

COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee: ARTS AND LEISURE COMMITTEE.....
Date of Meeting: 24TH SEPTEMBER 1991.....
Title of Report: VICTORIA RECREATION GROUND - TILEHURST.....
Agenda Item No:R.....
For Decision/Information: DECISION.....
Wards affected: KENTWOOD/TILEHURST.....
Services involved: LEISURE.....
Officer Contact:
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Designation: LEISURE MANAGER..... Services: LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES.....

1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 To report on recent negotiations over the future management of Victoria Recreation Ground, Tilehurst, and to propose the terms of a possible development partnership.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 To accept the principle of a partnership to develop the sports and other facilities at Victoria Recreation Ground, Tilehurst between Tilehurst Poores' Lands' Charity, Reading Borough Council, Tilehurst Cricket Club, Tilehurst Football Club and Tilehurst Club Football Club.

2.2 That you adopt the principle of an seven point plan set out in paragraph 3.5.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Victoria Recreation Ground, Tilehurst is owned by the Tilehurst Poores' Lands' Charity, and leased to the Council by the Charity's Trustees. It has been managed as a Public Park, and the sports pitches there let to Football and Cricket Clubs in the usual fashion. Historically, it has provided a home ground for Tilehurst Cricket Club and Tilehurst Football Club (Saturdays). A variety of other teams have played there as well.

3.2 Tilehurst Football Club originally approached the Council about possible ground and pavilion improvements, because their ambitions to play a higher standard of Football was frustrated by their inability to meet the ground requirements of the competitions they wished to enter.

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- (2) That a panel of five people, to include the Chair of the Arts and Leisure Services Committee, a local Councillor and local residents, be appointed by the Director of Leisure and Environmental Services to interview prospective partners.
- (3) That the Director of Leisure and Environmental Services be given delegated authority to select a partner, following the advice of the panel.
- (4) That officers be authorised to draw up a development agreement with any successful partner, subject to the approval of the terms of the agreement by the Policy and Resources Committee.

27. VICTORIA RECREATION GROUND - TILEHURST

The Director of Leisure and Environmental Services submitted a report on recent negotiations on the future management of Victoria Recreation Ground, (owned by Tilehurst Poor's Lands Charity and leased to the Council) and proposals for a possible development partnership, with three local sports clubs. He stated that a seven point plan for the future development of the Ground had been drawn up by the local clubs and Council officers as follows:

- (1) To take a long-term view of the development and to make sure that all decisions relating to the partnership serve the best long-term interests of the Recreation Ground.
- (2) To make the redevelopment of the pavilion the first phase of the partnership's activity.
- (3) The three sports clubs to form a Joint Development Committee before 31 December, 1991, to represent the three clubs' interests in the partnership.
- (4) The Joint Development Committee of the three clubs to write a development plan for the Recreation Ground, for consideration by the Council and the Trustees before 31 December, 1992.
- (5) To guarantee reasonable public access to the Recreation Ground between dawn and dusk, except on match days.
- (6) To transfer responsibility for pitch allocation and collection of fees on behalf of the Council to the Joint Development Committee from the start of the cricket and football seasons in 1992.
- (7) The Council to retain its existing lease until its expiry in September, 1997.

Resolved -

- (1) That the principle of a partnership agreement to develop sports and other facilities at Victoria Recreation Ground, Tilehurst, between the Council, Tilehurst Poor's Lands Charity, Tilehurst

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Cricket Club, Tilehurst Football Club and Tilehurst Club Football Club be approved.

- (2) That the principle of the seven point plan set out above be adopted.

28. READING HALF MARATHON

The Director of Leisure and Environmental Services submitted a report on a proposal to hold the Reading Half Marathon event on 26 April, 1992. He stated that it was proposed to maintain the same venue, Rivermead Leisure Centre, as used in 1991 with a slight change to the route of an added loop in the Prospect Park area to eliminate problems experienced with the start and final yards of the race using the Cardiff Road/Tessa Road loop.

Resolved -

- (1) That the Reading Half Marathon and Mini-Marathon be supported in 1992.
- (2) That details of the required road closures be submitted to the meeting of the Planning and Transport Committee to be held on 7 October, 1991.

29. 21 SOUTH STREET - USE OF UPSTAIRS ROOMS

The Director of Leisure and Environmental Services submitted a report on the development of the future use of the upstairs rooms at 21 South Street, currently used by the Community Welfare Rights Unit and the Federation of Pakistani Community Groups. He outlined the long-term development possibilities of relocating the Community Groups to more appropriate accommodation and of expanding the role of 21 South Street as a first class Arts Centre.

Resolved -

That the long-term policy of arts and community use of 21 South Street as set out in the report be endorsed.

30. HEXAGON ROOF REPAIR WORKS

The Director of Leisure and Environmental Services submitted a report seeking approval to proceed with urgent interim repair works to the Hexagon roof.

Resolved -

- (1) That, subject to the concurrence of the Policy and Resources Committee, capital expenditure of £100,000 on interim repair works to the Hexagon roof be approved.

Investigation revealed that Tilehurst Cricket Club also felt that ambitions were limited by the standard of the pavilion accommodation.

3.3 A preliminary meeting was held on the 22nd July 1991 between Council officers, the Charity's Trustees and representatives of Tilehurst C.C., Tilehurst F.C. and Tilehurst Club (Sunday) F.C. to see if, in principle, there was any support for the idea of forming a partnership to develop the ground for the sports use, whilst retaining public access and use as a Park. There was broad agreement, that subject to certain safeguards and conditions, that further discussions would be useful.

3.4 A further meeting was held between Council officers and the Sports Club representatives to identify the priorities for any development plan.

Following that meeting, it was agreed that I would write this report for submission to both Arts and Leisure Services Committee and the Tilehurst Poors' Lands' Charity Trustees (1st October 1991), in order to gain formal support for a seven point plan.

3.5 Seven Point Plan

- (a) To take a long term view of the development, and to make sure that all decisions relating to the partnership serve the best long term interests of the Recreation Ground.
- (b) To make the redevelopment of the pavilion the first phase of the partnership's activity.
- (c) The three sports clubs to form a Joint Development Committee before 31st December 1991 to represent the three clubs interests in the partnership.
- (d) The Joint Development Committee of the three clubs to write a development plan for the Recreation Ground, for consideration by the Council and the Trustees before 31st December 1992.
- (e) To guarantee reasonable public access to the Recreation Ground between dawn and dusk, except on match days.
- (f) To transfer responsibility for pitch allocation and collection of fees on behalf of the Council to the Joint Development Committee from the start of the cricket and football seasons in 1992.
- (g) Reading Borough Council to retain its existing lease until its expiry in September 1997.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are certain conditions in the lease which require the Trustee's consent, including entering into this type of partnership with the Sports Clubs, therefore it is important that the Trustees also agree formally to the seven point plan.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The annual lease payment, and the grounds and building maintenance costs are contained within existing budgets. There is no capital available for the improvements to the pavilion.

6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Sports Club will have to demonstrate their commitment to the Council's Equal Opportunity Policy, in particular how they intend to meet the needs of the target groups (Women, Elderly, Black, Unemployed/Low Income, Disabled).

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 Files held in Leisure and Development Section.