

 Executive – 11th March 2015		Agenda Item No. 16B
Title	Future Enhancement of Racing Club Warwick's (RCW's) Premises	
For further information about this report please contact	Chris Elliott Tel 01926 456000 E-mail chris.elliott@warwickdc.gov.uk	
Wards of the District directly affected	Warwick West (current ward)	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number		
Background Papers		

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	No
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	No
Equality & Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken	No

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Deputy Chief Executives	09.03.15	Bill Hunt, Andy Jones
Heads of Service	09.03.15	Rose Winship, Robert Hoof, Richard Hall, Tracy Darke, Andy Thompson
CMT	09.03.15	Chris Elliott, Andrew Jones, Bill Hunt
Section 151 Officer	09.03.15	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	09.03.15	Andy Jones
Finance	09.03.15	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s)	09.03.15	Cllr Mobbs, Cllr Hammon, Cllr Gallagher, Cllr Shilton, Cllr Coker, Cllr Vincett, Cllr Cross,
Consultation & Community Engagement		
N/A at this stage but if the matter were to be progressed depending on the nature of the physical changes then there are statutory planning consultation processes that would need to be undertaken.		
Final Decision?		No
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		
That a further report is brought back to the Executive in early July 2015 setting out the findings and costings of the property assessment work and seeking a decision toward making a contribution towards those costs.		

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on recent discussions between the Council and Racing Club Warwick (RCW). The report sets out an approach that could help to deliver enhancements to RCW's premises and so underpin the sustainability of RCW as a community hub and sports club for the adjacent local community.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Executive note the favourable discussions recently held with RCW and agree the steps set out in paragraph 3.5 of this report.
- 2.2 That a further report is brought back to the Executive in early July 2015 setting out the findings and costings of the property assessment work and seeking a decision toward making a contribution towards those costs.

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Members will be aware of the history of relations between the Council and RCW in recent years. This paper does not intend to revisit that history or seek to outline any explanations or justifications, these having been done in previous reports. A recent meeting between the Council and RCW recognised that continuing to focus on the recent history was not a productive use of anyone's time or money, least of all the local community's.
- 3.2 Now that the lease issues have been resolved, it is clear that both organisations have a common interest in supporting the local community. RCW as part of the recent initial discussions of the Council's Working Party on the future of St Mary's Lands in Warwick has set out its aspirations to enhance its premises to improve its community and sports facilities and financial sustainability. The relevant extract of RCW's written aspirations is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.3 RCW is not able to achieve these ambitions without external capital financial assistance. It is proposing to seek funding from a variety of sources and obviously the Council is one such body from whom such support is requested.
- 3.4 RCW has sought its own estimates of costs and even for the early stage works this runs into several hundreds of thousands of pounds.
- 3.5 The Council could help RCW in a number of ways:
 - 1. In co-operation with RCW, its own property staff could draft a specification for the work needing to be done and the costing thereof, in accordance with the RIBA staged process agreed by the Executive in January 2015;
 - 2. In co-operation with RCW, develop a business plan that will demonstrate to funders (including WDC) how RCW via the proposed works can help RCW fulfil a role as a community hub and become financially sustainable; and agree a delivery plan for those works;
 - 3. In co-operation with RCW, identify local and national sources of funding to which RCW and/or WDC could apply;
 - 4. Agree in principle that it is prepared to make a significant capital contribution towards the cost of the agreed set of works to RCW's premises/pitches, to be used to help bring in other sources of funding;
 - 5. Agree that a report be brought back in early July 2015 on items 1 to 3, above in order to determine the size of the contribution referred to in item 4 above.

- 3.6 The Warwick West ward contains a Super Output Area (SOA) which is amongst the worst 30% nationally in deprivation terms. RCW has traditionally served the Forbes estate within the Warwick West ward (although not the SOA area), as much a local community hub as a sport venue. The current premises/pitches are not necessarily fit for the purpose as a community hub, nor a sports one for that matter, in the 21st Century. As these premises/pitches are owned by the Council and are leased by RCW, then both organisations have an interest in ensuring that such facilities are fit for purpose. The Council's Facilities and Playing Pitch Strategy (also on the agenda of this Executive) will help inform the eventual approach.
- 3.7 The steps outlined in paragraph 3.5 will help the Council to evaluate and support RCW's plans whilst reassuring RCW that the Council is serious about helping them.

4. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 4.1 The Council's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) seeks to help make Warwick District a great place to live, work and visit; and it has 5 priority policy areas – Prosperity, Housing, Sustainability, Health and Well Being and Community Safety. RCW's proposals could contribute toward the Council's aims in respect of Health and Well Being and Community Safety.
- 4.2 In relation to the Council's Fit for the Future Programme (FFF), the proposals could assist in respect of 2 of the 3 strands:

Services – by improving or maintaining a range of the services to the local community; **Money** – by attracting additional financial resources to help address the local sports and community facilities; the impact on the **People** strand is at this stage anticipated to be neutral.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 At this stage the cost to the Council is not known with any precision but if it were to progress it is likely to be of some significance. Clearly the steps proposed in paragraph 3.5 would assist with giving the Council and RCW greater precision in terms of the likely capital contribution. The eventual decision would be a matter for the proposed report in early July 2015. This would have to be taken in the context of the Council's financial position overall, considering the availability of resources, other known and potentially forthcoming demands for the limited funding available and the on-going need to secure significant revenue savings.

6. **RISKS**

- 6.1 At this stage the risk is that the Council expends staff time and energy that leads to a decision to not support any enhancements, and so is wasted. This may also have a harmful impact on the Council's reputation. Given the recent positive meeting this would be a step backwards. The further report proposed will have to set out fully the risks once a particular scheme becomes clear.

7. **ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED**

- 7.1 The option of not proceeding as suggested in this report is a real one for the Council but is not recommended. RCW occupies premises that the Council owns

and which it is stating are not fit for purpose as a community hub and sports venue in the 21st Century. The premises serve a local community that experiences deprivation and enhancement to the premises/pitches could help address that issue.

- 7.2 Whilst RCW could seek funding only from other sources, it is inevitable that such funders would question why the owners; i.e. the Council, is not also contributing. If this led to no funding being made to RCW from any source, then the premises/pitches will only further decline, to the detriment of the local community.