

	<b>Executive – 12<sup>th</sup> February 2014</b>	<b>Agenda Item No.</b>
<b>Title</b>	2 <sup>nd</sup> Warwick Sea Scouts' Headquarters	
<b>For further information about this report please contact</b>	Andrew Jones 01926 456830; andrew.jones@warwickdc.gov.uk	
<b>Wards of the District directly affected</b>	Warwick South	
<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Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?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>	No	
<b>Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> September 2008 (Minute 394)	
<b>Background Papers</b>	Report to Executive: St Nicholas Park – Parks for People – HLF report Feb 2008; Executive report September 2008	

<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 (566)
<b>Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken</b>	Yes

<b>Officer/Councillor Approval</b>		
	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	9 <sup>th</sup> January 2014	Andrew Jones
Head of Service	10 <sup>th</sup> January 2014	Rose Winship
CMT	21 <sup>st</sup> January 2014	Chris Elliott, Andrew Jones; Bill Hunt
Section 151 Officer	15 <sup>th</sup> January 2014	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	9 <sup>th</sup> January 2014	Andrew Jones
Legal Services	13 <sup>th</sup> January 2014	Barry Jukes
Portfolio Holder	22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2014	Stephen Cross
<b>Consultation &amp; Community Engagement</b>		
<p>Proposals presented by WDC &amp; 2<sup>nd</sup> Warwick Sea Scouts to: Ward councillors; portfolio holders (and shadows) for Cultural Services &amp; Neighbourhood Services; Warwick Town councillors (South); skate park &amp; BMX track users' representatives; Gary Timlin (WCC Youth Worker); Friends of St Nicholas Park; park businesses – café, boat hire, amusements; Warwick Boat Club.</p> <p>Pre-application advice regarding the proposed development has been sought from planning officers and the tree preservation officer.</p> <p>A decision about whether to undertake pre-application consultation with residents adjacent to the park will be made once full details on the design plans, tree and bat surveys are available.</p>		

Full public consultation would follow the anticipated planning application.

<b>Final Decision?</b>	Yes
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below) Should landlord's permission be granted by the Executive, planning permission will need to be sought before the project can progress further	

## 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1** This report asks members to grant landlord's permission for the development of new facilities in St Nicholas Park by 2<sup>nd</sup> Warwick Sea Scouts (2WSS). The proposal comprises:
- 1.1.1** Construction of a new HQ building by 2WSS adjacent to the leisure centre on the site of the current skate park. (See Appendix A – plan for illustrative purposes only)
  - 1.1.2** Re-development of their current riverside site to provide a new building for equipment storage and changing facilities, alongside a boat yard. (See Appendix B– plan for illustrative purposes only)
  - 1.1.3** Withdrawal from the sailing club site in Myton Fields and re-instatement of the area as park land. (See site plan in Appendix C)
- 1.2** Members are asked to agree to re-location of the current skate park and re-modelling of the BMX track on the site of the current BMX area. (See Appendix A). The Scouts are aware that they will need to make a contribution towards the cost of these relocations.
- 1.3** The report also asks members to confirm that a grant of £50,000 be made available to 2WSS in support of this project.

## 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1** The Executive grants landlord's permission for:
- 2.1.1** A new 2 storey 2WSS HQ building to be constructed by 2WSS adjacent to the east wall of St Nicholas Park Leisure Centre, with restricted vehicular access via the existing leisure centre service road (see Appendix A): The necessary agreements and lease arrangements to be on terms and conditions acceptable to the Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Cultural Services.
  - 2.1.2** Demolition of the current riverside 2WSS hut and construction of a new building by 2WSS (anticipated to be of similar scale to the current hut) on a site adjacent to the west wall of the current building with the footprint of the current building re-developed for use as an open air boat yard and re-modelling of the slipway arrangements on the riverbank (see Appendix B): The necessary agreements and lease arrangements to be on terms and conditions acceptable to the Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Cultural Services.
  - 2.1.3** Accepting surrender of the current 25 year lease of the sailing club site in Myton Fields (due to expire in 2025) following re-instatement by 2WSS of the site as parkland (including removal of slipways, docks, fencing and storage containers) on terms and conditions acceptable to the Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Culture. See Appendix C for site plan.

- 2.2** The Executive agrees (subject to an acceptable contribution to costs by 2WSS as agreed by Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services) that the skate park and BMX facilities can be re-located and re-modelled on the site of the current BMX area (see Appendix A) and notes that these changes will be based on new designs evolved in conjunction with the facility users and can be made by the Council under Part 12 of the General Permitted Development Order.
- 2.3** The Executive agrees that £50,000 may be made available from the Service Transformation Reserve in the form of a grant to 2WSS as part of the FFF, Locality Improvement Plan to be released at a time determined by Deputy Chief Executive (AJ) in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Culture.

### **3 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1** Almost 10 years ago, 2WSS approached the Council explaining that their current headquarters building was nearing the end of its serviceable life and needed replacement. Furthermore, the existing building no longer met the Scouts' needs either in terms of current members/ activities or to meet future demands evidenced by the size of their longstanding waiting list.

After several years of debate, the current proposal has emerged as the most acceptable compromise between officers and scout leaders.

- 3.2** Appendix D contains copies of plans produced for 2WSS showing draft layouts for the new HQ and riverside facilities.
- 3.3** The new HQ building will include two meeting halls – allowing the possibility of running groups in parallel to increase membership opportunities for those 140+ boys and girls on the waiting list.

Locating the HQ building next to the leisure centre will help consolidate built form into one area of the park. This is considered preferable to new/ expanded development elsewhere in "open" areas of the park.

- 3.4** The redeveloped riverside hut will be no larger than the one it replaces. Its new position will remove the problem of the current hut being built over the line of a storm sewer. (Regulations introduced since the hut's construction in the 1960's now prohibit development within 5m of the pipe.)

The new boat yard next to the riverside hut, along with the service yard at the rear of the new 2WSS HQ building are required to house boats currently stored at the Myton Fields site.

New slipway(s) parallel to the bank will allow boats to be winched in and out of the river with minimal impact on other park users. The new slipway(s) would be designed to avoid either reducing the navigable width of the river or altering the existing current flows. Advice will be sought from the Environment Agency.

- 3.5** De-commissioning the sailing club site in Myton Fields will remove what is widely considered an "eyesore".
- 3.6** Informal consultation has produced a generally positive response to the proposals. In particular, representatives of the skate and BMX users were happy with the plans for the area adjacent to the leisure centre.

**3.7** Pre-application advice from Development Control and WDC Tree Officer has not identified any significant issues with the proposals. Wherever possible current trees and other planting will be preserved. Any tree removals agreed would be subject to the Council's replanting guidelines.

Some members of the Friends of St Nicholas Park group have expressed concerns about the riverside re-development; particularly the boat yard which they believe will be unsightly for Pickard Street residents. Others are supportive.

**3.8** Consultation with local residents has not yet been undertaken, in the knowledge that:

**3.8.1** The re-sited skate facility will remain over 95m away from the nearest residential property and the BMX track is not expected to extend more than 2 or 3 metres beyond its current footprint.

**3.8.2** The new riverside building will be no larger than the one it replaces and will be slightly further away from the houses in Pickard Street.

**3.8.3** All scout meetings will begin and end at the new HQ building. Parents will drop off and collect children using St Nicholas Park car park and no longer bring congestion to roads around Pickard Street.

**3.8.4** A final decision about whether to undertake any pre-application public consultation will be made once the scouts have produced detailed plans showing their final designs including the results of arboreal and bat surveys.

**3.9** Landlord's agreement will allow 2WSS to develop those detailed plans in confidence, leading to a planning application including formal consultation.

Once planning permission is in place, costs can be projected and the process of fundraising started.

**3.10** To demonstrate in-principle support for 2WSS' aspirations, Members had provisionally identified a sum of £50,000 to help with fund-raising initiatives. However, this sum had not been committed to any budget and therefore should Members support the proposals in this report it is recommended that the £50,000 is now allocated.

## **4 POLICY FRAMEWORK**

**4.1** The development of new facilities for 2WSS would significantly increase the group's ability to expand its membership and provide positive activities for young people in the area.

The initiative forms part of WDC's Locality Improvement Plan within the FFF strategy. It helps develop opportunities for young people, builds vibrant communities and opportunities for all.

## **5 BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

**5.1** It is proposed that a grant of £50,000 be made available to 2WSS in support of this project which is likely to cost them in excess of £500,000 to complete.

The Locality Improvement Plan (as noted by the Executive in December 2013)

included £50,000 potential funding towards this project from the Service Transformation Reserve which currently has an unallocated balance of £1,934,000.

- 5.2** We have already indicated to 2WSS that WDC will expect them to make a significant contribution towards the cost of moving the skate and BMX facilities.
- 5.2.1** The skate users would like to see a new facility built, rather than a simple re-location of the current skate park. The costs and funding arrangements for a new facility have not yet been determined, although the skaters have indicated a willingness to raise funds towards the costs.
- 5.2.2** This work will be considered as a separate project by Neighbourhood Services' Green Space Team. As the 2 projects' timelines develop, decisions will be taken about whether the Scouts fund re-location of the current skate park or make an equivalent contribution towards the costs of a new facility.
- 5.2.3** Initial estimates suggest that re-location the current skate facilities and re-instatement of the vacated site could cost circa £40,000. (in practice, re-instatement may not be required given the intention to build on the vacated site)
- 5.2.4** 2WSS are aware that in practice this could account for most, if not all, of the £50k grant funding.

**5.3** Under their 2 current leases 2WSS pay ground rent as follows:

**5.3.1** Riverside HQ building: £571p.a.; next review 1/1/15. Lease expires 1/1/25.

**5.3.2** Myton Fields site: £800p.a.; next review 1/8/15. Lease expires 1/8/25.

**5.4** New market leases will be granted covering the new HQ site next to the leisure centre and extended riverside site.

## **6 ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED**

**6.1** In September 2008 the Executive gave landlord's consent to 2WSS for development of a new HQ building in Myton Fields. That proposal was the preferred site identified in an extensive feasibility study.

Plans produced by the scouts for consultation in spring 2011 were for a building much larger than was considered in the feasibility and many objections were received.

**6.2** A number of options were considered and rejected including:

**6.2.1** Relocation to a new riverside site at Edmondscote. This was rejected by the scouts as it lay outside the Warwick Division scouting area and was up stream of the confluence of the rivers Avon and Leam, where water volumes were insufficient to support the full range of water based activities that they run.

**6.2.2** The idea of a second site away from the park and riverside was discussed and rejected. Some years ago, 2WSS had experimented with using facilities at Coton End School. The trial was abandoned as a lack of access to resources, particularly during the boating season, severely restricted the programme that could be offered.

**6.3** The option of rebuilding the riverside hut on its existing site and locating the boat yard to its west side (effectively reversing the proposed layout of hut and yard) was

considered and rejected by 2WSS on cost grounds.

This would have required the storm sewer to be re-routed; a development that the Scouts' advisors believe would be very expensive.

- 6.4** As landlord of the scouts' existing facilities, WDC has no obligation to help them bring forward these expansion plans. However, if we chose not to co-operate and make new land and leases available, we would miss the opportunity to help secure the future of this popular and well run youth organisation.

## **7 BACKGROUND**

- 7.1** 2WSS currently has 195 active members and a waiting list of 142.

Sea Scouting shares the same objectives as the rest of the groups affiliated to the Scout Association; the only difference lie in the fact that water and associated nautical skills are used more as a medium of training.

- 7.2** 2WSS is a highly regarded scout unit. It is one of a very small number of Sea Scout units achieving standards that allow it to be endorsed by the Royal Navy. 2WSS has a very high Royal Navy inspection rating – ranking it as one of the leading Sea Scout units in the country.
- 7.3** The group operates every weekday evening. During the winter the majority of meetings are held in the hall; in spring and summer meetings involve outside activities on the water.
- 7.4** Apart from weekly meetings the group runs: weekend and holiday activities (75% of which take place away from St Nicholas Park) and between 10 and 20 camps per year.
- 7.5** 2WSS currently operates from 3 venues in St Nicholas Park:

Scout hut on north bank of the river (adjacent to Charter Bridge)	Their HQ building where the ground floor is used for equipment storage and the first floor provides an assembly hall, galley and leaders office.
Sailing Club site in Myton Fields	A fenced area on the south bank of the river that includes open boat storage and 3 shipping containers which house boats and equipment.
Hut adjacent to St Nicholas Park car park	Used to store camping equipment. The building is also at the end of its serviceable life.

- 7.6** Apart from the equipment stored at the 3 venues above, 2WSS also maintains a small fleet at Draycote water.
- 7.7** The current building is nearly 50 year's old. It has been in a very poor state of repair for several years and is near the end of its serviceable life. Problems include the roof which is not weather tight and gas / electrical installations in need of update.

There are inadequate shower/ changing facilities for the numbers enrolled. The building has no disabled access.

- 7.8** The proposals would see the scouts' activities consolidated to 2 sites within the park, with less distance between these than currently separates the riverside hut

from the sailing club site. The contents of the storage hut would be housed within the new HQ building and the hut handed back to the Scout Association who owns it.

Vehicle movements in the park would be reduced. Leaders' vehicles would access the new HQ using the leisure centre service road. Vehicle access to the riverside site would be significantly reduced and there would be no need for vehicles to enter Myton Fields.

**7.9** The new scheme would be developed in stages as fundraising allowed. The first phase would see construction of the new HQ building. This would be followed by re-development of the riverside site. Withdrawal from Myton Fields would be the final stage once the new HQ and riverside sites were available to rehouse the equipment from the sailing club site.

**7.10** 2WSS allows Warwick Boat Club to use the sailing club facilities to help stage its annual regatta. De-commissioning of the site will lead the boat club to review how it operates the regatta.

Boat Club representatives have met scout leaders and the 2 groups will liaise to see if emerging designs for new slipways next to the riverside hut (s3.4 above) could substitute for the facilities lost in Myton Fields.