

Report To: Cabinet

Date of Meeting: 4 January 2022

Report Title: Part of Bowls Pavilion and Bowling Green at Alexandra Park

Report By: Peter Grace

Key Decision: N

Classification: Open

Purpose of Report

To agree which proposal received to take a lease of part of the Bowls Pavilion and Bowling Green should be progressed.

Recommendation(s)

- 1. To recommend to Full Council to progress with the proposal from Art on Prescription and delegate authority to the Estates Manager to agree Heads of Terms for a lease.**

Reasons for Recommendations

1. While the proposal is not the highest rent offered it provides the widest community benefit, so the potential financial loss is outweighed by the benefit.
2. The proposal from Art on Prescription is not the highest rent offered so the decision to proceed will need to be considered at Full Council.

Introduction

1. The pavilion and green were marketed with a closing date for Expressions of Interest of 27 August 2021. Details are attached in Appendix 1.

Background

2. At the closing date 6 proposals were received from different organisations.
3. The proposed uses were:
 - a. Community Farm, event space and farm shop.
 - b. Inclusive Centre for families and children to access including baby and toddler classes/sessions.
 - c. Mixed use facility – community hire Mon-Fri, café and outdoor leisure facilities at weekends and school holidays, private hire venue for celebrations and events in the evenings.
 - d. Pre-school sporting facility.
 - e. Dog Grooming Business.
 - f. Therapeutic wellbeing/visitor/education/gallery/cultural/pop up community space.
4. The proposals have been carefully considered looking at whether they would be acceptable in terms of use, the overall benefit to the community and financial considerations. On balance it is felt that the final proposal (f) will be acceptable in terms of Planning use, provides the widest community benefit and the activities will not jeopardise the enjoyment of the park for users.
5. The rental offers received varied in a range from £1,000 to £6,000. Proposal (f) is for £1,000 rental for the first development year and then a review to a fair and sustainable rent.

Art on Prescription

6. Proposal (f) was put forward by Art on Prescription who are a not-for-profit organisation providing creative activities, reminiscence and confidence building workshops designed to enhance mental health, wellbeing and promote social engagement.
7. Their proposal is for 'Art in the Park' which would be a cultural hub, raising awareness of the park as a valuable community asset and essential natural habitat that needs to be sustained and protected - whilst being used by various community groups that promote connecting with nature, preserving the environment, and enhancing wellbeing.
8. They have suggested an initial 12-month development strategy to work with the local community, residents and other interested groups. They are looking for a 5-year lease with a break clause and review after 1 year and first option to extend the lease at the end of term. This to be a Landlord repairing lease.

Conditions & Financial Implications

9. It was envisaged that a letting would be on a full repairing basis to avoid future liabilities for the Council. Art on Prescription have suggested a Landlord repairing lease, but we would only consider this for the initial 12-month period and thereafter it will need to be full repairing.
10. The rent is not the highest offered in the 1st year, but this is to be reviewed to a fair and sustainable rent.
11. There would be some costs and resources implications for the Council in letting this facility to this organisation as it would involve separating the utilities, installing check meters and recharging the costs.

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness

12. The aims and objectives of the Art on Prescription organisation are considered to meet a wide range of equalities and community cohesiveness objectives.

Conclusion

13. The proposal from Art on Prescription is not the highest rent offered so the decision to proceed will need to be determined at Full Council. It is recommended that delegated authority be given to the Estates Manager to agree heads of terms.

Timetable of Next Steps

14. Please include a list of key actions and the scheduled dates for these:

Action	Key milestone	Due date (provisional)	Responsible
Consideration by Full Council	Decision made	9 February 2022	Estates
Heads of Terms for a lease negotiated & agreed	Legal instructed	28 February 2022	Estates
Tenant starts occupation	Lease completed	1 April 2022	Legal/Estates

Wards Affected

Braybrooke.

Policy Implications

Reading Ease Score:

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness	Y/ N
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)	Y /N
Risk Management	Y /N
Environmental Issues & Climate Change	Y /N
Economic/Financial Implications	Y/ N
Human Rights Act	Y /N
Organisational Consequences	Y /N
Local People's Views	Y/ N
Anti-Poverty	Y /N
Legal	Y/ N

Additional Information

Appendix 1 – Marketing particulars

Officer to Contact

Officer: Amy Terry
Email: aterry@hastings.gov.uk