

POW BECK REGENERATION INITIATIVE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Cllr Mike Ashbrook

LEAD OFFICER: Mike Tichford

REPORT AUTHOR: Graham McWilliam

Summary: The report updates Members on progress towards the proposed re-development of the Rugby League Stadium and details the key issues that must be resolved before any development can proceed.

Recommendation:	a) Members are requested to accept the Stage 1 Report. b) Members agree that the Council should continue to support Stage 2 of the project and act as client for the work. c) To approve Delegation of Authority to the Deputy Leader and Corporate Director (Economic Prosperity and Sustainability) for management responsibility of the project to ensure delivery is achieved.
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Impact on delivering the Corporate Plan: The project is part of the Pow Beck Regeneration Initiative which is a key element in the Council's aim of creating and sustaining a healthy local economy.

Impact on other statutory objectives (e.g. crime & disorder, LA21): None

Financial and human resource implications: The Council have been asked to make a £10K contribution towards the costs of the stadium "Stage 2" report which is likely to cost between £60K and £70K. This is to be financed from the previously approved revenue based regeneration under spend brought forward from 2005/06. Remaining funding to be provided by Partners.

Project & Risk Management: None

Key Decision Status

- **Financial:** N/A
- **Ward:** N/A

Other Ward Implications: None

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Copeland Borough Council, West Lakes Renaissance and Whitehaven RLFC in August 2006 setting out the key objectives for the Stadium Redevelopment.

1.2 A Development Plan for the Pow Beck Valley area has been produced as part of the Whitehaven Regeneration Programme. A Key Project identified by this Plan is the redevelopment of the existing Rugby League Stadium.

- 1.3 The Stadium Delivery Group have now completed the Stage 1 Report, which has been considered by Corporate Team and Portfolio Holder and Leader.

The Pow Beck Valley Stadium Delivery Group has been formed by British Nuclear Group, Copeland Borough Council, West Lakes Renaissance and Whitehaven RLFC to deliver the objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding

2. ARGUMENT

The key issues and recommendations to emerge from the Stage 1 report are as follows:

- 2.1 Land ownership and lease issues are the most significant barriers to redevelopment. Early discussions with the landowners, Whitehaven Miners Social Centre, to establish the position they are taking are critical. The Rugby Club does not currently have an agreement in place, to use the stadium land.
- 2.2 The Japanese Knotweed contamination is a significant impediment to any development of the stadium.
- 2.3 The preferred option is for the provision of an enhanced stadium with a mix of multi-functional facilities and income streams. This is seen as the only option that has a realistic chance of providing long-term sustainability, however, the mix of facilities is crucial and needs careful consideration and business planning.
- 2.4 The Pow Beck projects should result in the provision of facilities and programmes which are mutually supportive and not in competition. This particularly relates to the synergy between the Stadium and the proposed new leisure facility.
- 2.5 The availability of capital funding is a key barrier which will have to be overcome, it will demand an innovative approach. The available funding does not match the requirements of the individual options with negligible funding available for the low cost options ie no BNG funding for minimal standard facility improvements. Whilst that available for the more comprehensive option falls below what is required.
- 2.6 Large scale Private Sector investment in and ownership of the stadium is not likely to be supported by Partners.

3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

Following consideration of this document the Group would recommend the following actions as the next stage in the process:

- 3.1 Confirmation is sought from the Partners that they accept and endorse the recommendations of this report and support the Delivery Group in carrying out these next steps.
- 3.2 Detailed discussions are started as a matter of urgency with the Whitehaven Miners Social Welfare Centre and their Solicitors to review the options and their respective positions including and sale or swap arrangements. Without a solution to the land ownership issues, no development of the Stadium can take place.
- 3.3 WRLFC should take immediate steps to eradicate the Japanese Knotweed from all parts of the stadium.
- 3.4 Discussions are held with an existing Leisure Trust to clarify their position, and their proposed involvement in the work of the Stadium Group.
- 3.5 Clarification is sought from West Lakes Renaissance, Copeland Borough Council and the RLFC on the level of financial support they are willing to commit to Stage 2 of the Stadium project.

3.6 The Aims and Objectives of Stage 2 are agreed and a Consultant brief is prepared for technical assistance in the development.

3.7 A draft press statement on progress is agreed.

4 CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The objectives of the Stage 2 work are as follows:

- Identify and agree a sustainable and deliverable facilities mix
- Produce outline scheme designs and cost estimates
- Agree Project Phasing
- Identify Capital and Revenue funding opportunities
- Agree the proposed Ownership and Management arrangement for the Stadium
- Preparation of an outline business plan for the Stadium Development
- Recommendation of procurement route
- An action plan and timescale are agreed
- Preparation of Outline Project and Risk Management
- A desk top contaminated land study is initiated followed by intrusive studies if required
- Prepare action plan based on the outputs from the Flood Risk Assessment
- Draft funding applications
- Notification of Project to HSE.

4.2 The report which went to the Executive on 25 July 2006 (Decision reference EXE/06/0057) gave delegated powers to the Portfolio Holder and Director (Fergus McMorrow, Corporate Director Economic Prosperity and Sustainability) to agree the implementation of project options on Pow Beck. It has therefore been agreed that the Council will be the Client for the Stage 2 Study.

4.3 The Council's Economic and Tourism Development Manager has submitted a bid for £45K of funding from West Lakes Renaissance towards the cost of the Stage 2 work.

4.4 Whitehaven Rugby League Club have now confirmed that they are not prepared to make a contribution towards the costs of the study, despite their being a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding.

4.5 Depending on the results of the Tender process there may be a funding shortfall to undertake the Stage 2 work.

4.6 The Rugby Stadium project should not be regarded as a project in isolation as it links to the whole Masterplan for the Pow Beck Valley site. It is affected by other pieces of work that are currently being undertaken.

4.7 The Flood Risk Assessment Study is progressing well. Interim findings are to be presented to a meeting of the Working Group on 6 November, in Penrith.

4.8 The proposed "site servicing" project, which was providing vital infrastructure works to the value of around £900K is likely to be withdrawn unless to the outstanding land ownership

issues can be urgently resolved. This level of cost may now have to be borne by future development projects on the site.

List of Appendices

None

List of Background Documents:

Stadium Delivery Project – Stage 1 Report – October 2006.
Memorandum of Understanding – dated 10.8.06
Brief for Stage 2 – October 2006.

List of Consultees:

Corporate Team, Councillor Mike Ashbrook, Cath Coombs.