

<b>Title</b>	Car Parking – National Bowls Championships	
<b>For further information about this report, please contact:</b>	Rose Winship/Chris Elliott	
<b>Wards of the District directly affected:</b>	Leamington Wards	
<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Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?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>	Executive: November 2013	
<b>Background Papers:</b>	November 2011 – Bowls Working Party report to O&S Committee; Impact Assessments – STRI; Neil Allen Associates; WDC 2009 Tourism Economic Impact Assessment WDC Proposal to Bowls England (August 2012) Relocation of Bowls England HQ and the Men’s Championships to Royal Leamington Spa (December 2012) FoVP Petition to Council – Sept 2013 User Survey – July/Aug 2013	
<b>Contrary to the policy framework:</b>	No	
<b>Contrary to the budgetary framework:</b>	No	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	No	
<b>Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)</b>	Yes Ref: 564	
<b>Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken:</b>	Yes	
<b>Officer/Councillor Approval</b>		
<b>Officer Approval</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	30/01/14	Chris Elliott/ Andrew Jones
Head of Service	30/01/14	Rose Winship
CMT	30/01/14	Chris Elliott, Bill Hunt, Andrew Jones
Section 151 Officer	30/01/14	Mike Snow
Monitoring Officer	30/01/14	Andrew Jones
Finance	30/01/14	Mike Snow/Jenny Clayton
Portfolio Holder(s)	30/01/14	Cllr Stephen Cross
<b>Consultation &amp; Community Engagement</b>		
Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI); Local residents, Royal Leamington Spa Bowls Club and other local bowls clubs – Neil Allen Associates; Bowls England Working Party; Internal consultation – Neighbourhood Services, Development Services. FoVP – Petition presented to Full Council Sept 2013; Victoria Park User Survey July/Aug 2013		
<b>Final Decision</b>		Yes
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

## **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1. This report sets out the recommendations arising from an options appraisal for car parking required in association with the annual Men's and Women's National Bowls Championships that will take place in Leamington Spa each year in August. The preferred option is 1a. The report details how this is the most objectively beneficial option in terms of: delivering the Council's agreement with Bowls England, financing the ancillary costs of the event, and reducing the impact on Victoria Park for the benefit of park users and residents. The report also addresses the charging regime to be applied and confirms that caravans will no longer be located in Victoria Park during this event.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. The Executive approve option 1a for car parking during the annual National Bowls Championships from 2014 onwards for a period of 28 days each year.
- 2.2. The Executive approve a preferred daily charge of £5 per car to apply to the recommendation made in 2.1, and that this figure is reviewed each year as part of Fees and Charges.
- 2.3. That, based on the decisions made in respect of recommendations 2.1 and 2.2, future years financial implications are reflected in the Medium Term Financial Strategy as discussed in paragraph 5.5.
- 2.4. The Executive approve that a maximum of £10,000 is allocated from the 2014/15 Contingency Budget to allow purchase of items of equipment to support the safe management of events; e.g. temporary road crossings, barriers and signs.
- 2.5. A further report is brought outlining plans/costs for the improvement of the "old tennis courts" to add to the parking provision at Victoria Park.
- 2.6. The Executive note that, in agreement with Bowls England, caravans are no longer being sited on Victoria Park in accordance with the wishes of local residents and park users.
- 2.7. That a review of the event in 2014 is undertaken and that the findings and lessons learned are reported to the Executive.

## **3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1. Over the last 9 months, following local residents' concerns about vehicles and caravans in Victoria Park, officers have been investigating alternative car parking options and alternative caravan provision for the Nationals.
- 3.2. A local residents' group, the Friends of Victoria Park (FoVP), formally raised their concerns to officers in May 2013. Their concern was that the extended event would render the park "closed" to other users for 30 days during the school holidays due to the space taken up by vehicles and the perceived "unsafe mix" of cars, caravans and pedestrians. The views expressed by the local residents were supportive of attracting Bowls England to the town but that, while they had "put up with the disruption for the women's event in

previous years”, the extended period of parking and the addition of caravan provision was unacceptable. There was a view that cars/caravans should not be allowed to use the park, and that bowlers should either park in town and walk, or use a park and ride facility that could be laid on for them.

- 3.3. Since work began on this project, offsite provision for caravans has been identified. Regardless of the results of an associated Planning application, caravans associated with the National Championships will not be present in Victoria Park from 2014.
- 3.4. The FoVP launched a petition in June 2013 encouraging people to oppose Victoria Park being used as a car park. This petition of 1,500 signatories was presented at Full Council on 26th September 2013. It was agreed that officers would report back to the Executive at a future meeting with the outcomes of an options appraisal for parking arrangements.
- 3.5. In order to help understand the views of the wider range of park users, a decision was taken, in conjunction with the FoVP, to commission a survey during the 2013 Women’s National Bowls Championships. The survey, conducted by The Research Solution, collected data from 360 visitors to the park; 175 park users and 185 bowls related visitors (Appendix 1). The results provide an overview of issues relating to the park during the National Bowls Championships and as such form part of the evidence base leading to the identification of the preferred option for the National Bowls Championship parking and more generally for how the park is used in future years. It should be noted that the survey was undertaken during the 16 days of the 2013 event and as such may not have captured views of regular park users who chose not to visit the park during the event.
- 3.6. Officers have been considering options for the use of other car parking sites in the area since the issue was raised by the FoVP. A number of town car parks were suggested by officers and the Friends alike, along with possible privately owned sites. An officer group was formed to undertake a feasibility assessment of a range of parking options (Appendix 2); this led to the Executive approving a short list of three sites in November 2013.
- 3.7. Following an in-depth options appraisal (Appendix 3) of the three sites approved by the Executive, a recommendation has been made to propose option 1a as the way to accommodate the car parking provision necessary for the annual National Bowls Championships from 2014 onwards. This option is considered most beneficial for a number of reasons:
  - 3.7.1. Delivering our agreement with Bowls England. The Council’s proposals, approved by the Executive in Sept 2012, provided Bowls England with up to 350 on-site car parking spaces for the duration of the National Bowls Championships. Option 1a is the only selection able to deliver on that agreement. Please note that Bowls England have agreed to alternative parking options for the final weekend of the National Bowls Championships (when the under 25’s championships are held). As such, Victoria Park would be used for 28 days of parking instead of the 30 originally agreed upon. This reduction in the number of days also means that planning permission is not required.
  - 3.7.2. Reducing the impact on Victoria Park during the National Bowls Championships. It should be acknowledged that no option available will fully

satisfy both Bowls England and the group of park users and residents that FoVP represent. However, in recognition of the views of FoVP, option 1a only takes approximately 55% of the area used for parking in recent years, and returns the other 45% to public use. As part of this, the provision for caravans has been removed entirely.

- 3.7.3. Providing additional safety and a reduction in the visual impact on the Park. It is proposed that this option will be managed by car parking specialists and will provide simplified traffic control via a single crossing point. As part of this option, the cars will be parked in a much more orderly way than was previously possible. There is also the option of screening the car parking area to further reduce the visual impact on the remainder of the park.
- 3.7.4. Reduced damage to the Park through wear and tear. Option 1a involves the laying of a temporary roadway to protect the grass from the movements of traffic. It also provides enough space to rotate where cars are positioned on non-peak days. This will allow for Park maintenance and allow the grass to recover, to some extent, during the Nationals.
- 3.7.5. Lower estimated net cost. As detailed in Budgetary Framework (Paragraph 5), option 1a presents the lowest estimated net cost to the Council. Whilst the investment in this option is higher than that of option 3 (Covent Garden), the final cost to the Council is considerably lower once the estimated parking fees are taken into account.

### 3.8. Parking Charges

- 3.8.1. The review of parking options for the National Bowls Championships also included a review of charges that would apply to parking associated with the event. The income generated by car parking is required to partially offset the costs associated with providing the parking provision. Previously, the council have subsidised car parking provision to approx. £2,000 per year. The financial implications of increasing the daily charge to £5 per car per day are outlined in the Budgetary Framework section of this report. Full details of potential charges for alternative options are found in Appendix 4.
- 3.8.2. The current charge for parking in Victoria Park during the Nationals is £4 per car per day, with a season ticket available for the 16 days at £25. These charges have been in place for 4 years. As such, now is an appropriate opportunity for a review. The increase in the daily rate to £5, assuming parking levels continue as now, would generate additional income that could be used to partially offset the increased costs of operating this site as a car park for the event (see para 5.3). However, at this stage any further increase in the charge could also have the effect of deterring some visitors away from the park, to on-street or other car parks, thus reducing the number of cars choosing to park in Victoria Park and the income generated during the event.

### 3.9 Event Management

- 3.9.1 The recent improved approach to event management across the district has highlighted the need for appropriate equipment in order to comply with appropriate legislation and best practice. This would include temporary road crossings, a range of temporary generic signage and barriers. At present these are hired as and when required. The ability to purchase a limited supply of such

equipment would equate to revenue savings in future years. The main use of this equipment would be at the entrance to Victoria Park to manage the safe flow of vehicles and pedestrians.

- 3.9.2 Whilst not central to the issues outlined in this report, or to the decision on whether to approve the recommendations, it is worth noting that, during the Championships, Archery Road and the "old tennis courts" are used to provide parking for; a small number of Bowls England officials, Royal Leamington Spa Bowls Club volunteers, traders and local residents. Access to these areas is controlled through parking permits, parking bay suspensions and road closures on Archery Road each day until the end of play. The details of how this is managed are under review. Officers will amend the details as required for 2014 onwards dependent upon the outcome of this report.
- 3.10 The National Bowls Championships in 2014 will be a major event for the District and it will be important for the Council to review the event in its entirety and learn any lessons for the planning of future National Bowls Championships and indeed for other major event in the District.

#### 4. POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 4.1 The proposals in Appendix 5 support the Warwick District Sustainable Community Strategy. In particular it will continue to make direct contributions to the following:
- **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** – contribute to encouraging active lifestyles for all sectors of the local community and visitors to the district.
  - **Involving Communities** - provide support for local clubs and other community groups.

#### 5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 5.1. *Estimated* expenditure associated with each option (full details of which are found in Appendix 4):

	<b>Victoria Park (1a)</b>	<b>Victoria Park (1b)</b>	<b>Warwickshire College (2)</b>	<b>Covent Garden (3)</b>
<b>Staff Costs</b>	£14,000	£14,000	£8,640	£2,700
<b>Site Costs/Rent</b>	£0	£0	£7,500	£3,500
<b>Shuttle Bus</b>	£0	£0	£15,300	£15,300
<b>Equipment &amp; signage</b>	£7,489	£8,884	£600	£300
<b>Set up/take down barriers (est)</b>	£1,000	£1,000	£0	£0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	£22,498	£23,884	£32,040	£21,800

Note: Estimated equipment costs for the Victoria Park options are included in Appendix 6.

- 5.2. Estimated income. An average of 120 cars per day has been used throughout this report with the exception of Option 1b where the average anticipated attendance is reduced to 110 due to the maximum capacity being capped at a lower number

	Victoria Park Option 1a Estimated income (excl VAT)	Victoria Park Option 1b Estimated income (excl VAT)	Warwickshire College Estimated income (excl VAT)	Covent Garden Estimated income (excl VAT)
Daily Charge £3 (inc VAT)	N/A	N/A	£9,000	£9,000
Daily charge £4 (inc VAT)	£11,200	£10,267	£12,000	N/A
Daily Charge £5 (inc VAT)	£14,000	£12,833	£15,000	N/A
Daily Charge £6 (inc VAT)	£16,800	£15,400	£18,000	N/A
Daily Charge £10 (inc VAT)	£28,000	£25,667	£30,000	N/A

- 5.3. Estimated net cost of Options

	Victoria Park Option 1a	Victoria Park Option 1b	Warwickshire College	Covent Garden
<b>Estimated expenditure</b>				
Staff	£14,000	£14,000	£8,640	£2,700
Rent	£0	£0	£7,500	£3,500
Bus	£0	£0	£15,300	£15,300
Misc	£7,498	£8,884	£600	£300
	£1,000	£1,000		
<b>Total</b>	<b>£22,498</b>	<b>£23,884</b>	<b>£32,040</b>	<b>£21,800</b>
<b>Potential Income</b>				
Charges below (incl VAT)	Potential Income ( excl VAT)			
Income @ £3	£8,400	£7,700	£9,000	£9,000
Income @ £4	£11,200	£10,267	£12,000	
Income @ £5	£14,000	£12,833	£15,000	
Income @ £6	£16,800	£15,400	£18,000	
Income @ £10	£28,000	£25,667	£30,000	
<b>Estimated Net Income to Council of each option</b>				
net @ £3	n/a	n/a	n/a	£-12,800
net @ £4	£-11,298	£-13,617	£-20,040	n/a
net @ £5	£-8,498	£-11,051	£-17,040	n/a
net @ £6	£-5,698	£-8,484	£-14,040	n/a
net @ £10	£5,502	£1,783	£-2,040	n/a

*NB – Income figures above assume:*

*Average 120 cars per day for 28 days Victoria Park Option 1a*

*Average 110 cars per day for 28 days Victoria Park Option 1b*

*Average 120 cars per day for 30 days Warwickshire College*

*Average 120 Cars per day for 30 days Covent Garden*

- 5.4. The anticipated income estimates assume that existing numbers of cars continue to use the preferred option. It is considered likely that, should Warwickshire College or Covent Garden options be used, a reduction in parking will be experienced as visitors find alternative options which are closer to the venue/cheaper. Consequently the cost to the Council would increase proportionally as the income reduces and the costs remain the same irrespective of the number of cars using the facilities.
- 5.5. The 2014/15 Budget has been drawn up and is presented for Recommendation to Full Council in a separate item on this agenda. Until the preferred site has been confirmed, it has not been possible to determine the net financial impact and incorporate this into the Budget. It is recommended that any cost implication be subject to a bid to the Contingency Budget in 2014/15, and any future years implications be built into the Financial Strategy. Most of the options presented will incur an additional cost to the Council which will increase the level of savings still to be saved.
- 5.6. The impact on the local economy and businesses was a key factor in the Council's desire to make Leamington, and Warwick district, the "Home of English Bowls". Based on data from Worthing Borough Council surveys and the 2009 Warwick District Tourism Economic Impact data, it has been estimated that the Championships will have an economic impact of between £700,000 and £1.2 million. To harness the maximum impact, the challenge is to make the visit to the district as enjoyable and memorable as possible. This requires a combination of good bowls facilities, a range of accommodation options, convenient ancillary facilities (including parking) and a range of retail and visitor attractions.

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

- 6.1. In undertaking the review of parking options, officers considered a number of alternative sites. If Option 1a were not to be progressed then then full details on the alternative options are contained in Appendices 3 and 4. Given that the proposal to Bowls England included on-site parking for up to 350 cars during the Championships, and as such was a significant factor in the decision made by Bowls England to relocate the Championships and their HQ to Royal Leamington Spa, there is a risk of legal challenge should the Council be unable to offer appropriate and acceptable car parking for the event.

## **7. BACKGROUND**

- 7.1. At their August 2012 meeting the Executive endorsed a document which contained a series of proposals from this Council to Bowls England (Appendix 5). At the Company meeting of Bowls England on 24th November 2012, the Board presented its recommendation of the move to Leamington Spa which was supported.

- 7.2. The proposals to Bowls England made in August 2012, included the provision of onsite parking in Victoria Park for up to 350 cars. This provision was based on the Park being successfully used since 1974 to support the annual championships and other major sporting events. The detail of how the park has been used in the intervening 39 years has varied over time but there have been very few complaints or records of incidents in this time. The parking has allowed competitors, officials, spectators, VIP guests and traders to park close to the event in a secure and managed car park with no impact on users of town centre car parks.
- 7.3. A "Sporting and Resident Impact Study" was undertaken by Neil Allen Associates in July 2012. This helped the Council to understand the impact of attracting the men's championships to the district. The survey focused on how the extended National Bowls Championships would affect local residents and existing users of the greens (Appendix 7). The survey found that:
- 78% of those surveyed supported the existing women's championships
  - 59% supported the potential of adding the men's event
  - 4% were strongly opposed to the current championships
  - 9% were strongly against any future expansion.
- 7.4. The report from Neil Allen made specific recommendations for the Council to consider in respect of parking arrangements for residents, parking on Victoria Park, and early morning noise and activity on the greens. The project team noted these recommendations and have been progressing work on each of them throughout the life of the project. It soon became very clear that the most high profile of these issues was the parking of cars (and caravans) on Victoria Park for the extended period of 30 days.

## **APPENDICES:**

- App 1: Nationals 2013 Survey WDC
- App 2: Long List of Parking Options
- App 3: Appraisal of Shortlisted Parking Options
- App 4: Analysis of Car Park Fees & Charges Options
- App 5: Proposal to Bowls England
- App 6: Site Proposals for Victoria Park (CTM Event Management)
- App 7: NAA Report Regarding Car Parking
- App 8: Route Maps for Covent Garden and Warwickshire College Options