

POW BECK REGENERATION INITIATIVE

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: Cllr Mike Ashbrook
LEAD OFFICER: Mike Tichford
REPORT AUTHOR: Graham McWilliam

Summary: The report outlines a proposal to provide a new stand with over 1,000 seats, at the railway end of the Rugby League Stadium at Pow Beck, Whitehaven.

Recommendation:	a) Members are requested to support the proposal in principle, to acquire the seating for the Railway End, in Partnership with West Lakes Renaissance. b) The Project is subject to the Rugby Club securing its share of the funding required. c) A further report detailing full costings and rental charges to be presented to a further meeting of the Executive.
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Impact on delivering the Corporate Plan: The development of the Rugby Stadium 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: None at this stage

Project & Risk Management: None

Key Decision Status

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

Other Ward Implications: None

1. INTRODUCTION AS PER REPORT DATED 21 NOVEMBER 2006

- 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 Deliver Group have now completed the Stage 1 Report, which has been considered by Corporate Team, Portfolio Holder and Leader. The Pow Beck Valley Stadium Deliver Group has been formed by British Nuclear Group. Copeland Borough Council, West Lakes Renaissance and Whitehaven Rugby League Club to deliver the objectives of the Memorandum of Understanding.
- 1.4 At their meeting on the 21st November 2006, The Executive approved the Council acting as client for the stage "2" Consultancy work, to be undertaken by White, Young and Green.

2. ARGUMENT

- 2.1 In order to meet the minimum requirements of entry to the Super League, Whitehaven Rugby League Club are required to have 1,500 seats, within the stadium. At present they have 550 seats located in the Main Stand.
- 2.2 An opportunity has arisen to provide an additional 1000 seats at the Railway End of the Stadium, utilising demountable seats which could be taken down if required for any major events in the town. A stand will be erected to give cover for spectators. A similar building has been erected at Gretna Football Club to meet Scottish League 1 requirements.

3. OPTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED

- 3.1 West Lakes Renaissance have indicated that they, in partnership with the Council, would fund the purchase of additional seating provision at the Railway End. It is proposed that the Council would own the seating which could be used for wider community use, in supporting major events in Copeland. The Council would rent the seating back to the rugby club with the income being "ringfenced" for future maintenance of the seating.
- 3.2 The remaining costs for the stand and groundworks would have to be funded by the Whitehaven Rugby Club and sponsoring organisations.
- 3.3 The total cost of the project is estimated at £300,000 with the seating costing in the region of £100,000.

4 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 At present, Whitehaven Rugby League Club could not be promoted to the Super League, due to the ground failing to meet the minimum standards of the league.
- 4.2 This project would go "part way" to meeting Super League requirements and enable the club and its supporters to hold realistic ambitions of gaining promotion.

List of Appendices

None

List of Background Documents:

Quote from "Arena Seating" dated 22 November 2006. Pow Beck Valley Stadium delivery project – stage 1 report – October 2006

List of Consultees:

Corporate Team, Cllr Ashbrook, Paul Crooks West Lakes Renaissance