

 Executive 8 January 2014		Agenda Item No. 6
Title	Support for an Indoor Bowls Facility	
For further information about this report please contact	Chris Elliott 01926 456000 Rose Winship 01926 456223	
Wards of the District directly affected	Whitnash and Bishop's Tachbrook	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?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	n/a	
Background Papers	None	

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	n/a

Officer/Councillor Approval		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Deputy Chief Executive	13.12.13	Andy Jones, Bill Hunt
Head of Service	13.12.13	Rose Winship
CMT	13.12.13	Chris Elliott, Andy Jones, Bill Hunt
Section 151 Officer	13.12.13	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	13.12.13	Andrew Jones
Finance	13.12.13	Mike Snow
Portfolio Holder(s): Finance, and Development	13.12.13	Councillor Cross
Consultation & Community Engagement		
n/a		
Final Decision?		
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below) If agreed then the Avon Valley Indoor Bowls Club will have to raise funds and if and when that is secured a more detailed report will be needed concerning the land ownership matters and linked service partnership.		

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks approval in principle to offer the Avon Valley Indoor Bowls Club (AVIBC) a long lease (term 99 years) on land at Harbury Lane to support their desire to raise funds for a new indoor bowls facility/changing rooms relocating from the Jaguar Land Rover site at Gaydon.
- 1.2 The proposal would if successful add to the range of sporting facilities in the District and so make a contribution to both the local economy and to the health and well-being of the community especially the more elderly.
- 1.3 The proposal would also provide a significant 7 day a week though not 24 hours a day on-site presence which would help deter illegal site encampments and if combined with AVIBC taking on the running costs and responsibilities for the changing rooms it will offer a financial relief to the Council and so the wider community.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Council agree in principle to offer a long term lease (99 years) on part of the Harbury Lane sports fields to AVIBC at a peppercorn rent and otherwise on terms to be agreed between the parties subject to:
 - 2.1.1 AVIBC taking on the running costs and ongoing responsibilities for the existing changing rooms on site;
 - 2.1.2 The proposal not contravening the restrictive covenant relating to this area of land; and
 - 2.1.3 The proposal being acceptable planning wise.
- 2.2 A further report be brought to the Executive once funding has been raised concerning matters of detail relating to the lease, the location of the proposed facility and the partnership agreement.

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Council has been approached by AVIBC currently based at the Jaguar Land Rover site at Gaydon for assistance to relocate its facility into the District. The need arises as it has been given advance notice by its present landlord that it will not be able to remain on the present site when the lease ends in 2020. The AVIBC's business case is set out in the attached submission at Appendix 1. It seeks to build upon the success in attracting the relocation of the Bowls England Headquarters and National Men's Bowls Championships (Outdoor) to the District.
- 3.2 AVIBC has not yet sought funds to assist in developing the new facility but is seeking to identify a site which it can lease on a long term basis at a peppercorn rent in order to develop a viable funding approach. It has been advised that there are no Council resources on offer including officer time in raising funds and constructing a new building. However, a number of Council owned recreational sites have been assessed and both AVIBC and Officers have concluded that the Harbury Lane site (see map 1) offers both opportunity to AVIBC and to the Council directly and indirectly.

- 3.3 The benefits to the wider community will be both economic as well as building on the benefits of securing the Men's National Bowls Championships in addition to already hosting the National Women's Championships as well as an investment of a several millions of £s in a new community sporting facility; and health and well-being related, as it will offer an all year round sporting facility to the residents of the District, especially the elderly and this is significant in terms maintaining activity levels on the over 50's which translates into beneficial health impacts.
- 3.4 The benefits to the Council are that an on-site 7 day a week though not 24 hours a day presence, would help to deter the illegal encampments that the area has experienced in the last few years which has cost the Council £5000.00. Additionally, the new facility could incorporate the existing changing rooms which have been subject to some vandalism and in the recent asset strategy the financial liability to the Council in terms of maintaining the building is estimated as ££500,000 over 30 years. It is proposed that this liability is taken on by AVIBC as a condition of granting a long lease at a peppercorn rent. The site is subject to a restrictive covenant restricting use but the proposal would not be in breach of the covenant.

4. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

- 4.1 The proposal if successful would contribute towards both the Prosperity and Health and Well Being policy priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 4.2 If liabilities can be off-set by the Council granting a lease at a peppercorn and without loss of facilities then the proposal will contribute to both the Service and Money elements of the Fit for the Future programme.
- 4.3 Any proposal would need to address planning policy issues regarding potential impact on playing fields and visual impact of buildings. It will be important that these items are addressed and the Council is satisfied that there is an acceptable planning solution at an early stage of proceedings.

5. **BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 Other than some officer time having been expended so far, there has been no actual cost to the Council of dealing with this proposal. The raising of funds for the facility and the construction of the facility will be the responsibility of AVIBC rather than with the Council. There would be a cost in terms of legal fees relating to the lease and officer time.
- 5.2 The Harbury Lane site is recreational and its use is restricted via covenant. Consequently and especially as the proposed facility is a community run sporting use, a lease would only be likely to generate a low or no value. However, the deterrent factor of a regular on-site presence preventing illegal encampments and the offsetting of the responsibilities for the changing rooms would offer a financial benefit to the Council in the region of £500,000 over 30 years.
- 5.3 At the next stage it will be necessary to assess the value for money element by comparing this financial benefit as against a potential rental income if the lease was not at a peppercorn level but at a market rent. It is unlikely that a market rent would be significant.

6. ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S) CONSIDERED

- 6.1 The Council could decide not to offer support for a long lease to be granted to AVIBC. However, this would represent a missed opportunity.
- 6.2 The approach of offering support in principle to the granting of a long lease at a peppercorn rent at this stage offers the least cost and least risk approach to the Council in securing additional investment in local sporting facilities.