

		Executive – 13th November 2013	Agenda Item No. 13
Title		Working with Bowls England – Update	
For further information about this report please contact		Rose Winship/Chris Elliott	
Wards of the District directly affected		Leamington wards	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006?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 – August 2012, December 2012, September 2013	
Background Papers		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	
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 Ref: 551
Equality & Sustainability Impact Assessment Undertaken			No
Officer/Councillor Approval			
Officer Approval	Date	Name	
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive		Chris Elliott/ Andrew Jones	
Head of Service		Rose Winship	
CMT		Chris Elliott, Bill Hunt, Andrew Jones	
Section 151 Officer		Mike Snow	
Monitoring Officer		Andrew Jones	
Finance		Mike Snow	
Portfolio Holder(s)		Cllr Stephen Cross	
Consultation & Community Engagement			
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			
Final Decision?			Yes
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)			

1. **SUMMARY**

The purpose of the report is to update members on the Bowls England project as requested at the September Executive. The report also incorporates a series of options in respect of car parking for the National Championships as requested by the Executive following the presentation of a petition by the Friends of Victoria Park to Full Council in September.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 The Executive note the progress that has been made on the projects associated with the relocation of the Men's National Championships and Bowls England's HQ to Leamington.
- 2.2 The Executive confirm the shortlist of car parking options (as set out in paragraph 3.10.4 of this report) for officers to investigate more fully and bring a further report in early 2014.
- 2.3 That a further report will be brought to the Executive setting out the Action Plan to maximise the economic benefits of the extended National Championships.
- 2.4 That the Executive note the use of the Chief Executive's emergency powers under G4 of the Constitution where in consultation with Group Leaders he waived the Procurement Policy in respect of procuring gas and water utility diversion works and agree to use £12,000 from the Corporate Property Investment Budget (CPIB) to upgrade the existing utility infrastructure to the Bowls Pavilion.

3. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 At its August meeting in 2012 the Executive endorsed a document which contained a series of proposals from this Council to Bowls England (Appendix 1). 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.
- 3.2 As a result, an Council officer project team was established in December 2012 with the Chief Executive as project sponsor and a Project Manager appointed in February 2013 (Appendix 2). The project comprises improvements to the Pavilion, installation of a new irrigation system, increased storage provision, car parking provision, economic and tourism benefits and the overarching communication plan for the project which includes working with Royal Leamington Spa Bowling Club (RLSBC) and the Friends of Victoria Park (FoVP).
- 3.3 Pavilion Improvements
 - 3.3.1 As described in previous reports to the Executive, there are a number of improvements required within the bowls pavilion.
 - Increased changing and toilet provision
 - Increased storage (in the club bar and kitchen area)
 - Repair to glazed sections of the roof
 - 3.3.2 Following approval of the additional budget for this project by the Executive in September 2013, and the granting of planning permission for the

improvements, officers have continued to work with Mansells in accordance with the SCAPE framework. Mansells have now completed the "re-tendering" of the building works to obtain 3 quotes per element of the works. The project costs have been reviewed in detail by officers from Housing and Property Services and Cultural Services to ensure that they represent best value and that there is no non-essential work included. A revised cost plan has been accepted from Mansells, which will allow the project to be completed within budget. Preliminary work on site will commence on 11th November 2013 with ground works and construction commencing 25th November 2013.

- 3.3.3 Site surveys have identified that public gas, electric and water supplies run beneath the area required for the additional changing room and the new irrigation tank. This therefore requires the public utilities to be re-routed.
- 3.3.4 Western Power have completed the diversion of the electricity supply on site. The water and gas have yet to be diverted at the time of writing, but contractors have been instructed to carry out these works. As noted in recommendation 2.4, the Chief Executive exercised his emergency powers under G4 of the constitution in order to waive the Procurement Policy. This was done to secure the best value for money for the Council when instructing the diversionary works.
- 3.3.5 The use of emergency powers was deemed necessary following the quotations provided by the utility boards to carry out the diversions for gas and water. Their combined figures amounted to close to £75,000 due to an insistence that utility infrastructure be upgraded alongside the diversions. Alternative quotes were sought from third party contractors with the final result being a sum of £31,905 for the full series of works (infrastructure upgrades included). Before instructing the works for the above price, an alternative option was available to the Council. This was to carry out the smaller-scale diversions with no associated infrastructure upgrades. Whilst initially far cheaper, both utility boards refused to allow these works without input from themselves, and an large additional associated cost. The end result was the choice between smaller, essential works and larger scale upgrades with only around £7,000 difference between the two.
- 3.3.6 The diversions are split between two sets of work. With the cheaper option, each element was priced low enough **not** to require a full tender exercise. With the larger infrastructure works, one of the elements was priced in a way that **required** a full tender exercise. Since such an exercise was not feasible within the project timeframe, and since the cheaper option represented very poor value for money, it was agreed that the Procurement Policy actually prevented the Council from receiving best value for money in this instance. In addition, an upgrade of the utility infrastructure to tackle long standing low gas pressure has been an issue for Housing and Property Services for some time. Since these works would eventually have been carried out separately, the Chief Executive under his Emergency Powers in consultation with Group Leaders has agreed to fund the infrastructure element of the works (£11,000) from existing budgets (Corporate Property Investment Budget – CPIB).
- 3.3.7 Following the Executive meeting in September, Cllrs Cross and Rhead were nominated to join the Project Board and oversee progress. Both members have now been briefed on the full scope of the project with a specific briefing on the pavilion works and Mansells costs. It has been agreed that their role going

forward will be one of “critical friend” overseeing the progress being made on the various elements of the project and challenging as appropriate.

3.4 Irrigation System

- 3.4.1 As reported in the September 2013 Executive report, the irrigation element of the project has now been delayed until autumn/winter 2014/15. The companies who tendered this summer have been notified of the delay and will be invited to retender next year alongside any additional companies who wish to do so.

3.5 Storage provision

- 3.5.1 Planning permission was granted on 25th July 2013 for new storage provision to be created on the western end of the “old tennis court” area. The new storage provides much needed space for Bowls England and WDC events team, and as such was jointly funded by Bowls England and the Council. The construction is now complete, with the approved landscaping works to be undertaken during the winter months as detailed in Condition 2 of the Decision Notice

3.6 Economic/Tourism Impact

- 3.6.1 The impact on the local economy, in the region of £1million per annum, was a key factor in the Council wishing to see the move of the men’s National Championships and Bowls England HQ to Leamington Spa. In order to realise these benefits, it is clear that work needs to be done with partners to maximise the impact in the coming years. Officers from the Economic Development team have been members of the Project Board since its inception, supporting the 2013 championships and gaining an understanding of the event and its participants. Work is now focusing on the arrival of the men’s events in 2014, and the unique opportunities that this presents in creating a good first impression of the district and what it offers to visitors.
- 3.6.2 Anecdotally officers have been aware for many years of the benefit that the women’s championships brought to the district. This has been backed up this year by the results of a survey carried out by The Research Solution during the 2013 event. The full results of the survey are attached as Appendix 3. The results highlight the number of spectators and competitors who visit the town during their stay for shopping, eating and drinking. These figures are significant and demonstrate the potential for local businesses to benefit from the additional 2 weeks. The figures also show good levels of overnight stays in the district during the championships. The results would also suggest that there is potential to increase the amount of visitor spend further by encouraging visits to local attractions.
- 3.6.3 The 2013 Women’s Championship event was supported by the issue of a new Accommodation Guide that was mailed to all counties early in 2013. This was well received and contributed to high levels of hotel and B&B bookings in the summer. Requests have already been received for the 2014 edition which needs to maximise the impact for the new visitors for the Men’s event. Economic Development officers worked with local businesses to develop a book of vouchers to encourage visitors into the town centres. Whilst these were well received, it is felt that there is an opportunity to make these more effective by working more closely with local businesses and BID Leamington.

3.6.4 Partnership working will also be the key to addressing the need to improve the pedestrian waymarking in Leamington Spa and to consider opportunities to enhance the town with street dressing in the lead up to and duration of the annual championships.

3.7 Communications

3.7.1 As described in the early reports to the Executive, it was considered essential that communication and joint work with the Committee members of Royal Leamington Spa Bowling Club continues throughout this project. It was clear from the inception that there would be some changes to how the greens at Victoria Park would be used in future which would not necessarily be seen as a positive move by all members of RLSBC. The club Committee have been open to discussion throughout the last 18 months, and meetings continue to address some of the operational details around green allocation, catering and bar provision, and access during the construction works this winter (Appendix 4).

3.7.2 Following the planning meeting in May 2013 when permission was granted for caravans and marquees on Victoria Park, a group of local residents asked to meet with officers to raise their concerns. This group were to go on to form the Friends of Victoria Park, and continue to meet with officers to raise ongoing concerns and discuss solutions. (Appendix 4) A drop in session, attended by over 200 people) took place on 11th July to allow local residents to meet a range of officers and understand the full details of the project. Three newsletters have been produced to date, with a further one due to be circulated prior to the start of the building works in November 2013. Regular updates have been placed on the Council's website and as appropriate press releases have been issued to raise awareness of the details of the project.

3.7.3 Emerging from the meetings with the FoVP, which included a meeting with representatives of the group, Chris White MP, Cllrs Cross and Gifford, and project officers, has been the clear view that the group are in opposition to the use of areas of Victoria Park being used as a "car park" and "caravan site" for the duration of the 4 week championship from 2014 for 10 years. This culminated in the presentation of a petition of 1500 names to Full Council on 26th Sept 2013

3.8 Caravans

3.8.1 Officers have been working for some time to identify alternative options for caravans during the 30 days of the championships from 2014 onwards. Bowls England has agreed to the principle of off-site provision. This has resulted in privately owned land being identified as a preferred site, A planning application from the landowner is anticipated by end November. Irrespective of the outcome of the planning application it has been agreed that there will be no provision for caravans on Victoria Park from 2014 onwards.

3.9 Car Parking provision

3.9.1 The proposals to Bowls England made in August 2012, included the provision of on-site parking in Victoria Park for up to 350 cars. This provision was based on the successful use of areas of the park being used for car parking to support the annual championships, and other major sporting events since 1974. The detail of how the park has been used in the intervening 39 years has varied over time, but in general terms there have been very few complaints or records

of incidents in this time. The parking allows 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.

- 3.9.2 Alongside other reports, a Sporting and Resident Impact Study was undertaken by Neil Allen Associates in July 2012 to help inform the Executive of the impact of attracting the men's championships to the district. The survey focussed on the sporting impact on existing users of the greens, and the potential impact on local residents during the extended event period. The survey found that 78% of those surveyed supported the existing women's championships, 59% supported the potential of adding the men's event; only 4% were strongly opposed to the current championships and 9% against any future expansion. The report from Neil Allen made specific recommendations for the Council to consider in respect of residents parking arrangements, parking on Victoria Park, 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.
- 3.9.3 Local residents (FoVP) formally raised their concerns to officers in May 2013. The principle of their concerns was that the extended event would render the park "closed" to other users for 30 days during the school holidays due to the area of the park used as the car park/caravan park and the "unsafe mix" of cars and pedestrians in the park. The views expressed were that 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 was unacceptable. There was a view expressed that the park should not be used for any parking and that bowlers should use town car parks, then walk or use a park and ride facility that could be laid on for them.
- 3.9.4 Alongside the opposition to parking on Victoria Park, was the dis-satisfaction with the impact that bowls parking has on residents parking on Archery Road. These concerns go beyond the period of the National Championships and extend throughout the bowling season (April – Sept) as local bowlers and others using the greens for competitions use the on street parking on Archery Road. There was a wish from residents to see this reduced from 4hr to 2hr parking, and for greater use to be made of the "old tennis court" area at the end of Archery Road to take the pressure off the road.
- 3.9.5 With planning for the 2013 Women's Championships underway at the time of these discussions, officers were able to consider how they might amend the arrangements for 2013 in order to address some of the residents' concerns. Original plans for the layout of car parking and caravans was revised to move the caravans to a less obtrusive location within the park, and the original parking area was reduced in size to increase the area of open space remaining available for other park users. Traffic management arrangements were revised to provide more control at the entrance/exit to the park where vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists could come together. As in previous years these arrangements continued to be revised throughout the event as appropriate. Feedback since the event has been that the changes were effective and appropriate.
- 3.9.6 A decision was taken, in conjunction with the FoVP, to commission a survey during the women's championships in 2013. The survey, conducted by The

Research Solution, collected data from 360 visitors to the park, 175 park users and 185 bowls related visitors (Appendix 3). The results provide an overview of issues relating to the park during the bowls championships and should form part of the evidence base when considering arrangements for how the park is used in future years.

3.9.7 The arrangements for use of the old tennis courts and Archery Road were also revised for the 2013 event. The number of VIP/volunteer passes for Bowls England and Royal Leamington Spa Bowls Club were reduced significantly, freeing up significant amounts of space for local residents. Observations during the event showed that there was always unutilised space along Archery Road and residents confirmed that they had no problems with the availability of on street parking during the event. There were some initial issues with access for customers of the Cricketers Arms and VP Tennis Club, however these were resolved by confirming instructions to the security company managing the closure of Archery Road.

3.10 Car Parking Options

3.10.1 FoVP launched a petition in June 2013 encouraging people to sign up to oppose Victoria Park being used as a car park. This petition 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 the options appraisal for parking arrangements.

3.10.2 Officers have been considering options for the use of other car parking sites in the area since the issue was raised by the FoVP in the summer. A number of town car parks were suggested by the Friends, along with possible privately owned sites. A small sub-group of the main project group was formed with the Head of Neighbourhood Services, Car Parking Manager, Head of Cultural Services, Sports and Leisure Manager and Project Manager undertaking a feasibility assessment of a range of parking options (Appendix 5).

3.10.3 Bowls England attended the first of these meetings in order that officers could ensure that they had a full understanding of the car parking needs of those attending the Championships. It was confirmed that the car parking element of the Council's proposals to Bowls England was a major factor in Leamington Spa being the favoured venue. Car parking at Worthing, which has for many years been a combination of sites with a variety of charges, has caused difficulties for those attending the event. The proximity of the parking provision to the greens in Victoria Park limits the distance to be walked to the playing area. This is a significant factor for those with mobility issues and those bringing equipment each day. BE have stated that they would not favour the option of a "park and ride" solution (in conjunction with off site parking provision). During the 2013 event an independent survey (Appendix 2) collected data from those attending the event, and from general park users. From this survey we can confirm that 69% of those attending the event were over the age of 55yrs, (with almost half over the age of 65yrs). This must be a consideration when considering the feasibility of alternative parking sites.

3.10.4 The results of the initial appraisal of parking options were presented to the FoVP and Cllr Bill Gifford at a meeting on 2nd Oct. This meeting agreed to focus on a short list of three options requiring further work.

- Review existing parking arrangements in Victoria Park to find a more effective solution
- Investigate the use of Warwickshire College car park (with Park and Ride/shuttle bus)
- Investigate the use of Covent Garden Car Park (with Park and Ride/shuttle bus)

3.10.5 Further work is required to produce a fully costed appraisal of each of the 3 shortlisted options. It is considered essential that the operational implications along with the annual operating costs and any one off cost are fully understood before any decision is made. Whilst it was intended to have this information available for this meeting, the complexity of each option and the requirement for information from third parties has delayed the process. Without such detail it is not felt that an informed decision could be made by the Executive.

3.11 As described in 3.9.4 of this report, local residents have raised some general issues regarding parking in the vicinity of the greens.

3.11.1 The on street parking on Archery Road is currently restricted to 4hrs, having been extended from 2hrs some years ago to improve parking provision for park users and bowlers. This parking area is also used by residents with Residents Passes for the L2 area of the town. Whilst this parking is controlled during the Nationals through road closures and parking bay suspensions, for the rest of the year, residents can experience limited access to parking spaces and have been keen to understand the possibilities of reverting back to a 2 hour parking limit.

3.11.2 The decision to change the on street parking time limits can only be made by the County Council amending their traffic regulation order. Due to staff shortages at WCC only one variation to the traffic regulation orders is being made each year in Warwick District with the next set of streets/roads to be considered for change during January 2014.

3.11.3 To have the Archery Road restrictions changed, local residents or the local WCC councillor need to lobby traffic projects group at WCC explaining their reasons for the necessity of a change this is only the start position. Even if included into the list the change would not be guaranteed as the process requires consultation which is unlikely to start until in late 2014 and any change to the restriction not taking place until early 2015.

3.12 Officers continue to work on a scheme that would see the old tennis court area, which has for many years been used as an informal parking area for the park and the bowls facilities, be developed into a formal managed car park. This would require investment to resurface and line the area, and the installation of a ticket machine and lighting. A full proposal will be brought to members at an appropriate time once the full details of a scheme are developed.

4. **POLICY FRAMEWORK**

4.1 The proposals in Appendix 1 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 Pavilion costs/project costs

	<i>Original (Sept 2013)</i>	<i>Revised (Oct 2013)</i>	<i>Variance</i>
Mansells contract			
Preconstruction costs	6000	8994	2994
Preliminaries	63000	30444	-32556
Works specification	148000	176020	28020
Mansells & SCAPE Fees	10000	9637	-363
Contingency	20000	20000	0
Sub Total	247000	245095	-1905
Ancillary Costs			
CDM	8000	3000	-5000
Site investigations	7000	8000	1000
Public Utilities (incl contingency)	27200	37345	10145
Sub Total	42200	48345	6145
Project total	289,200	293,440	4240

- 5.2 As outlined in the September report, there was initial uncertainty about the detail and the costs of the works involved to re-route the public utilities. Sections 3.3.4 – 3.3.6 of this report provide updated information as to the current situation regarding said utility diversions. The sum included above reflects the work already completed by Western Power (£5,440.17); a sum of £5,600 for the water diversion and associated changes to the infrastructure; and a sum of £26,305.50 for the gas diversion and infrastructure upgrade. As mentioned in 3.3.6, the improvement to the gas infrastructure has been a long-term intention of the Council and, as such, is work that would eventually be undertaken irrespective of the extension to the pavilion. It has therefore been agreed under the Chief Executive's emergency powers (G4) that the infrastructure costs (rounded up to £12,000) are met from the existing Corporate Property Investment Budget (CPIB).
- 5.3 In effect this means that the Council will draw most of the infrastructure element of the utility diversions from the existing Corporate Property Improvement Budget instead of the bowls project budget. The remaining £31,905 of utility costs breaks down as follows;
- The *necessary* works to divert the services amount to around £14,000. These will be drawn from the bowls budget as originally intended.

- The *optional* works to upgrade the infrastructure amount to £17,905. These will be drawn from existing Housing and Property Services budgets.
- Since the £14,000 leaves approximately £6,000 of spare funding in the project costs assigned to the utilities, it has been agreed that only approximately £11,905 will be drawn from the CPIB budget.

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

- 6.1 The alternative options relating to the car parking elements of the project are as outlined in Appendix 4. The detailed assessment of the shortlisted options will be addressed in the report to the Executive in early 2014.