

REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RESOURCES / EXECUTIVE

Date of Meeting: 16 March 2016 / 12 April 2016

Report of: Corporate Manager Property

Title: Exwick and Flowerpot Playing Fields

Is this a Key Decision?

No

Is this an Executive or Council Function?

Executive

1. What is the report about?

The report proposes the transfer by lease of the whole of Exwick and Flowerpot Playing Fields (shown on the annexed plan), including the changing rooms, to Exeter College but with continued use by the community.

2. Recommendation:

That the transfer by lease of the Exwick and Flowerpot Playing Fields be approved along the lines set out in this report but with the detailed terms to be agreed by the Corporate Manager Property in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder Enabling Services.

3. Reasons for the recommendation:

Corporate Plan objective to deliver the Exwick Hub and to secure operational savings on playing field management.

4. What are the resource implications including non-financial resources.

This proposal will reduce operational costs. The Assistant Director Public Realm advises that the total cost of running these playing fields/open spaces is about £20,000 per annum. Leasing the playing fields would however also result in the loss of income which is partly from the fees of hiring pitches and partly also from the loss of income from the flat over the changing rooms. These two together are about £10,000 per annum.

The proposal would therefore save the authority about £10,000 per annum.

The proposal will also provide for the provision of a new cricket wicket on Exwick Playing Fields and for a 3G pitch at the Hub site at no cost to the City Council.

5. Section 151 Officer comments:

The savings identified in the report form part of the overall savings identified for 2016/17.

6. What are the legal aspects?

Please see the Monitoring Officer comments below

7. Monitoring Officer's comments:

The transfer of the fields in this way may amount involve a TUPE transfer of staff who have hitherto undertaken the running and maintenance operations. Legal/HR advice on this aspect is therefore necessary.

8. Report details:

The proposed Heads of Terms for a lease are:

- 1) The land to be leased is shown coloured blue on the attached plan and would include trees and boundaries. The toilet block, skateboard park and netball area are not included. These areas would remain the Council's responsibility.
- 2) The lease would be for a term of 25 years.
- 3) The College would be responsible for the maintenance of all areas leased to them.
- 4) The land could only be used for public open space/playing fields/changing accommodation or ancillary uses.
- 5) The College will lay out a new all-weather cricket square on Exwick Playing Fields.
- 6) The College will construct a new all-weather 3G playing pitch on the adjoining playing fields previously known as the Civil Service Playing Fields.
- 7) A local Board would be established to oversee the public use of the playing fields. The makeup of the Board would include representatives from the Council and local sports clubs.

9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?

The proposal meets the purpose "support Exwick Sports Hub by transferring the playing fields to the college" and "reduce operating costs".

10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?

The main risks are that the College do not maintain the area to the standard anticipated or that community use is not available as conveniently or as affordably as anticipated.

These risks will be reduced by having a joint Board to advise on public use/hiring of facilities. The makeup and terms of reference of the Board have yet to be determined.

11. What is the impact of the decision on equality and diversity; health and wellbeing; safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults, community safety and the environment?

No direct impact, save for the potential for improved sporting facilities for the city as a whole.

12. Are there any other options?

The alternative to granting a lease is not granting a lease and retaining direct management of the playing fields.

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Corporate Manager Property

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

None

Contact for enquires:

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