

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL**Report by Chief Officer: Resources****Infrastructure Regeneration and Economic Development Committee:****7 February 2024**

Subject: Lease of Knowes Sports Pavilion, Langside Street, Faifley G81 5HJ to the Flourishing Faifley group.

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval for West Dunbartonshire Council (the Council) to transfer Knowes Sports Pavilion (Knowes) to Flourishing Faifley Community Group (the group).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Approves the 25 year lease of Knowes Sports Pavilion to Flourishing Faifley Community Group with a target date of entry prior to 31 March 2024.
- (ii) Authorises the Chief Officer Resources to conclude negotiations.
- (iii) Authorises the Chief Officer Regulatory and Regeneration to conclude the transaction on such conditions as considered appropriate.

3. Background

- 3.1** In March 2023, as part of savings options put forward to address a £21million budget gap, members agreed to review community facility provision across West Dunbartonshire. The review sought to reduce the provision to a level more consistent with neighbouring local authorities and address reduced usage post-pandemic. The £257,000 saving will be achieved through the reduction in the budget for community facilities managed by West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust. Transferring responsibility to manage and control community facilities to voluntary organisations through a combination of community asset transfers or community lease arrangements would reduce the costs to West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust and to the Council.
- 3.2** Whilst Knowes was not part of this initial review, the Council continue to engage with groups across the authority to encourage transfer of ownerships where possible either by disposal, community asset transfer or lease arrangements.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1** The group is a community group formed and based in Faifley. Their community garden promotes self-sufficiency in the local community, provides a drop-in service to promote health and well-being, offers activities and outdoor learning to the local community and schools, and facilitates community led events to promote positive community engagement. The group wish to relocate their existing community garden and allotment areas to the pavilion and associated land, in addition, establish a permanent base at this location.
- 4.2** The group are members of the Keep Scotland Beautiful organisation which is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) and registered as a Scottish Charity with the Scottish Charity Register (OSCR). They are governed by a Board of Charity Trustees all of which are appointed and co-opted by the Board members.
- 4.3** Keep Scotland Beautiful operate a 'It's Your Neighbourhood' scheme, a community environmental improvement initiative managed in partnership with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) under the Britain in Bloom campaign. It runs alongside Beautiful Scotland but is non-competitive and is based on the three pillars of: community participation; environmental responsibility and gardening achievement.
- 4.4** Knowes comprises two full size former natural grass football pitches which bookings are no longer taken from and is therefore unused, a single standalone pavilion building including changing/shower facilities and a surfaced parking area adjacent.
- 4.5** The pavilion building is being refurbished by Morrison Construction, at their cost. This is part of their Community Benefit obligations in respect of their nearby Faifley Campus new development. The refurbishment involves making the premises wind & watertight with works currently ongoing, anticipated to be completed in the relatively near future.
- 4.6** The group intend to use only one of the two pitches for conversion to community garden and allotment use, managed and maintained wholly by them. The remaining pitch will convert to an open space area for public use. Greenspace have advised they have no objection to and support this proposal. This will also remove the current maintenance burden and cost of grass cutting of the pitches, undertaken by the Greenspace team.
- 4.7** Flourishing Faifley therefore wish to assume a lease of Knowes. It is proposed, subject to the group's necessary internal approvals, to offer them a rent free period with effect from the agreed date of entry until the first contracted rent review within the lease on the fifth anniversary of the date of entry.

4.8 The offer of lease will be subject to agreement of the usual terms and conditions associated with a full repairing lease with a target date of entry prior to 31 March 2024.

4.9 Flourishing Faifley wish to retain the option of a Community Asset Transfer at any time during the period of lease.

5. People Implications

5.1 There are no significant people implications other than the resources required by Legal Services to negotiate missives and conclude the transaction.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

6.1 The Council will no longer incur resources in managing and maintaining the property.

6.2 No financial outlays are required by the Council to facilitate this arrangement.

6.3 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

7. Risk Analysis

7.1 The lease will be subject to legal due diligence. There is a risk of the lease not proceeding due to any emerging issues during the diligence and leasing process. This is standard for any lease transaction.

8. Environmental Sustainability

8.2 Any refurbishment of the property will require to be in line with current building standards.

9. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment is not applicable for the purpose of this report.

10. Consultation

10.1 Consultations have been undertaken with Finance, Regeneration and Regulatory, Greenspace, Citizen Culture & Facilities and West Dunbartonshire Leisure Trust.

11. Strategic Assessment

11.1 By agreeing to this proposal the Council will benefit from savings in relation to operating costs and maintenance.

11.2 The recommendation in this report supports the delivery of the Council Strategic Plan and in particular the achievement of the following priorities:

- Our Communities – Resilient and Thriving;
- Our Council – Inclusive and Adaptable

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Date: 31 January 2024

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Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	None
Wards Affected:	Ward 4