

 Executive – 14th January 2015		Agenda Item No. 7
Title	2014 National Bowls Championships - Review	
For further information about this report please contact	Rose Winship Rose.winship@warwickdc.gov.uk	
Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?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	Executive – Feb 2014 Minute 138	
Background Papers	November 2011 – Bowls Working Party report to O&S Committee; Aug 2012 Impact Assessments & WDC Proposal to Bowls England Dec 2012 - relocation of Bowls England HQ and the Men's Championships to Royal Leamington Spa Sept 2013 - FoVP Petition to Council July/Aug 2013 - User Survey	

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)	Yes 652.14
Equality and Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken	N/A

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive		Chris Elliott; Andrew Jones
Head of Service		Rose Winship
CMT		
Section 151 Officer		Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer		
Finance		Mike Snow; Jenny Clayton
Portfolio Holder(s)		Cllr Sue Gallagher
Consultation & Community Engagement		
Bowls England; Royal Leamington Spa Bowls Club; Operators of Victoria Park Café Victoria Park Tennis; Friends of Victoria Park; local residents, park users, Local businesses		
Final Decision?		Yes
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Executive in Feb 2013, a request was made by members to receive a report which reviewed the 2014 National Bowls Championships in order that members could understand the impact of the event on the district, and on the various parties affected by the event. This report sets out the findings and the lessons learned which are proposed to be taken into account in planning for the future National Bowls Championships.
- 1.2 The report for the 2014 National Bowls Championships – Review requested that the Council consider converting the old tennis courts to a permanent car park. This report details the costs of converting the old tennis courts, the impact of the operational requirements and the ongoing costs.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Executive are asked to note the key findings from the review and agree the lesson learned in 3.9.2 to be taken into account in the planning of the future National Bowls Championships events and that the Economic Development Action Plan associated with the event at Appendix B is agreed.
- 2.2 That authority be delegated to the Economic Development and Regeneration Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Development Services, to draw down up to £5,000 from the Tourism Reserve to support the 2015 – 2018 Action Plan attached at Appendix B to this report.
- 2.3 Members agree that no works take place to the old tennis courts to make it a formal car park but that a further report (including costs) is brought on what can be done to improve the amenity of the old tennis court area.

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 In reviewing the 2014 National Championships, officers have considered the following areas that each have a contribution to make in assessing the success of the event.
 - Economic impact on the district
 - Operational feedback from Bowls England
 - Technical feedback from the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI)
 - Impact on local residents and park users
 - Parking operations and usage data
 - Impact on Royal Leamington Spa Bowls Club, Victoria Park Café and VP Tennis
 - Impact on WDC officer resources

3.2 Economic Impact

- 3.2.1 Fundamental to the decision to welcome Bowls England to the district was the anticipated economic benefit to the district. This includes increased spend in local shops, restaurants and bars in addition to overnight stays in local hotels and bed and breakfast establishments. Using the Advantage West Midlands Economic Impact Toolkit in 2012 it was estimated that the district would benefit from between £700,000 and £1.2million from the Nationals each year
- 3.2.2 In assessing the impact of the 2014 Nationals, results have been modelled using a mixture of figures from the 2013 Tourism Economic Impact Assessment and the 2014 Bowls surveys (both devised and compiled by TRS Ltd). Over the course of the four weeks of the championships a total of 213 surveys were

returned. All of these were conducted with the bowls championship attendees (competitors, officials or spectators) and they therefore represent attendees that were there because of the Championships. The results of the survey, coupled with the revised Tourism EIA, have given a greater level of refinement to previously produced figures of economic impact. (Appendix 1) summarises the results of the EIA Toolkit. Feedback was also sought from local businesses and Shakespeare's England (Appendix 2)

- 3.2.3 In summary it can be demonstrated that the four weeks of the National Championships has produced an economic impact of between £1.3m and £1.7m if we use the conservative calculations of attendances at the event. Using the higher figure which attempts to capture ALL visitors the event, for which there is no exact measure, the impact is in the region of £2.1m.
- 3.2.4 Feedback from BID Leamington and local businesses is clear, that they value the impact of the extended championships, particularly at a potentially quieter time of year i.e. during school holidays). Many positive comments were received from locals and visitors alike about the "feel and welcome" experienced in the town, aided by the flags and signage installed for the duration of the event. Feedback from Shakespeare's England shows that there is further work required for future years to refine the offering and extend the period of offers in order to maximise the level of redemption and so the impact on the local tourism economy(Appendix 2).

3.3 **Bowls England**

- 3.3.1 Bowls England are the event organisers and are responsible for the day to day management of the event. They work closely with the Council in the lead up to and during the event to ensure a safe, effective and enjoyable event is delivered. Bowls England have provided feedback and lessons learned from an operational perspective, and also from the verbal and written feedback that they received during and after the event from those attending the event.
- 3.3.2 Bowls England have produced a summary report (Appendix 3) which summarises their feedback on the event and suggestions for improvements in future years. These suggestions were captured at a Nationals debrief session between WDC officers and Bowls England in early October. Feedback from the Bowlers and visitors survey also flagged up areas for Bowls England and the Council to consider for improvement in future years regarding the facilities, scheduling and associated provision.
- 3.3.3 In summary the feedback highlights the value of the extensive pre-planning that took place by the Council and Bowls England for the event. The investment made in the greens and the ancillary facilities were key to the smooth running of the event, and the many positive comments received by Bowls England. Car parking provision was highlighted as being very good, and could be improved further for future years with consideration of closing times and disabled provision. There are some suggestions on areas for improvement in respect of on-site catering, litter bins, and on site signage.

3.4 **Technical Assessment**

- 3.4.1 As in previous years, technical support for the 2014 Nationals has been carried out by the Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI). Given the extended nature of the event and in order to pre-empt any emerging issues and take the necessary

action to retain the playing surface at its optimum the STRI carried out more frequent visits this year.

- 3.4.2 In summary, the greens coped exceptionally well with the amount of play and the varied weather conditions during the 30 days. Regular testing and early identification of any potential areas of concern allowed the green keeping teams to take preventative action at appropriate times, and so avoided loss of greens or disruption to the programme of competition. This approach also ensured that the greens were in good condition for the Leamington Spa Open which followed on immediately after the Nationals.

3.5 Impact on residents and park users

- 3.5.1 Over the last 12 months, some local residents and park users have raised concerns about the impact of the extended National Championships on local residents and on the restricted access to Victoria Park due to an area of the park being used for parking during 28 days of the event. In the last year, officers have worked closely with the Friends of Victoria Park (FoVP) and ward councillors to consider alternative parking sites, and to reduce the impact on the park. The outcome of these discussions has been the removal of caravans from Victoria Park, the reduction of the area being allocated for parking and the introduction a new approach to parking, managed by a specialist event company.
- 3.5.2 In order to inform the 2014 review, the Council commissioned a series of face to face surveys for park users and a postal survey sent to 642 households close to Victoria Park. These were designed in consultation with The Research Solution who also conducted the surveys and analysed the results. (Appendices 5a & 5b). The results of the surveys will be used to inform the planning of future Nationals (and other events in Victoria Park) and the ongoing improvement of facilities in the park.
- 3.5.3 During the championships the FoVP were invited to provide feedback on any issues that they were experiencing or raise any concerns. This could be done informally as officers were on site in the park, or through e mail.
- 3.5.4 In summary, the key messages are:

Park Users:

- Overall, 74% of park users felt that the Nationals had little or no impact on their park usage. 5% felt that the Nationals limited their or their children/pets usage of the park.
- Of the issues raised, car parking for park users during the Nationals was raised as the main concern.
- Prior to the Nationals, over half of those surveyed were not aware that the event was taking place, suggesting that some further awareness raising amongst park users should be considered for future years.
- Many of those surveyed thought that the parking arrangements for the 2014 were an improvement on previous years.

Residents:

- Parking arrangements on Archery Road were effective for residents, with some suggestions on improvements for future years
- Access to the park for residents was not considered a problem by 89% of respondents
- Limited disruption from noise, disruption or vehicle movements

- The event caused less disruption than expected for 58% and about the same as expected for 41% of respondents.
- Significant levels of support for the Nationals in Leamington with the benefit that it brings to the town/district.

3.6 Parking operations and usage data

3.6.1 Members considered a number of options for accommodating the car parking requirements associated with the National Championships at the meeting of the Executive in November 2013. From this a shortlist of three potential options was evaluated further the recommendation to provide parking at Victoria Park was approved by the Executive in February 2014.

3.6.1 The approval for parking at Victoria Park was based on proposals to restrict the area used, control the flow of vehicles and manage the safety of park users more tightly. To ensure this was delivered a specification for the service was developed and the contract awarded to CJs Events, Warwickshire Ltd. Feedback and data relating to parking is included in Appendix 6

3.6.2 In summary, the key messages based on feedback from Bowls England, participants and spectators (200 sample from survey), and from park users and residents:

- Arrangements for 2014 event were a significant improvement on previous years
- Vehicle control in and out of the park and in the parking area was well managed
- Parking staff were courteous and helpful
- There were a few complaints about bottle necks at the entry/exit point which impacted on park users wishing to use the half mile track
- Grass in the parking area proved to be resilient and stood up to a range of weather conditions through careful management of parking zones.
- Gross income from car parking totalled £20,075 (incl VAT)
- 82% of those surveyed travelled to the event by car
- 76% of those surveyed parked in Victoria Park
- 60% of those surveyed were aware of alternative parking locations
- 12% of those surveyed would consider parking at Covent Garden car park compare with 32/36% for St Peters/Adelaide Road
- 36% of those surveyed said they would consider using a park and ride service

3.7 Impact on other park organisations

3.7.1 There are three key organisations operating in Victoria Park who are impacted to varying degrees by the National Championships. Royal Leamington Spa Bowling Club (RLSBC), the café operator and VP Tennis. Feedback from each of the above clubs is detailed in Appendix 7

3.7.2 Royal Leamington Spa Bowling Club is a key partner in the delivery of the National Championships. The extension of the event to 30 days places a significant pressure on club volunteers to man the bar and kitchen in the club house. The club also experience a significant loss of access to greens for the duration of the event.

- 3.7.3 The café in the park is operating under lease. They too are a key partner in providing catering for visitors to the Nationals. The café opens each day of the event which places significant pressure on the café operators.
- 3.7.4 VP Tennis operates a community tennis club on the courts in Victoria Park. This includes offering adult and junior tennis coaching as well as supervising the courts for casual public play.
- 3.7.5 In summary, when considering the impact of the Nationals on other park organisations, the key messages are:
- Communications from the council appears to have been successful, timely and appropriate.
 - All partners were satisfied with the contact details, arrangements for escalating issues and response times to requests during the event.
 - The potential negative impacts on the tennis club appear to have been managed reasonably well and the opportunities for increased trade available to the club and café appear to have been successful.
 - Learning points and opportunities for improvement in future years
- "Red/Amber/Green" lists for busy / non busy days were a helpful addition.
 - Some fine tuning of parking passes and access to Archery Road may be beneficial.
 - Communications were generally well received and appropriate. It would be beneficial to consider a more structured approach to monitoring cleanliness of changing rooms and toilet areas.

3.8 Impact on WDC officer resources

- 3.8.1 Whilst Bowls England are the event organisers of the National Championships, their focus is on the competition and hospitality of guests. The event requires a significant degree of behind the scenes work in order to run in a safe and effective manner. Cultural Services officers have significant input in the pre-event planning and front line operations during the event. This includes monitoring of car parking contractors, point of contact for RLSBC, the café operator and VP tennis should they have any issues during the event, and liaison with local residents to address any concerns.
- 3.8.2 Neighbourhood Services officers oversee the works being done by The Landscape Group in preparing and maintaining the greens and Veolia to ensure that the venue is clean and tidy at the start of each day.
- 3.8.3 This year there has been wider officer input with the introduction of the Visitor Information stand manned by staff volunteers from across the Council, and work by the Economic Development and Media teams to maximise the economic impact of the event across the district. A summary from each of these service areas is detailed in Appendix 8.

3.9 Summary and conclusions

- 3.9.1 Based on the feedback and the reports from the groups above, it can be concluded that the National Bowls Championships in 2014 were a success and that the experiences of this first year of the extended event can be built on in future years to ensure that the event is a credit to the district and the sport of bowls.

- 3.9.2 In reaching this conclusion, it is recognised that there are some areas where lessons can be learnt from the 2014 event and officers will work with the relevant parties to develop these. This includes:
- car parking arrangements for general park users during the event
 - ongoing improvements in the park, i.e. play area, paddling pool, signage, café, toilets
 - parking arrangements for disabled visitors
 - competition schedule (Bowls England)
 - alternative car parking information provided to visitors by Bowls England
 - consideration be given to offering free parking in Covent Garden on selected days of the 2015 event
 - revised approach to promotional offers to benefit the local tourism sector
 - consideration of alternative approaches to promote "visitor welcome"
 - fuller induction for staff volunteers manning Information stand and extension of the opening hours for this service
 - consideration be given to organising some "family events" in Victoria Park on the quiet days of the Championships

3.10 Old Tennis Courts

- 3.10.1 The site in question was formally the tennis courts for Victoria Park but since the introduction of the new tennis courts some time ago, the site has been used as informal parking for bowlers and park users. Due to the size, layout of the site and the absence of parking controls the site is used nominally and has the potential to create parking problems by individuals becoming blocked in by inconsiderate car parking.
- 3.10.2 As part of the ongoing consultation in regards to the National Bowls event held in Victoria Park with local stakeholders and residents, officers were asked to explore the option of converting the old tennis courts into a permanent car park which could be used by local stakeholders including residents and bowlers.
- 3.10.3 The site would require resurfacing, marked out parking bays, general tidying of the surrounding shrub beds, the introduction of lighting columns and the introduction of a parking regime due to the potential for commuter parking if unrestricted. The site would only yield 37 spaces with a convoluted design and egress, due to the design it would require cars to turn within a hammer head junction at the top of the site before exiting.
- 3.10.4 With the introduction of a parking regime the car park would then service the local stakeholders. It is uncertain what level of use this would be. The main users would more likely be the bowls club, tennis club and local residents from Archery Road.
- 3.10.5 With an increase in Neighbourhood Services revenue costs to operate a fully functional car park it would be preferable to try and generate income from the site through the use of a pay and display regime. Given the demographic of car park users to this site and availability of 4 hours free parking on Archery Road, there are limited options for charges. Any charges levied on this site will likely not over the cost of the pay and display machines annual running costs.
- 3.10.6 With the introduction of a parking regime then enforcement of the area would be required. The area in question could be covered by the new Ranger service and would need an early daily visit to ensure that commuter parking was curbed. This would be an additional pressure to Ranger service that had not been factored in to the route planning of this new service.

- 3.10.7 The costs associated with introducing a parking regime would see an increase to the base budget for Neighbourhood Services and would require funding. It is uncertain that any income could be gained from this site to off-set the costs.
- 3.10.8 The parking area would only service a limited number of stakeholders and outside of event periods the use of the site is expected to be low. The cost to introduce this site for sustained limited use would be an unproductive use of public funds.
- 3.10.9 The costs of the new car park are set out below.

Estimated capital cost for installation of new parking area;

New surface	£30k
Lighting	£10k
Signage	£1K
Floor Markings	£500
Pay and display machine	£3.5k
Grounds maintenance work	£1K

Total **£45,000**

Estimated revenue cost for the new parking area per annum;

Staff costs	£500
Pay and Display costs	£750
Electricity	£650
Cleansing	£250

Total Cost **£2,150**

- 3.10.10 The income is based on charges in the car park of 4 hours free parking followed by £3 all day, with the expectation that the parking area only achieves between 10% to 25% occupancy rates. A nominal number of penalty charge notice income has been included.

Estimated occupancy rates and income (Ex VAT) per annum;

10% occupancy	£500
25% occupancy	£1,200
45% occupancy	£2,180

- 3.10.11 For the parking area to achieve a cost neutral position it would have to deliver rates of 45% occupancy 5 days per week. Officers do not consider 45% as a realistic level of continued use.
- 3.10.12 The site is in close proximity to the town centre and a number of businesses with large volumes of staff parking. By creating a new car park there is a high risk that the site will be filled with commuter parking. To counter this risk the introduction of parking regulations would be required.
- 3.10.13 The introduction of parking regulations would burden the Council with ongoing costs in relation to enforcement and equipment. The estimated income demonstrates that there is uncertainty that income from this area would be sufficient to make the installation cost neutral.

3.10.14 However, it is acknowledged that the old tennis courts are “a bit of an eyesore” and could be enhanced so it is suggested that a further report be brought setting out what could be done to improve the amenity of the area including costs of such works.

4. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

4.1 The successful delivery of the extended National Bowls Championships is identified as a corporate project within the Fit for the Future Programme.

4.2 A direct contribution is made to the Warwick District Sustainable Community Strategy in the following ways:

- Prosperity– encouraging visitors to the district who make a significant contribution to the local economy through overnight stays, hospitality, visitor attractions and retail.
- Health and Well Being - Hosting a National sporting event in the district raises the profile of sport locally and is an opportunity to encourage local people to participate in an active lifestyle.
- Involving Communities - provide support for local clubs and other community groups in order that they can contribute to and benefit from the National Championships.

4.3 The report seeks to highlight a range of impacts on a variety of individuals and groups. Officers have worked with a range of partner organisations and representatives of local communities in the lead up to the event in order to reduce the negative impact on key sectors of the community.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

5.1 Annual revenue expenditure on the Nationals is summarised below:

Parking management	£20,500
Security	£ 9,284
Waste/skips	£ 4,000
HTM traffic signage	£ 2,850
Other services	£ 3,604
Total	£40,238

In addition to the above, one off expenditure was incurred for general events equipment that can be used to support a range of events. In Feb 2014, the Executive approved a budget of £10,000 to cover these costs; to date a total of £5,610 has been spent from this budget.

5.2 Income from the car parking £20,075.
Bowls England 50% contribution to highway signage £1,425

5.3 Utilising the revised spend figures from the Bowlers survey and the lower estimates of those attending, the economic impact can be shown to be between £1.3 (before a multiplier effect) and £1.7m (including the multiplier) for the four weeks of the championships. Using the higher attendance figures of (as in the previous Executive report) an estimated economic impact of the championships of £2.1m can be demonstrated.

- 5.4 Based on the successful management of the parking services in Victoria Park in 2014, it is proposed that a mini tender exercise is undertaken to appoint a "parking contractor" for the next 5 years (with an option to extend annually up until 2023). It would be reasonable to assume that this would result in a reduction of the annual cost of this service which cost £20,500 in 2014.

6. RISKS

- 6.1 The report summarises the outcomes of the review of the National Bowls Championships, identifies lessons learned to be taken into account for future years. It is considered that this approach generates no risks associated with the subject matter of the report and indeed will help the risk register for the 2015 Championships.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED

- 7.1 In 2012 the Executive approved a 10 year commitment to working with Bowls England and hosting the combined National Championships at Victoria Park. An agreement was signed in April 2013, and the 2014 event was the first of the combined event. Therefore, this report does not seek to consider alternatives to the hosting of the event in Victoria Park, but recognises that as a result of the review there are some "lessons learned" and finer details which may be revised for future years events. Given the general high levels of satisfaction with the way the event was delivered it is not anticipated that there will be any fundamental changes to the event plan in coming years.
- 7.2 The Council could decide to go ahead with transforming the old tennis courts into a car park but this would not be guaranteed to be cost effective.

- Appendix 1 - Bowlers/visitors survey & Economic Impact Assessment results
- Appendix 2 - Feedback from local businesses & Shakespeare's England
- Appendix 3 - Bowls England Feedback
- Appendix 4 - Technical Assessment – STRI reports; quote from Tony A; TLG feedback
- Appendix 5a - Park User surveys and summary of results
- Appendix 5b - Residents survey and summary of results
- Appendix 6 - Car parking data and operational assessment
- Appendix 7 - Impact on other park users
- Appendix 8 - Impact on WDC officers
- Appendix B – Action Plan 2015 -18

Bowlers & Visitors Survey & Economic Impact Assessment results
Results from Bowlers Self-Completion Survey

Base		213	213
Which age group do you belong?	17-24	4%	9
	25-34	3%	6
	35-44	6%	12
	45-54	8%	18
	55-64	17%	36
	65-74	45%	96
	75+	17%	36
Base		213	213
Are you	Male	39%	84
	Female	61%	129
	Prefer not to say	-	
Base		212	212
How have you travelled to the nationals today?	Car (shared)	67%	142
	Car (alone)	15%	32
	Walk	7%	14
	Other (please specify)	5%	11
	Bus/Coach	4%	8
	Train	2%	5
	Bike	-	
Base		186	186
If travelling by car where did you park today?	In Victoria Park	76%	141
	Other car park	16%	29
	I used on street parking	8%	15
	Covent Garden Car Park	1%	1
Base		191	191
Were you aware of the alternative parking locations	Yes	60%	115
	No	40%	76
Base		91	91
Would you consider using any of the alternative parking locations such as	On-Street parking	55%	50
	Adelaide Road	36%	33
	St Peters Multi	32%	29

	Storey		
	Covent Garden Multi Storey	12%	11
Base		187	187
Would you consider using a park and ride scheme if available?	Yes	36%	68
	No	64%	119
Base		212	212
How many times will you be visiting Victoria Park during nationals?	1 Day	10%	21
	2-3 Days	25%	53
	3-7 Days	27%	57
	More than 7 days	38%	81
Base		212	212
Have you visited Leamington Spa previously for the nationals as a competitor, supporter or official?	Yes as a supporter	45%	95
	Yes as a competitor	36%	76
	No	27%	58
	Yes as an official	17%	37
Base		151	151
If yes, approximately how many times have you visited before?	7 or more times	61%	92
	4-6 times	17%	26
	Twice	9%	14
	3 Times	9%	13
	Once	4%	6
Base		201	201
How many days are you spending in the whole area for the nationals?	More than 7 days	41%	83
	3-7 days	26%	53
	2-3 days	20%	41
	1 Day	12%	24
Base		203	203
Are you staying overnight in the area whilst at the nationals?	Yes	69%	141
	No	31%	62
Base		141	141
If yes, are you staying	Paid for accommodation	74%	105
	Other	21%	29
	With friends/relatives	5%	7

Ratings of Facilities		Very Good	Fairly Good	Fairly Poor	Very Poor	No Opinion
Base	1195	519	446	81	29	120
		43%	37%	7%	2%	10%
How would you rate - Greens	206	116	69	2	1	18
		56%	33%	1%	0%	9%
How would you rate - Changing Facilities	189	42	73	20	4	50
		22%	39%	11%	2%	26%
How would you rate - Catering/bars in Victoria Park	203	70	104	15	6	8
		34%	51%	7%	3%	4%
How would you rate - Car Parking	196	110	58	12	5	11
		56%	30%	6%	3%	6%
How would you rate - Spectators Provision	203	72	86	28	11	6
		35%	42%	14%	5%	3%
How would you rate - Local Facilities	198	109	56	4	2	27
		55%	28%	2%	1%	14%

Economic Impact Toolkit results

In terms of the responses from the 213 completed bowlers surveys, the actual estimated spend (by the respondents themselves) from the responses was £93,875. Of this, approximately half (£46,665) was spent on accommodation.

41% of respondents said they were staying in the area for more than 7 days. 26% indicated that they were here for 3 – 7 days. 20% that there were here for 2-3 days. The previous EIA calculation used an average stay of 4 days, which now appears to be on the low side. The previous EIA also used lower figures for the amount spent per day for day-trips and overnight trips.

69% of those surveyed were staying in paid-for accommodation – a higher than previously estimated number.

Bowls England themselves estimate the Championships attracted over 2000 competitors. Spectator estimates have been conservatively assessed at three times this number (6,000) over the four weeks.

Utilising the revised spend figures and the lower estimates of those attending has produced an economic impact of between £1.3 (before a multiplier effect) and £1.7m (including the multiplier) for the four weeks of the championships. Using the higher figures of total attendance (as in the previous Executive report) has given an estimated economic impact of the championships of £2.1m

Feedback from local businesses & Shakespeare's England**Feedback from Local Businesses**

BID Leamington reported good feedback from a range of businesses they consulted on the impacts of the championships. A number of businesses attended the championships to promote themselves and to familiarise themselves with the set up and the potential for future years.

The overwhelming message is that the business community values the impact of the extended championships – particularly at a potentially quieter time of year (school holidays).

Feedback from Shakespeare's England

There were no reported redemptions of the tourism little book of offers distributed at the Bowls. This was primarily attributed to the fact that competitors and spectators already knew what they were doing when they arrived and secondly that the book of offers only contained offers for the month of August. Shakespeare's England Board has already requested that the offers run for a period of three or four months to encourage a return visit at a later stage. Potentially, the booklet will need to be produced and distributed much earlier for competitors to bring with them.

27% of survey respondents requested further information from Shakespeare's England which gives an opportunity to engage with them to return.

Bowls England Feedback

Bowls England

Response to Warwick District Council regarding 2014 National Championships

November 2014

Introduction:

The Bowls England National Championships were held at Victoria Park, Royal Leamington Spa, from Saturday 2nd to Sunday 30th August inclusive.

The following report has been produced by Bowls England to provide feedback to Warwick District Council on a number of key issues. Suggested improvements for 2015 are identified in italics.

Pre-Event:

A great deal of preparatory work had been done by Warwick District Council and Bowls England, either individually or jointly. This included:

1. Regular communication with the Club and Café
2. Visitor information circulated by Bowls England to competitors/spectators
3. Production of Event Plan (including a meeting attended by all relevant agencies)
4. Liaison with residents and local businesses

It is Bowls England's view that the extensive pre-planning was key to the overall success of the event.

National Championships:

Greens and Greens Staff

Overall feedback regarding the quality of the playing surface was positive. Bowls England wishes to comment positively on the continued improvements that have been witnessed at Victoria Park over recent years and to publicly thank all involved in this, especially the greenkeeping team. It is our view that, given the Council's investment, this improvement in standards will continue. It must be noted that E green produced the highest number of complaints from players, whilst D green was only played in East/West direction for the duration of the tournament due to its poor standard in the other direction.

Bowls England requests that a number of squeegees for use on the green in the case of inclement weather be available on site in 2015 and that all Council staff are trained in the use of these.

Parking

Very positive comments have been received regarding the parking arrangements. Some concerns were raised regarding the lack of disabled parking in the first week, but this issue was addressed following discussion between Bowls England Officials and the Council. One item to note is the closing time of 7pm is potentially an issue of concern if there is a late match due to fixture clashes or bad weather.

Refreshments

Bowls England was concerned at the availability throughout the Championships of refreshments at both of the on-site amenities. Bowls England worked closely with the nearby Royal Naval Association Club to ensure the needs of players and spectators could be adequately catered for.

Bowls England is keen for the availability of on-site facilities to be improved in 2015.

Tournament Office

The size and location of the Office is fine.

Additional electrical sockets have been identified as a requirement for 2015 onwards and this matter is 'in hand'.

Litter

Whilst the number of bins on site was plentiful, they appeared to blend into the background. Bowls England issued reminders to players and spectators to make use of the bins provided however on some occasions there was a lot of rubbish around the greens at the end of the day's play.

Spectator Viewing/Chairs

The removal of the hanging baskets during the early part of the Championships significantly increased the available viewing area for spectators and we would wish for this to remain the same for future years. The supply of chairs was generally good and spectators were encouraged to bring their own, however Warwick District Council is aware that some of the chairs currently being used are past their sell-by date.

Bowls England wishes to request a supply of suitable chairs be made available in 2015.

Changing Facilities

The facilities provided were of a high standard and met demand on most days.

Temporary marquees were made available to provide additional accommodation on busier days. Bowls England feels that this will suffice at present.

Signage

Bowls England is of the view that signage around the venue must be improved, to include emergency exits, toilets and other key facilities. This work should be completed together with the additional access points that are being considered to enable easier access to/from the venue for players and spectators.

Support from Warwick District Council

The support by Warwick District Council staff of the event was excellent – with regular attendance on site plus telephone and e-mail support when required. Bowls England also fully appreciated the support and interest from Council Members and the Portfolio Holder.

Warwick District

We received a great deal of feedback from players and spectators regarding Royal Leamington Spa and the surrounding area, with the vast majority positive with regard to the wide range of places to eat and accommodation. The Bowls Advisor document produced by Bowls England had assisted many 'first timers' to find out more about the area and this is something that we wish to repeat in 2015.

Technical Impact Assessment

STRI report: End of Nationals report

Attached as separate report

Feedback from Bowls England confirmed the quality of the greens. Tony Allcock stated: "Bowls England is delighted with the performance and presentation of the greens for this year's championships and is looking forward to the continued improvements that will be made to the greens over the coming seasons".

Park Users survey and results summary

Attached separate report

Residents survey and summary results

Attach separate report

Car parking operational assessment and data

Positive written and verbal feedback was received during the event from bowlers, park users, and partners and the local Friends of Victoria Park group and local councillors who all remarked that the arrangements were a significant improvement over previous years. Whilst some noted that their starting point was to seek no cars in the park, they accepted that the revised approach, with a much reduced impact on the areas used, was more tolerable. An example of this feedback can be seen in an excerpt from an e mail received from a resident:

"I believe you are seeking feedback on this year's parking arrangements in Victoria Park. As a regular user of Victoria Park my starting point is that I would prefer the park not to be used for parking. However, this year's arrangements are far better than last year. The car parking has been restricted to a relatively small section of the park leaving ample space for other activities. The barriers look smart and are well laid out. The vehicle access system works smoothly and the tracking should avoid any damage should it turn wet. The safety measures are excellent and the staff courteous at all times. As a pedestrian I have been given priority when using the well signed crossings. On this basis, and as a resident keen to see the bowls remain in Leamington, I would be happy for these arrangements, and particularly the company responsible for this year's arrangements, to continue in subsequent years."

Overflow parking was available at St Peters Car Park, although not required. Wet weather contingency arrangements were agreed with Warwickshire College, although also not required. Free Parking was offered at Covent Garden during the first weekend, but take up was minimal not making it into double figures.

During the event a staffed road closure was operated on Archery Road to preserve spaces for local residents, volunteers staffing the event and customers for the Cricketers public house. This also received considerable positive feedback and worked well from the perspective of those who expressed an opinion.

There were no reports of significant parking displacement on local roads or complaints from residents in the neighbouring streets. The only negative comments received related to the free parking area available by the railway bridge at the western end of Victoria Park. Some feedback from park users and dog walkers was received that this car park was often full with the assumption that this was due to bowlers and spectators for the event. This was monitored during the event and although there were often spaces remaining after 09.00, the area was often full by mid-morning. Park users who were unable to park as a result were permitted free parking within the park if they identified themselves and the issue to the parking team.

During the periods of wet weather some surface mud and grass damage was briefly evident. However this was roped off and soon recovered. The use of a temporary track-way for the main access route was successful in avoiding rutting and helping to facilitate fast and effective repair after the event.

Parking data for VP parking

- Total cars parked was 6058, generating £20,080 income (incl vat)
- Average cars per day was 200

- Of these 737 (12%) were blue badge holders and 1,379 (23%) were officials, volunteers or VIPs with free passes.
- The busiest day was the first day, Saturday 2nd August, when 304 cars parked at Victoria Park; the quietest day was the last day, Sunday 31st August, when just 45 cars parked at Riverside House.
- The first two weeks, the Women's Nationals, were busier (average 228 per day) than the second two weeks, Men's Nationals. (average 179 per day)
- Day by day results are available in APPENDIX X for information

The following key messages can be concluded from the car parking arrangements for 2014;

- The specification and revised arrangements delivered a significant improvement to previous years within a reduced area.
- The appointment of CJs Events, Warwickshire Ltd, worked well and received significant positive feedback.
- The combination of reduced area and professional management is therefore considered sustainable and appropriate for future years.
- The offer of free parking at Covent Garden was not successful, but could be reconsidered again for future years.
- The road closure on Archery Road was successful.
- Potential measures to limit long stay use of the free parking at the western end of the park could be considered in future.
- The parking numbers were broadly in line with estimates and were able to be accommodated within the area provided.

Impact on other park organisations**RLSBC**

Arrangements and Information prior to event

- The bowls club appreciated the provision of the "Red/Amber/Green" lists regarding busy / non busy days and from a bar perspective confirmed this provided a direct correlation with their levels of trade.
- Information received from WDC was well received and appropriate. In future it will be useful to have a copy of the playing schedule as far in advance as possible.
- The club were disappointed to note that their contributions were not noted in the event programme.

Arrangements, Information and responses during the event

- During the event the club confirmed that response times to issues raised or requests was good and there were no problems getting responses to requests
- It was suggested that a regular programme of monitoring the cleanliness of the toilets could be included in future with more frequent emptying of bins etc.

Main impact on organisation

The impact on the club is in two main areas:

- Reduction in access to the greens for club play as the championships takes the whole venue for the majority of each day during the tournament period. This impacts on the clubs opportunities to play matches which in turn are felt to have an impact on attracting members to join the club. The club were concerned to note that there were a number of free greens at various stages of the competition and suggested there may be opportunities to review the schedule.
- The provision of bar and catering services to players and officials which represents a peak in demand and opportunity to increase sales. The club will be reviewing their approach to managing this over the coming weeks to ensure they are best able to offer these services in future.
Provision for car parking and access to the site was well managed and suitable with no major issues reported. Play for

Learning points and opportunities for improvement in future years

- The "Red/Amber/Green" lists were useful.
- The club find as much advance information as possible helpful.
- The first year has been a learning experience with regard to numbers and needs of the Men's element of the competition, but in general most elements worked well.
- The event is now long and tiring one for the volunteers to sustain and they will be considering their approach for future years.

Café lease

Arrangements and Information prior to event

- The Café leaseholder was happy with the advance information provided by the district council and especially found the "Red/Amber/Green" lists for anticipated numbers useful.
- It was suggested that some direct communications with Bowls England may have been useful in advance of the event.

Arrangements, Information and responses during the event

- The Café confirmed that communications and liaison with council officers during the event worked well and there were no issues.
- It was suggested that there may be opportunities in future for Bowls England to notify the café when play is about to end and the players leave the greens as this could help them prepare for peak demands.

Main impact on organisation

- The National Championships represent a significant peak in trade for the café and an opportunity to increase sales during a short time period.
- In general terms this worked well from the café perspective and a significant amount of positive feedback was received

Learning points and opportunities for improvement in future years

- The "Red/Amber/Green" lists were useful.
- They could be further refined with start times which would be useful for the café.
- All other areas of the event were positive and worked well.

VP Tennis

Arrangements and Information prior to event

- The tennis coaches and club were aware of most relevant details and information suitably in advance of the event and had no requirements for the provision of further information in future years.
- They had been unaware that there would not be any caravans on the park in 2014, so their absence was pleasant surprise, as was the smaller area being used for car parking.

Arrangements, Information and responses during the event

- The coaches and club were happy with communications and arrangements during the tournament itself and had no issues contacting relevant officers with any queries or concerns.
- All were happy with the arrangements made for the Car Parking contractor to also use the tennis pavilion as a welfare base for their staff.
- The co-location and sharing of facilities worked well.

Main impact on organisation

- The main impact was on club members wishing to park in Archery Road as they normally would as this was closed during the day. However passes had been made available and all players with just a couple of exceptions had been able to gain access when and where they wanted during the period of the event.
- Figures for the holiday tennis camps had been lower during the final two weeks than the previous year, but it was not possible to be clear if this was related to weather, the bowls or other factors. Numbers for pay and play were also reduced during August and this was felt to be related to the availability of free parking close by during the event.

Learning points and opportunities for improvement in future years

- The only points which were noted for change in future years was to consider the number and distribution of parking passes to ensure regular club members had no issues during the event.
- In summary the club and coaches commented that the event had been better organised than in previous years and had therefore had comparatively less impact on their use of the park.

APPENDIX 8

Impact on WDC officer resources

Cultural Services are the lead service area and the prime link with Bowls England. This relationship has extended since the move of Bowls England to be based in Riverside House since April 2013. With Bowls England on site, pre-event planning has been easier and less time consuming, and has allowed both parties to work together to develop a more robust approach to event planning. The Event Plan for the Nationals went through a multi-agency Safety Advisory Group for the first time prior to the 2014 event, reflecting the Council approach to effective event management.

The decision to outsource the management of car parking has significantly reduced the amount of input from Cultural Services officers during the event, allowing the team to focus on other work during August. A rota was in place for the 30 days of the event providing a duty officer contact; with very few exceptions, mainly on the opening weekend or on days when play was significantly delayed, this resulted in officer presence at the greens being reduced to a minimum.

Liaison with other operators in the park has increased this year, mainly due to the extended period of the event and the unforeseen queries triggered by the arrival of the men at the venue. It is hoped that these have largely been addressed and can be pre-empted for future years.

From an Economic Development & staff volunteers perspective, experience of 2014 shows that the Visitor Information Tent needs to be within the Bowls Championship area to be an integral part of the Championships. The good working relationship with Bowls England will allow this from the start of 2015. Staff volunteers enjoyed their time at the Bowls and all were happy to take part. The level of knowledge about the area was variable and for 2015 it is felt that a fuller induction and training programme (e.g.: Welcome Host) would be beneficial for all staff. Staffing for the Tent needs to be revised to take greater account of competitor arrivals before their start times which will mean that more volunteers will be needed which is considered to be possible without impacting services.

The Media team were involved from the early stages in developing communication plans, advising on social media strategies, liaising with press and broadcasters and monitoring media activity in the lead up to and during the event. Given the media interest in the extended event, the input from this team was far greater this year than it had been previously. On reflection, it was essential that resources were allocated from this team, and the resulting media coverage was significant. It is anticipated that the input from the Media team in future years will be less intensive and key staff will have a better understanding of the event and the workload it can generate.