

FORWARD PLAN SELECT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 28th March 2006

Briefing Note – John Billam Update

Background

The Corporate Deciding Committee on 17th January 2001 agreed the recommendations of the Director of Environmental Services and the Manager Corporate Property Services to dispose of the John Billam Sports Pavilion to the Trustees of the Gujarati Arya Association on the basis of an Agreement for Lease and Lease for 125 years, following competitive tender.

The GAA have since July 2002 been in occupation of the pavilion at John Billam sports ground on the basis of an agreement for lease. This arrangement protects the Council's interest in the property and imposes strict conditions on the GAA to undertake improvement works to the pavilion as approved by the Council. Once the approved improvement works are completed to the satisfaction of the Council, the agreement to lease automatically converts to a fully repairing lease.

Current Status

The completion of the lease was originally scheduled for June 2004, however the GAA had been having problems with their on site building contractor, who has since been dismissed and which has resulted in a delay for the completion of the works

Changing Rooms

The Building Control Surveyor confirmed that upon his latest inspection (Monday 10th March) of the premises as a whole, the Fire Alarm system requires Certification, the drains require a formal test, and disabled access hand-railing is to be finished off. These do not appear significant issues and it is intended to use the Agreement for Lease to advise GAA that we require these matters to be attended to within 28 days. Following a successful re-inspection we will be in a position to formally accept handover of the Changing Rooms.

Main Building

As above, not yet formally completed, therefore the main 125 year Lease is not yet grantable to the GAA, though clearly this nears finalisation. Occupation continues meanwhile under the Agreement for Lease arrangement.

Sale Proceeds

There is an Item on Forward Plan for the April Executive which intends to recommend the deployment of the balance of the lease premium towards grounds maintenance / playing fields relaying / resurfacing / drainage work, to be specified. This is in line with an earlier Corporate Deciding Committee decision made on 17th January 2001. Pending discussion at this Capital Board the drafting of any report has been put on hold.

In the unlikely event that the scheme fails the lease would not be entered into and the building would then the building would automatically revert back to Council ownership with no financial loss to the Council. All improvement works to date valued at approximately £500k have been funded by the GAA.

Shaun Faulkner
Head of Parks Service