

TITLE OF REPORT: Surplus Declaration and Community Asset Transfer of the Training Room & Bowling Green, Saltwell Park

REPORT OF: Colin Huntington, Strategic Director, Housing, Environment and Healthy Communities

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval to (i) declare surplus the training room and bowling green (The Property) at Saltwell Park, to the Council's requirements, and (ii) outline the future proposals for the property after it being declared surplus.

Background

2. The Property, shown edged black on the attached plan, is held for leisure purposes. The majority of the building has been underused for a number of years and the bowling club, that was previously using part of the accommodation and the bowling green, has been dissolved.
3. The Recovery College Collective (ReCoCo), a local charity which supports people with mental health issues, has applied to take a lease of the Property to use as a base for their work. Through its work, the organisation will also assist the Council with its improvement proposals for the Park.

Proposal

4. It is proposed that the Property be declared surplus to the Council's requirements and to facilitate the grant of a 25 year lease, to ReCoCo, pursuant to the Council's Community Asset Transfer policy.

Recommendations

5. It is recommended that Cabinet: -
 - (i) Declare the Property surplus to the Council's requirements; and
 - (ii) Authorise the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance to grant a 25 year lease at nil rent pursuant to the Council's Community Asset Transfer policy.

For the following reasons: -

- (i) To manage resources and rationalise the Council's assets in line with the Corporate Asset Strategy and Management Plan.
- (ii) To realise savings identified through rationalisation of the bowling green portfolio.

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APPENDIX 1: Training Room at Saltwell Park, Gateshead NE8 4SF

Policy Context

1. The proposed surplus declaration supports the overall vision for Making Gateshead a Place Where Everyone Thrives, in particular supporting communities to support themselves and each other.
2. The proposed declaration will also accord with the provisions of the update of the Corporate Asset Strategy and Management Plan 2015 – 2020. In particular, the rationalisation of the Councils estate.

Background

3. In 2018, ReCoCo applied to take a lease of Bill Quay Farm, but their proposals were not considered suitable for that property. However, as the purpose of the charity is to provide peer support to people with mental health issues and much of their work is based outdoors, it was suggested that they look to develop proposals for the Training Room in Saltwell Park.
4. The Property, which is shown edged black on the attached plan, is held by the Council for leisure purposes and has been underused for a number of years. The bowling club using part of the building and the adjacent green has been dissolved, with bowlers wishing to continue the sport moving to other clubs.
5. ReCoCo is able to access funding to undertake some building improvements and has been in discussions with the Council as to how their work can help implement improvement proposals the Council has for the Wildlife Garden in the park.
6. ReCoCo has requested that the building be transferred to them pursuant to the Council's Community Asset Transfer policy. Given the location of the training room and bowling green within the Park, and the need for this occupier to work closely with the Council in relation to how the use of the building develops, it is considered that a 25 year lease and partnership agreement is most appropriate in this instance.

Proposal

7. It is proposed that the Property, shown edged black on the plan be declared surplus to the Council's requirements and a 25 year lease at nil rent, be granted to the ReCoCo.

Consultation

8. In preparing this report consultations have taken place with the Leader, Deputy Leader, Communities and Volunteering Portfolio Holders and Ward Councillors for Saltwell.

Alternative Options

9. The option of not granting a lease has been discounted as maintenance of the green and pavilion had been identified as an efficiency saving. There were no alternative viable options for the use of the property.

Implications of Recommended Option

10. Resources:

- a) **Financial Implications** - The Strategic Director, Resources and Digital confirms that there are no financial implications arising from this recommendation.
- b) **Human Resources Implications** - There are no direct staffing implications arising from the recommendations in this report.
- c) **Property Implications** - The grant of a lease of this property will result in a reduction in the Council's operational costs.

11. **Risk Management Implications** - There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

12. **Equality and Diversity Implications** - There are no implications arising from this recommendation.

13. **Crime and Disorder Implications** - The grant of a lease of this property will reduce opportunities for crime and disorder, especially vandalism and theft.

14. **Health Implications** - There are health implications arising as result of this report, as the activities provided by the tenant provide both physical and mental health benefits to people who participate in the activities delivered.

15. **Climate Emergency and Sustainability Implications** - The grant of a lease will ensure the future sustainability of the pavilion and bowling green.

16. **Human Rights Implications** - There are no implications arising from this recommendation.

17. **Ward Implications** – Saltwell.

18. **Background Information** – None.