to the provision of a long lease from the council it is not possible to enter into meaningful negotiations for external grant funding. They mentioned discussions they have had recently with the Coalfields Trust, which was supportive of their aims, and a forthcoming meeting with the Big Lottery.

- 3.5 During discussions alternative options for the development of the site were tabled these were:
- Utilise the existing and adjacent Community Centre for youth provision and replace the former Nelson Boys & Girls Club with a MUGA (Multi Use Games Area). This could release part of the site for residential development.
 - Extend the existing and adjacent Community Centre by demolishing the former Nelson Boys & Girls Club and building a fit for purpose extension to house a modern youth facility. This could release a larger part of the site for residential development.
- 3.6 The Community Council was not prepared to consider these alternative options and is committed to restoring the former building and adjacent land for leisure and youth provision.
- 3.7 A condition survey was carried out on the existing building and at that time (2007) restoration costs of circa £72k were identified. The Trust believes it can carry out the required repairs for much less than this and have apparently received a quotation of £10k for priority 1 repairs. These being those repairs that were classified as urgent at that time.
- 3.8 Should the Trust take possession of the building they will have to do so in the knowledge that improvements will have to be made to the building, for which they will be responsible, to bring it up to a standard appropriate for its planned use, including being DDA compliant.

4. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no potential equalities implications of 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.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are financial implications associated with the Development Trust's proposals. In particular if the council was to develop the site in accordance with Cabinet's decision on the 2nd August 2011 it is expected that the council will receive a Capital receipt that will not be realised in the event of a long term lease being entered into.

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no personnel implications associated with this report.

7. CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 Nelson Community Council has responded to the report and its recommendations by expressing the wish that any lease "must contain a clause to the effect that the lease would revert to the Community Council should the Development Trust be wound up for any reason". The Development Trust also seek a longer period than the 18 months initially recommended to obtain funding. Community Council members believe that a minimum period of three years should be sought.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Cabinet agree to 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 on the recommendations within this report.

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 Recommendation 1.
- 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.

9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

To support the Nelson Development Trust's aims to enhance youth provision on the site.

10. STATUTORY POWER

10.1 Local Government Act 1972. This is a Cabinet function.

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