



**Executive**  
**21<sup>st</sup> August 2019**

**Agenda Item No. 5**

<b>Title</b>	Newbold Comyn – Update and Approach to Engagement
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<b>Wards of the District directly affected</b>	Clarendon Crown Newbold
<b>Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?</b>	Appendices 4 and 5 marked private and confidential.
<b>Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> March 2019 Minute No. 11
<b>Background Papers</b>	None

<b>Contrary to the policy framework:</b>	No
<b>Contrary to the budgetary framework:</b>	No
<b>Key Decision?</b>	Yes
<b>Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)</b>	Yes (ref 1022)
<b>Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken</b>	No

<b>Officer/Councillor Approval</b>		
<b>Officer Approval</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
Chief Executive	29/07/19	Chris Elliot
Head of Service	18/07/19	Dave Barber
CMT	29/07/19	Chris Elliot, Andrew Jones, Bill Hunt
Section 151 Officer	06/08/19	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	29/07/19	Andrew Jones
Finance	06/08/19	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	05/08/19	Cllr Norris
<b>Consultation &amp; Community Engagement</b>		
<b>Final Decision?</b>	Yes	

## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 This reports provides Members with the proposed approach for the completion of the Newbold Comyn Study, with a focus on resident engagement in the master planning process.
- 1.2 The report also updates Members on the results of a commercial appraisal by Bruton Knowles of existing outbuildings adjacent to the Newbold Comyn Arms. The appraisal is commercially sensitive and as such is private and confidential. The report concludes that a mix of uses deliver the best commercial outcome for the Council.
- 1.3 The report also updates Members on the revised governance arrangements for the Study, following the 2019 local election.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Executive approves the proposed approach for the completion of the Newbold Comyn Study.
- 2.2 That subject to approval of Recommendation 2.1, Executive approves the proposed methodology for resident engagement in the preparation of a final masterplan demonstrating future uses.
- 2.3 That Executive notes the results of the commercial appraisal of existing outbuildings.
- 2.4 That Executive notes the revised governance for the Newbold Comyn Study.
- 2.5 That Executive approves additional funding of £15,000 from the 2019/20 Contingency Budget to allow for additional consultation, procurement of the ecological survey, ensure that funds are available for legal advice on the final activity mix (should it be required) and project contingency.

## **3. Reasons for Recommendations**

### Recommendation 2.1

- 3.1 In line with the recommendations of the Executive Report of 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019, SLC (<https://www.slc.uk.com/>) have been reappointed as consultants to support the Newbold Comyn Study.
- 3.2 SLC will be working with landscape architects Southern Green (<https://www.southerngreen.co.uk/>).
- 3.3 The purpose of the Study is to provide the Council with a masterplan identifying and locating viable/ deliverable uses, with supporting high level business case. This masterplan should take account of the wide

variety of users and high profile of the area, as demonstrated by the existing online survey.

- 3.4 SLC have prepared a timeline of activities to deliver the conclusion of the Study (appendix 1). The proposed timeline includes a number of key milestones delivered through seven stages, a number of which have been delivered since SLC were reappointed:

<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Timeframe</b>
Stage 1 Project Inception and Site Analysis (primarily desktop exercise)	May 2019
Stage 2 Needs Analysis (to begin post Executive Report): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation with key stakeholders</li> <li>• Launch of online survey</li> <li>• Public drop-in sessions</li> <li>• Consultation with potential operators</li> <li>• Briefing paper on consultation results</li> <li>• Workshop with Project Team (Officers) and Member Reference Group</li> </ul>	August 2019 Sept 2019 Sept/ Oct 2019 August 2019 October 2019 October 2019
Stage 3 Draft Masterplan Development: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• RIBA Stage 2 draft final masterplan drawing showing preferred locations of facilities.</li> </ul>	November 2019
Stage 4 Development Costs and Business Planning	November 2019
Stage 5 Management Models	November 2019
Stage 6 Feasibility Report	November/ December 2019
Stage 7 Final Consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display of final draft masterplan and site analysis</li> <li>• Review and discuss required amendments to final draft masterplan arising from consultation, with Officers and Member Reference Group.</li> </ul>	January 2020 March 2020

- 3.5 In addition to the above, it is anticipated that an Executive Report will be presented to Members prior to the final consultation to advise Members on the proposed final facility mix.
- 3.6 The above timeline would deliver a final Executive Report in Spring 2020.
- 3.7 If the final masterplan is approved by Executive, the Council will be required to resource the delivery of the masterplan including obtaining relevant permissions, potentially procuring and managing delivery partners etc.

## Recommendation 2.2

- 3.7 The completed Newbold Comyn survey demonstrated how important the area is to local people. At its meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019 Executive supported the recommendation that a report would be brought to Executive in the summer of 2019 that would set out proposals for a mix of uses, costs and funding for those uses and which will form the basis for the next round of public consultation. This report sets out three masterplan options, based on the shortlist of activities presented to Executive 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019.
- 3.8 A high level assessment of options, on assumed most commercially favourable model (based on SLCs experience in this area) suggested that the right mix of uses in the right layout could generate a significant income for the Council. A summary of this appraisal can be found as private and confidential appendix 4 (restricted due to commercial sensitivity).
- 3.9 This has informed three masterplan options, which can be found in appendix 3. The options are:

### *Layout 1*

Includes a redesigned golf offer of a new par-3 golf course, driving range, adventure golf, footgolf and the reinstatement of the former pitch and putt area. It also includes a new adventurous play area, a new outdoor activities area (high ropes, low ropes, zip wires, climbing etc.), an extension to the nature reserve, a new 3G artificial turf pitch, visitor centre / café and additional parking.

### *Layout 2*

Excludes the par-3 golf course, driving range, footgolf and pitch and putt but includes a significantly larger extension to the nature reserve. It also includes the other facilities shown in Layout 1 but with changes to the location of some of these.

### *Layout 3*

Also excludes the par-3 golf course, driving range, footgolf and pitch and putt but includes an extended area for outdoor activities which occupies Observation Hill. This therefore reduces slightly the extended area of nature reserve shown in Layout 2. It also includes the other facilities shown in Layout 1 but with changes to the location of some of these.

- 3.10 The purpose of these masterplans is to provide a framework for feedback and help illustrate the spatial implications of suggested activities. The masterplans have been assessed by the Council's Planning Pre-Application process to ensure that they are in keeping with planning policy. They will also be subject to a high level ecological assessment to ensure that there are no immediate ecological restrictions.

- 3.11 Residents will be able to inform that masterplan through a combination of drop in sessions, online survey and interviews. These will be run through September and October 2019.
- 3.12 Drop in sessions will run over two days, at two different locations. These will be visual, and interactive. They will be split into three sections:
- What do you think?*  
This will seek feedback on the proposed facility mix.
- Where do you think?*  
This will enable participants to provide feedback on where they think facilities should be located.
- What else do you think?*  
This is an opportunity for participants to provide any other comments.
- 3.13 The online survey will also enable participants to feedback on the proposed facility mix and inform the masterplan. The survey will be hosted by SLC and is based on their experience of delivering similar surveys elsewhere in the country.
- 3.14 SLC have worked with Officers to identify a significant list of stakeholders. They will continue to work with Officers to ensure that previously underrepresented groups are engaged through the drop in sessions and interviews.
- 3.15 The masterplans address the agreed study area, though Officers are conscious of Member concerns that the final masterplan addresses opportunities/ relationship with the river and nearby reservoir. This will be explored through stakeholder interviews.
- 3.16 Members should also note that the Member Reference Group (MRG, Groups Leaders invited to nominate members) will play a key role in the evaluation of engagement outputs via two planned workshops (with Officers).
- 3.17 The detailed engagement approach can be found in appendix 2.

### Recommendation 2.3

- 3.18 The 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019 Executive approved a commercial appraisal of existing outbuildings at Newbold Comyn. The purpose of this appraisal is to provide a benchmark commercial value to assist with the evaluation of the final masterplan proposal.
- 3.19 Bruton Knowles were appointed to undertake this work in April 2019. The appraisal is attached as appendix 5 (draft), private and confidential.
- 3.20 The appraisal is based on a number of assumptions:

- The Council will retain the freehold interest of the outbuildings, thereafter, letting and managing occupied space.
- The long-term sustainable use of the outbuildings, for the benefit of the community is critical.
- The conversion of the outbuildings will be the responsibility of the Council, assuming a modest profit margin on Gross Development Value.

- 3.21 The appraisal provides commentary on a number of options:
- Do nothing
  - Standalone options:
    - Residential
    - Offices
    - Retail
  - Options which complement the current and possible future use(s) of the study area (retail/ leisure) while still returning a profit to the Council.
- 3.22 The appraisal concludes that both *do nothing* and *residential* are not acceptable options moving forwards and has dismissed them.
- 3.23 The appraisal suggests that standalone retail use is deliverable.
- 3.24 The appraisal suggests that the correct blend of uses could deliver a positive value for development.

#### Recommendation 2.4

- 3.25 When the study was first launched it fell within the Culture Portfolio, reflecting the previous use as a golf course. The former golf course area is currently maintained by a private contractor under the supervision of Cultural Services. being maintained by the Council's Neighbourhood Services. However, it is anticipated that Neighbourhood Services will have a significant role in the future management of at least part of the study area. It has therefore been agreed with the Council's Executive that the study is moved from the Culture Portfolio to Neighbourhood.
- 3.26 It has also been agreed that a Member Reference Group is convened. Group Leaders have been invited to nominate members and substitutes. This group will have a significant role in the evaluation of and response to consultation (see 3.15).

#### Recommendation 2.5

- 3.27 Executive approved a budget of £50,000 to procure specialist consultancy advice at its meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> March 2018. Of this, £14,979 was allocated to SLC for their initial high level appraisal. A further £10,000 was approved at its meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019 for the next phase of the Study, to meet the estimate costs of Phase 2, based on SLCs initial fee proposal and costs of appraisal of outbuildings.

- 3.28 Subsequent dialogue between Officers and SLC identified the need for an additional stage of consultation (Stage 7: Final Consultation), leading to an increase in costs of £6463.75. High level ecological surveys are also expected to be slightly higher in cost than originally anticipated.
- 3.29 Further internal discussion has also suggested that it would be prudent to allow up to an estimated £5000 for legal services to help ensure the deliverability of the final activity mix.
- 3.30 There is therefore a potential shortfall of £14,175.
- 3.31 It is recommended that the shortfall is funded from the 19/ 20 Contingency, plus a project contingency totalling £15,000.

## 4.0 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. To that end amongst other things the FFF Strategy contains several 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.

<b>FFF Strands</b>		
<b>People</b>	<b>Services</b>	<b>Money</b>
<b>External</b>		
<b>Health, Homes, Communities</b>	<b>Green, Clean, Safe</b>	<b>Infrastructure, Enterprise, Employment</b>
<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> Area has well looked after public spaces All communities have access to decent open space Improved air quality Low levels of crime and ASB	<u>Intended outcomes:</u> Dynamic and diverse local economy Vibrant town centres Improved performance/productivity of local economy Increased employment and income levels
<b>Impacts of Proposal</b>		
Newbold Comyn is currently free to access providing opportunities for improved health outcomes. The study will not impact on this	The Council is committed to maintaining Newbold Comyn and preserving public access ensuring the area is well looked	No impact.

commitment.	after. The study will not impact on this commitment.	
<b>Internal</b>		
<b>Effective Staff</b>	<b>Maintain or Improve Services</b>	<b>Firm Financial Footing over the Longer Term</b>
<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
<b>Impacts of Proposal</b>		
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

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.

4.3 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.

4.2 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).

#### 4.4 Changes to Existing Policies

4.5 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.

#### **4.6 Impact Assessments**

None

#### **5. Budgetary Framework**

5.1 The budgetary requirements for this work was agreed at by Executive at its meeting of 6<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

5.2 In order to meet study requirements an additional £15,000 is requested from the Contingency Budget 2019/20 and that the balance on the reserve is discussed in more detail within the Budget Review to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2019 Report on this Executive agenda.

5.2 It is important that any future use of Newbold Comyn is affordable. Consequently, any proposal needs to be considered alongside sources of funding for it, including the upfront capital costs and recurring costs/revenue. If this is not addressed at the outset, the Council risks setting undue expectations and potentially abortive works.

#### **6. Risks**

6.1 There is a reputational risk that the Council is perceived to be delaying a decision and continuing to use resources to procure external advice. However it is recognised that Newbold Comyn is a much valued asset for Royal Leamington Spa and the District. There are a significant number of interests to balance and the approach must take account of this.

6.2 There is a risk that if the golf course is perceived as being unused that it will become a target for antisocial behaviour. Officers will continue to monitor this.

#### **7. Alternative Options considered**

7.1 An alternative option would be to proceed without additional engagement. This would risk the Council adopting a masterplan for Newbold Comyn that has a negative impact on relationships with the area leading to a decrease in use.

7.2 An alternative option would be to reduce the engagement period. However this would entail a risk that residents feel excluded from a key Council decision.