

 Executive 29 June 2020		Agenda Item No. 3 (V)
Title	Use of delegated powers - Newbold Comyn Draft Masterplan	
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Wards of the District directly affected	Clarendon, Crown, Newbold	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	Appendix 2 confidential due to commercially sensitive information relating to external organisations	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	7 th March 2018 6 th March 2019 21 st August 2019	
Background Papers		

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	Yes
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes 1,104
Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken	No (If No state why below)
To be undertaken at final approval of Masterplan	

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	25/02/2020	Chris Elliot
Head of Service	25/02/2020	Rob Hoof
CMT	25/02/2020	Chris Elliot, Andrew Jones, Bill Hunt
Section 151 Officer	25/02/2020	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	25/02/2020	Andrew Jones
Finance	25/02/2020	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	25/02/2020	Cllr Norris
Consultation & Community Engagement		
Previous consultation took place in August 2018 and September – November 2019. The first exercise was to understand local residents and visitor’s relationship with the site and the latter to understand what facilities the public would support.		
Final Decision?	No	
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. **Summary**

- 1.1 Following the closure of the golf course at Newbold Comyn, a series of studies and public consultations have been carried out in order to develop a draft Masterplan.
- 1.2 This report informs Members of an urgent decision taken by the Chief Executive under delegated authority CE(4), following consultation with Group Leaders, to agree a final Masterplan for the site.
- 1.3 Due to the Coronavirus outbreak and in line with the self-isolation Government advice, the 18 March 2020 meeting of the Executive was cancelled. As a result, the decisions on the agenda for that meeting were taken under the Chief Executive's delegated authority CE(4).

2. **Recommendation**

That Executive notes the decision taken by the Chief Executive, after consultation with Group Leaders, under delegated authority CE(4) to:

- 2.1 Note the progress made by SLC on their study to determine the future of Newbold Comyn.
- 2.2 Approve the proposed methodology for a further public consultation exercise which will seek views on the proposed Masterplan.
- 2.3 Note the work done to date in regard to the outbuildings and agree the next steps for determining their future use.

3. **Reasons for the Recommendation**

- 1.1 This was an urgent matter which could not wait until the next Executive meeting. Because of the Coronavirus outbreak, it was not known when the Council meetings would resume.
- 1.2 This resulted in the use of delegated power CE(4), which states:
"The Chief Executive be authorised to deal with urgent items that occur between meetings, in consultation with the relevant Deputy Chief Executive, Head(s) of Service (if available) and Group Leaders (or in their absence Deputy Group Leaders) subject to the matter being reported to the Executive at its next meeting."
- 1.3 **Recommendation 2.1:** SLC were initially appointed in September 2018 to carry out a study looking into future uses for Newbold Comyn.
- 1.4 Following completion of this study and a further report to Executive in March 2019, SLC were re-appointed to carry out further work including a more detailed public consultation, Masterplan development and business planning. This report provides an update on each of these elements.
- 1.5 Engagement with identified stakeholders together with a comprehensive public consultation exercise was undertaken during September, October and November 2019 seeking feedback on the facility options developed during the initial study.

- 1.6 The purpose of this consultation was to inform the Council on the public's view of which facilities were to be included in the Masterplan. The responses were to be reviewed alongside an assessment of need and a consideration of financial sustainability.
- 1.7 The key conclusions emerging from the consultation are detailed below. Please note a full breakdown of the results can be found at Appendix 1 to the report.
- The online survey generated a total of 3346 responses
 - The vast majority of consultees were positive about enhancing opportunities for increasing physical activity at Newbold Comyn
 - The facility options with the strongest support through the online survey were nature trails, extension to the nature reserve, improving pedestrian routes, cycle trails and routes, adventure play area and café / visitor centre
 - The facility options with the strongest support through the c. 400 attendees of the two public drop-in sessions were exactly the same as the online survey. This demonstrates a clear consensus amongst local people about which facilities they favour the most
 - Support was indicated for activities that create a 'sense of wellbeing', can be integrated into the existing landscape and are low cost or free to access
 - Concern was expressed about the character of the site being spoilt and the impact upon wildlife and ecology of any over-development
 - Transport to and from Newbold Comyn by public transport, bicycle and on foot could be enhanced
 - Dog walkers wish to retain the unrestricted access to Newbold Comyn that they currently enjoy
 - Improving disability access across the site was mentioned several times in the online survey comments and during the public consultation drop-in sessions
 - Mixed views were expressed, regarding golf at Newbold Comyn – some were strongly supportive of reinstating a full golf-course or the 'front 9 holes' and some were strongly against reinstating any golf provision
- 1.8 On 19 November 2019, SLC facilitated a workshop with Warwick District Council (WDC) Members and Officers to agree which facility options should be taken forward to the next stage of the feasibility study and Masterplan.
- 1.9 SLC took Members through an exercise to appraise the facility options which considered the need and viability of each proposed facility option. Each option was then given a priority rating. A full summary of this workshop can be found as Appendix 2 to the report however due to commercial sensitivities will need to be considered as private and confidential.
- 1.10 It was agreed that those facility options identified as a High or Medium priority were to be taken forward to the next stage to test the feasibility of each one.

Facility Group	Priority Rating
Cycle trails / pedestrian routes / exercise trim trail	High
Extended nature reserve / nature trails	Medium / High

Artificial turf pitch	High
Redesigned golf offer – driving range, par 3, footgolf	Low
Outdoor Activity Centre – High ropes, climbing, zip wires, archery, dry tobogganing, woodland craft	Medium
Adventure golf / Pitch and Putt	Medium
Adventure Play	Medium
Skate park	Low
Café / Visitor Centre	High
Community garden / sensory garden	Low

- 1.11 A draft business case and feasibility report has been produced which provides capital costs and options for management and operational arrangements for each facility.
- 1.12 The current cost for delivering the draft Masterplan is £10,030,600. This figure is made up of capital and project costs. Further work needs to take place to identify funding sources and delivery models for each facility.
- 1.13 It is recommended that this viability work takes place over the coming months, and a final business case is brought back to the Executive for approval in the summer along with the final Masterplan.
- 1.14 **Recommendation 2.2:** As agreed by Executive in August 2019, the draft Masterplan will be subject to a final public consultation.
- 1.15 The purpose of this consultation is to understand the public and stakeholder’s views on the draft Masterplan. The feedback will inform any changes before a final version is brought back to Executive alongside the business case referred to in paragraph 3.13.
- 1.16 The draft Masterplan proposed for consultation is included in Appendix 4 to the report.
- 1.17 It will consist of an online survey which will include an interactive map of the site. This will allow participants to review each facility on its own or to look at the site in its entirety.
- 1.18 There will also be public drop in sessions where the project team will be able to talk through the facility mix and provide further advice on the design. Historically, these events have been very popular so SLC will be in attendance to support officers.
- 1.19 **Recommendation 2.3:** There are a number of vacant outbuildings adjacent to Newbold Comyn. For clarity, Appendix 3 to the report shows each of the barns which will be referred to in this report as:
- A: The old clubhouse
B: The barns
- 1.20 In the feasibility work carried out to date, a variety of uses for the outbuildings have been considered which could potentially support the facilities and activities proposed through the Masterplan.

- 1.21 The outcome of this work is that building 'A' can add value to the wider project. The draft Masterplan proposes the former golf club is re-purposed to serve outdoor activities. Minor reconfigurations to the internal layout are proposed to provide a reception area and lobby, a meeting/briefing room, a store for hire cycles and toilets
- 1.22 The buildings referred to as 'B' do not have an identified use within the Masterplan. This position has been informed by indicative budget estimates to repurpose the barns from their former agricultural use alongside a commercial appraisal that was presented to the Executive in August 2019.
- 1.23 This commercial appraisal also stated that 'do nothing' with the 'B' outbuildings was not an acceptable option.
- 1.24 On a short term basis, a potential use has been identified as providing storage and workshop facilities for a local dance company who have been based in the District for 30 years and who are at risk of displaced from the town if an alternative is not found. This is subject to Executive approval and the recommendations are provided in a separate report.
- 1.25 The long term future use will be decided once an Asset Review has taken place as part of the implementation of the Asset Management Strategy. This review will dictate the level of future investment and ensure that any future use is capable of meeting the Council's needs and objectives.

4. Policy Framework

4.1 Fit for the Future (FFF)

The Council's FFF Strategy is designed to deliver the Vision for the District of making it a Great Place to Live, Work and Visit and be Carbon Neutral by 2030. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several Key projects. This report shows the way forward for implementing a significant part of one of the Council's Key projects.

The FFF Strategy has 3 strands – People, Services and Money and each has an external and internal element to it. The table below illustrates the impact of this proposal if any in relation to the Council's FFF Strategy.

FFF Strands		
People	Services	Money
External		
Health, Homes, Communities	Green, Clean, Safe	Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Improved health for all Housing needs for all met Impressive cultural and sports activities Cohesive and active communities	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Becoming a net-zero carbon organisation by 2025 Total carbon emissions within Warwick District are as close to zero as possible by 2030 Area has well looked after public spaces	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Dynamic and diverse local economy Vibrant town centres Improved performance/productivity of local economy Increased employment and income levels

	All communities have access to decent open space Improved air quality Low levels of crime and ASB	
Impacts of Proposal		
Newbold Comyn is currently free to access providing opportunities for improved health outcomes. The study will not impact on this commitment.	The Council is committed to maintaining Newbold Comyn and preserving public access ensuring the area is well looked after. The study will not impact on this commitment.	The proposals within the Masterplan could provide additional jobs. It would positively impact on the economy by attracting visitors.
Internal		
Effective Staff	Maintain or Improve Services	Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term
<u>Intended outcomes:</u> All staff are properly trained All staff have the appropriate tools All staff are engaged, empowered and supported The right people are in the right job with the right skills and right behaviours	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Focusing on our customers' needs Continuously improve our processes Increase the digital provision of services	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Better return/use of our assets Full Cost accounting Continued cost management Maximise income earning opportunities Seek best value for money
Impacts of Proposal		
No impact	Proposal recognises customer needs and will improve service provision in line with these.	Proposal ensures that the Council gets best value from the asset, and income maximised, set against customer needs and deficit in Budgetary Framework.

4.2 Supporting Strategies

- 4.3 Each strand of the FFF Strategy has several supporting strategies. The impact of the recommendations within this report seek to protect the Council's financial position while protecting a valuable public asset in the long term.
- 4.4 In addition, any proposals that emerge from the process will need to comply with Section 13, paragraphs 133 – 147: Protecting Green Belt Land of the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 4.5 Proposals will also need to support the aspirations of the Green Spaces Strategy for Warwick District 2012 – 2026, in particular recommendations B (Improve), C (Connect), D (Involve) E (Resource), F (Sustain) and G (Conserve).

4.6 The recently adopted Business Strategy 2020 -2023 refers to providing outstanding public amenities at Newbold Comyn as a priority initiative to which the recommendations in this report would contribute.

4.7 **Changes to Existing Policies**

4.8 The Council's updated Playing Pitch Strategy was approved by the Executive in July 2019. The football element of the updated Strategy and the FA Local Football Facilities Plan identifies a need to improve the condition of the existing grass pitches, refurbishment of the pavilion/changing rooms, and to recommends the establishment of a full size 3G pitch and Multi Use Games Area at Newbold Comyn to address the issues of over play of grass pitches.

4.9 **Impact Assessments** – to be carried out when the Masterplan is formally adopted.

5. **Budgetary Framework**

5.1 This report does not require any further budget, over that than has previously been agreed through previous Executive reports.

5.2 The work by SLC suggests a cost for delivering the draft Masterplan is £10,030,600. Further work is being carried out by SLC to identify funding sources and delivery models for each facility. Viability work is proposed to take place over the coming months, and a final business case will be brought back to the Executive for approval in the summer along with the final Masterplan.

5.3 No funding is currently allowed for within the Council's capital programme for potential investment in Newbold Comyn. Any funding requests will need to be considered alongside other Council priorities from the anticipated limited resources. Consequently, any business case for Executive approval will need to be subject to funding being available.

5.4 Within the 2020/21 Budget agreed by Members in February, £40,000 one-off budget was allowed for maintaining Newbold Comyn for 2020/21. The future report on the business case to be reported to Executive will need to address all costs related to Newbold Comyn from 2021/22.

6. **Risks**

6.1 The significant risk to the project is planning and the constraints this will be impose on any facility brought forward by the Masterplan.

6.2 In order to mitigate this risk, future planning applications will require justification for built development and car parking.

6.3 Previous consultation exercises have attracted a high volume of responses from the public which shows how important and valued Newbold Comyn is. People have strong views on what activities should take place on the site and there is a risk not all aspirations will be met by the Masterplan.

6.4 This risk cannot be completely mitigated due to the differing views held by the public. However, by following an informed and thought out methodology which focuses on public engagement and financial sustainability the Council can be assured the best future use is agreed.

6.5 There are no direct risks associated with the report because the decision has already been taken.

7. Alternative Option(s) considered

7.1 No alternative options were considered as the decision was already made and the report was for information only.