

	<h2>Environment Committee</h2> <h3>11 January 2017</h3>
<p style="text-align: right;">Title</p>	<p>Community Management of Bowling Greens</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Report of</p>	<p>Commissioning Director for Environment</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Urgent</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Key</p>	<p>No</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Enclosures</p>	<p>None</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">Officer Contact Details</p>	<p>Jenny Warren: Head of Parks, Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing: Jenny.Warren@barnet.gov.uk (0208 359 7803) Dennis Holmes: Lead Commissioner Parks and Green Spaces: Dennis.Holmes@barnet.gov.uk (07753 686 111)</p>

<h2>Summary</h2>
<p>The Council provides and maintains bowling greens and associated pavilions/clubhouse at 7 sites throughout the Borough. These facilities are occupied by a number of bowls clubs with varying membership levels.</p> <p>Taken together, the bowls facilities are estimated to cost the Council £111k in the current financial year (2016/17). The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) requires a reduction in the annual cost to the Council of providing the bowls facilities of £100k; fully effective from financial year 2017/2018.</p> <p>Officers have explored strategies to achieve the required cost saving to the Council whilst assisting the bowls clubs to become financially self sustaining into the future with representatives of the clubs.</p> <p>This report updates Environment Committee on progress to date and seeks the agreement of the Committee to a way forward.</p>

Recommendations

- 1. The Environment Committee notes progress to date on negotiations with the Bowls clubs relative to the MTFS savings requirement and provides instruction to the Commissioning Director for Environment to continue negotiations with the clubs as set out in 1.19 below; in association with the Council's Estates Team as appropriate**
- 2. The Environment Committee authorise the Commissioning Director: Environment to agree the final terms of the new arrangements with the bowls clubs set out in 1.22 below; or as further settled and agreed by the Council as appropriate.**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 The past five years have been challenging for all local authorities; the combination of reduced public spending and increasing demand meant that Barnet needed to save £75 million between 2011 and 2015, just over a quarter of its budget. As far as possible, the council sought to meet this challenge through savings to the 'back office' to protect our front-line services. During this time of significant challenge, the council has seen levels of resident satisfaction remain high both in terms of satisfaction with the council as well as with a range of local services. The latest Residents' Perception Survey indicates that 89 per cent of residents are satisfied with Barnet as a place to live and 77 per cent feeling that the council is doing a good job.
- 1.2 In November 2014, the Environment Committee approved a five-year Commissioning Plan, and in March 2015 indicative proposals for achieving savings by 2019/20. The Commissioning Plan and Savings programme set out the strategic priorities, commissioning intentions and indicative budget proposals of the Environment Committee up to 2019/20.
- 1.3 At its 29 September 2016 meeting, the Environment Committee considered a Members Item relative to the Blind and Partially Sighted Bowlers group and resolved:-
 - That the Environment Committee noted the report;
 - That the Environment Committee requested that officers are instructed to consider an equalities impact assessment at the appropriate time;
 - That the Environment Committee noted that Members of the Council can submit an application for Area Committee grant funding;
 - That the Environment Committee recommend that in the event that any report is reported to the Environment Committee, consideration be given to the Member's Item and it be outlined how the Council engaged with the bowling club;

- That the Environment Committee requested that consideration be given to the position of the bowls club in the event that a future report be submitted to the Environment Committee.

- 1.4 Having been put to the vote the Environment Committee unanimously that a report be presented to the next meeting of the Environment Committee outlining progress
- 1.5 In November 2016 the Environment Committee approved an updated package of £6.5 million savings from 2016/17 to 2019/20.
- 1.6 Both the original Medium Term Financial Plan and revised MTFs agreed in November 2016 including savings of £100,000 relating to the management of Bowling Greens.
- 1.7 The Council provides and maintains 10 active bowling greens with pavilions/clubhouse at 7 locations within the Borough:-

Site	No of Greens	Bowls Club	No of members 2016
Friary Park	1	Friary Park BC	21
Mill Hill Park	2	Mill Hill BC	46
Oak Hill Park	1	Oak Hill BC	70
Old Courthouse	2	Barnet BC	30
Victoria Park	2	Finchley Victoria BC	19
Victoria Recreation Ground	1	East Barnet Valley BC	25
West Hendon Playing Fields	1	Hendon BC	30

- 1.8 The cost to the Council of maintaining these facilities is estimated to total £111k during the current financial year.
- 1.9 There are 2 additional active greens; located at Glebelands and Lyttleton Playing Fields which are leased to the Bishopswood Bowls Club on a full repairing basis requiring no subsidy from the Council.
- 1.10 There is a further bowling green located within Childs Hill Park which was decommissioned in 2014 following the loss of the remaining five members.
- 1.11 Participation in bowls has declined over recent years resulting in the clubs competing for members not only with each other but also with non-local authority based clubs but also clubs in other areas. The clubs have sought to

increase their membership levels and also looked at alternative means of raising revenue but with limited success.

- 1.12 The continuing existence of the bowls clubs and bowling greens contributes to the delivery of the health improvement agenda; both physically and psychologically.

Past arrangements

- 1.13 Under past arrangements the bowls clubs pay the Council annual fees on the basis of how many members are present at the club. In return the Council maintains the greens and the pavilion/clubhouse buildings although it should be noted that some of the clubs have invested in the interiors of pavilions/clubhouses and, in some cases, have augmented the Council’s maintenance regimes for the greens.
- 1.14 The clubs raised revenue through membership fees and by holding small scale events within the pavilions/clubhouses. In one case, the club converted the second green on the site to croquet as a means of increasing income. The clubs paid annual fees agreed by the Council; with the Council meeting the deficits not covered by the agreed fees.
- 1.15 In this model, the clubs had little incentives to grow and develop their memberships; resulting in small numbers of members and limited contributions to the costs incurred by the Council.

Progress to date

- 1.16 Officers have engaged with the bowls clubs, including the Blind and Partially Sighted Bowlers group, both as a group and individually to explore strategies which could be implemented to move them to a position that would be financially self-sustaining whilst obviating the need for the ongoing Council subsidy.
- 1.17 Given their starting points and, in many cases, low membership levels the clubs will require assistance to become self-sustaining and reduce the cost of bowling green provision to the Council. Future arrangements will also have to reflect that some pavilions/clubhouses are standalone buildings whilst some are part of larger, multi-occupied buildings.
- 1.18 The following division of responsibilities has formed the basis of discussions with the clubs to date:-

Council responsibilities	Club responsibilities
Structures and exteriors of bowls club pavilion buildings	Interiors of bowls club pavilions
	Maintenance of the greens and immediately adjacent grassed/planted areas

	Utilities costs
	Insurances
	The collection of membership fees and the generation of additional income

- 1.19 It has also been assumed that the clubs will be able to register with HM Revenue and Customs as Community Amateur Sports Clubs; resulting in NNDR relief and, depending on circumstances, some taxation benefits.
- 1.20 The Bowls Clubs are to be exempt from the Community Asset Strategy for an initial period of 5 years as a requirement for rental income would be unachievable in addition to their meeting all the other costs arising from the operation of the bowling greens. The continuing exemption from the Community Asset Strategy should be reviewed after 5 years at which time the clubs will have had the opportunity to increase their income streams.
- 1.21 The Council will undertake reasonable preparatory works to bring the sites to an appropriate condition to be maintained by the clubs. Such works may include shrub and site clearance, installation of check meters to ensure proper charging for utilities and making equipment available.
- 1.22 The outcome of the discussions to date:-

Club(s)/location(s)	Current position/proposal
Oak Hill BC Oak Hill Park	<p>Current: The club has already taken responsibility for all aspects of the operation of the green and stand alone pavilion/clubhouse: including utilities and maintenance of the green and adjacent planted areas. The club is 'holding over' under the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 provisions against the terms of a 15 year lease entered into in 1994.</p> <p>Proposal: The current arrangements with the club operating independent of the Council continue with a new lease being entered into of a minimum of 25 years duration to ensure eligibility to external funding sources.</p>
Hendon BC West Hendon Playing Fields	<p>Current: The club occupies part of a multipli-occupied building as a direct let from the Council with the Council taking responsibility for all aspects of the pavilion building and the bowling green and associated planted area.</p> <p>Proposal: The club to take responsibility for the interior of the part of the building that it occupies together with the, external spectator area, the bowling green and associated green areas; including the costs of these activities. The Council to retain responsibility for the structure of the building.</p>

	<p>A lease of minimum 25 years duration so as to ensure access by the clubs to external funding sources to be developed and entered into between the two parties.</p>
<p>Finchley Victoria BC and Finchley Victoria Ladies BC Victoria Park</p>	<p>Current: The club occupies the two bowling greens, immediately adjacent planted areas and associated pavilion as a direct let from the Council with the Council taking responsibility for all aspects of the management of the facilities. The club changed the use of the second green from bowls to croquet in 2015 as part of a plan to reduce costs and increase membership income.</p> <p>Proposal: The club to take responsibility for the interior of the pavilion building, the bowling greens and the immediately adjacent planted areas; including the costs of these activities. The Council to retain responsibility for the structure of the building. The second green to continue to be maintained by the club and used for croquet.</p> <p>A lease of minimum 25 years duration so as to ensure access by the clubs to external funding sources to be developed and entered into between the two parties</p>
<p>East Barnet Valley BC Victoria Recreation Ground</p>	<p>Current: The club occupies the bowling green, immediately adjacent planted areas and associated pavilion as a direct let from the Council with the Council taking responsibility for all aspects of the management of the facilities.</p> <p>Proposal: The club to take responsibility for the interior of the pavilion building, the bowling green and the immediately adjacent planted areas that it occupies; including the costs of these activities. The Council to retain responsibility for the structure of the building.</p> <p>A lease of minimum 25 years duration so as to ensure access by the clubs to external funding sources to be developed and entered into between the two parties</p>
<p>Mill Hill BC Mill Hill Park</p>	<p>Current: The club occupies the two bowling greens, immediately adjacent planted areas and part of the multi-occupied pavilion building as a direct let from the Council with the Council taking responsibility for all aspects of the management of the facilities.</p> <p>Proposal: The club to take responsibility for the interior of the part of the pavilion building it occupies, one of the bowling greens, with the second green being decommissioned to save costs, and the immediately adjacent planted areas; including the costs of these activities.</p> <p>The club is in discussion with the Blind and Partially Sighted Bowlers group with a view to continuing to accommodate that group at Mill Hill.</p>

	A lease of 5 years duration or management agreement for the provision of all services from the Council.
Friary Park BC Friary Park Barnet Mens BC and Barnet Womens BC Old Court House	Current: The clubs occupy the pavilion buildings, bowling greens, of which there are two at Old Court House, and the immediately adjacent planted areas as direct lets from the Council with the Council taking responsibility for all costs. Proposal: These clubs have indicated that they are not confident in developing financially sustainable proposals to allow them to remain in their current sites. They have agreed to enter into a conversation around a possible ground share. In this model, should the 2 clubs consolidate at Old Court House, the second bowling green will be decommissioned to reduce costs. Further work is required with these clubs to finalise a proposal for their future operation.

1.23 The above positions have been developed in the recognition that the clubs are unlikely, in the short term, to become fully financially self-sustaining due to their small membership levels and income streams.

1.24 The discussions to date suggest that, taken together, the above proposals could deliver a total annual saving of £80k, against the MTFS requirement of £100k, as follows:-

Proposal	Estimated saving
Oak Hill Park BC	4,152
Hendon BC	10,403
Finchley Victoria BC	16,846
East Barnet Valley BC	7,719
Mill Hill BC	17,024
Friary Park BC	7,942
Barnet BC	17,222
Total	81,308

1.25 Further discussions are required with the clubs to ensure that their business plans are realistic and capable of delivering the saving required by the MTFS. At this stage and to inform the future discussion, Environment Committee is requested to agree the above proposals for change to bowls in Barnet and the estimated savings and to instruct the officers to finalise negotiations with the

clubs with a view to the new arrangements becoming operative on 01 April 2017: with agreement to the final terms being delegated to the Commissioning Director for Environment; except to the extent authority is required from the Assets Regeneration and Growth Committee or those with delegated authority from them.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **Recommendation 1** – It is recommended that the Environment Committee notes progress to date on negotiations with the Bowls clubs relative to the MTFs savings requirement and instructs the officers to continue negotiations with the clubs. This will provide the officers with the framework within which to continue negotiations with the bowls clubs, in tandem with the Council's Estates team as appropriate.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 Closure of the bowling greens is not recommended as this would result in the cessation of the playing of bowls in the Council's parks and reduce the facilities available to support the Fit and Active Barnet strategy. The proposed renegotiation of arrangements will ensure the continuing availability of bowls in the Council's parks.

3. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 If the Committee is minded to agree the above recommendation, the officers will continue negotiations with the bowls clubs with a view to new arrangements being in place from 01 April 2017.

5 IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 The Council's Corporate Plan outlines that:-

- The Council will develop more innovative ways of maintaining its Parks and Greenspaces; including through greater partnerships with community groups and focus on using parks to to achieve wider public health priorities for the Borough.

5.1.2 The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy says:-

- Barnet is now the largest Borough in London by population (367,265 at the end of 2015) and is continuing to grow. The highest rates of population growth are forecast to occur around the planned development works in the west of the Borough; with over 113% growth in Golders Green and 56% in Colindale by 2030;
- Barnet Sport and Physical Activity Needs Assessment (2012) highlighted that whilst health behaviours and outcomes are more favourable in Barnet than in England as a whole, sport and physical

activity rates and the use of outdoor spaces are below the national average;

- A breadth of evidence demonstrates that a more active lifestyle is essential for physical and mental wellbeing. Regular physical activity helps reduce the risk of stroke, type II diabetes, development of dementia, incidences of heart disease, cancers and high blood pressure. Physical activity supports the prevention and management of long term conditions as well as being a component of achieving and maintaining a healthy weight;
- Physical inactivity currently costs the UK economy £7.2 billion. Additional costs are incurred via the wider economy through increased sickness absence, premature death of productive individuals and increased costs for individuals and their carers;
- Within Barnet the health costs of physical inactivity currently amount to £6.7 million. This is approximately £1.9 million per 100,000 of the Borough's population. However, as measured by the Sport England Active People Survey Data (APS9 Quarter 2) 43.8% of the Borough are currently inactive and would like to do more;
- The number of people with mental health conditions is predicted to increase as the population grows. In November 2014, the Health and Wellbeing Board identified prevention of and early intervention in mental health problems as a priority. Mental health is our key priority in year one of the LHWB Strategy with partners coming together to make a positive impact for all of our residents;
- Maximise the potential of improvements to and changes in the management of open spaces where this could support improved mental wellbeing.

5.1 **Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)**

5.2.1 **Finance, Value for Money and Procurement** – **Finance, Value for Money and Procurement** – The Council's MTFs requires a reduction of £100k in the annual revenue cost to the Council arising from bowling greens in its parks. £50k of this was profiled for 2016/17 and a £50k for 2017/18, totalling £100k. The current proposals total £81,308 (per para 1.17); the report seeks (Recommendation 2) delegation to the Commissioning Director Environment to agree the final terms of the new arrangements. Should the savings not total £100k, alternatives will be required.

5.2.2 **Staffing** – None at this time.

5.2.3 **IT** – None at this time

5.2.4 **Sustainability** – Moving the bowls clubs to a financially sustainable delivery model will protect their ongoing availability to Barnet residents

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

5.3.1 Local authorities have a number of different statutory powers in relation to parks and open spaces

5.3.2 It is recommended that the current leases or contracts with the bowling clubs are checked to determine what amendments are required to them as a result of the proposed changes. If leases or licences are currently in place it is likely that deeds of variation will be needed to reflect the changes once agreed by the parties. If there is no lease or licence in place for the bowling greens or any of them it is recommended that a lease should be granted. A licence is not appropriate unless the use of the green is genuinely shared with other users. Before granting a lease of open space (which for this purpose means land and/or buildings owned by the Council and used by the public for recreation) the Council is required to advertise for two consecutive weeks in a local newspaper and to take account of comments received in response in reaching its decision.

5.3.3 The Council's Constitution (Clause 15A: Responsibility for Functions, Annex A) sets out the terms of reference for the Environment Committee. This includes:-

- Commissioning parks and open spaces, refuse and recycling, waste minimisation and street cleaning and certain other matters;
- Approve any non-statutory plan or strategy within the remit of the Committee that is not reserved to Full Council or Policy and Resources Committee;
- Approve fees and charges for those areas under the remit of the Committee.

5.3.4 The Council's Constitution (Clause 15A: Responsibility for Functions, Annex A) sets out the terms of reference for the Assets, Regeneration and Growth Committee (ARG). These include:-

- To consider for approval any non statutory plan or strategy within the remit of the Committee that is not reserved to Full Council or Policy and Resources Committee;
- Asset Management – all matters relating to land and buildings owned, rented or proposed to be acquired or disposed of by the Council;
- Disposals (including leases, licences and deeds of variation) with a value of less than £100,000 can be approved by a Director or Deputy Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the Chairman of the appropriate Committee or certain other officers if less than £25,000 – but this does not apply to disposals at undervalue;
- The grant of any new leases or licences or the variation of existing leases or licences will need to be approved by ARG or through the scheme of delegation mentioned in this paragraph as appropriate.

5.4 Risk Management

- 5.4.1 The management of risk is undertaken on a continual basis and reported as part of the Council's Quarterly Performance regime and considered as part of the Performance and Contract Management Committee quarterly monitoring report.
- 5.4.2 Risks are managed through the project boards and are reviewed and revised at board meetings. The current key risk areas are:-

	Rating Criteria	1: Low	2: Medium	3: High
1.	Total investment required		X	
2.	Potential benefits	X		
3.	Return on investment	X		
4.	Level of risk	X		
5.	Political sensitivity	X		
6.	Fit with corporate objectives	X		
7.	Users/DU's impacted	X		
	Total score		8	

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

- 5.5.1 The Equalities Act, 2010 outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:-
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act, 2010;
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people of different groups;
 - Foster good relations between people from different groups.
- 5.5.2 Relevant protected characteristics are:- age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.
- 5.5.3 Changes to the operation and management of the Council's bowling greens bowling greens will have the potential to impact on all sectors of the community as the facilities are public facilities and accessible to all. The age profile of the membership of the bowls clubs is such that any changes in arrangements agreed will impact mostly on older people. An initial Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has been developed for the project. This will be developed and updated to reflect the outcome of the further negotiations with the clubs.

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

- 5.6.1 The initial proposals for the future of the bowling greens described in this report have been developed following discussions and negotiations with the bowls clubs. There will be further discussions with the clubs as the

proposals are developed and finalised.

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 LBB Medium Tern Financial Strategy

6.2 Open Barnet Data Portal

6.3 Members items at

<http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=695&Mid=8590&Ver=4>