

# Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Corporate Director for Place  
to  
Cabinet

on  
18th June 2013

Report prepared by: Kate Trueman  
Leisure & Sports Manager

Agenda  
Item No.

**25**

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## Proposed Development of Lower Thames Rowing Club Boat/Club House Place Scrutiny Committee – Executive Councillor: Councillor Jarvis

“A Part 1 Public Agenda item.”

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### 1. Purpose of Report

Inform members of the proposal to build a Boat/Club House in partnership with Lower Thames Rowing Club (LTRC) at Two Tree Island.

### 2. Recommendation

2.1 That Members support the Lower Thames Rowing Club proposal to develop a Boat/Club House at Two Tree Island that will be funded by Southend on Sea Borough Council and Sport England.

2.2 That Members approve in principle to lease the Boat/Club House to the Lower Thames Rowing Club for use as a Boat/Club House for a period of 25 years; subject to the necessary planning permissions being obtained.

2.3 That Members agree to authorise the Corporate Director for Corporate Services to agree the terms of the lease in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Culture & Tourism based on advice and assistance from Property & Regeneration and Asset Management.

2.4 That Members note that a consultation process will be undertaken on the Bell Wharf Scheme during the Summer months.

### 3. Background

3.1 The LTRC was founded in late 2002, when eight members of a local yacht club acquired a fleet of 16ft skiffs from a boating lake in Hampshire.

Since then the club has grown slowly, with members enjoying rowing on the creeks between Benfleet & Leigh as well as further afield on a regular basis.

3.2 Currently, the LTRC have boats/equipment stored in two locations, which is not ideal whereby one is in a local boat yard and is on a grace and favour arrangement and the LTRC have a small designated area they can use.

However, the management of the boatyard are concerned as to the amount of space LTRC occupy. The other area that LTRC have for storage is a container at Two Tree Island.

- 3.3 LTRC is an active club and row all year round, including the winter months. Their membership is restricted due to the lack of ground space and storage for more boats. A Boat/Club House will give LTRC a secure location and enable them to increase their fleet to accommodate a growing membership; otherwise the potential for the LTRC to expand is limited.
- 3.4 The LTRC membership has grown substantially in the last two years from 48 to 70 (some 40%); however the current facilities are not adequate to enable the club to continue to grow its membership. A purpose built facility will enable further membership growth (this is anticipated at 15-20% plus) and the membership would include many more recreational and associate members.
- 3.5 Dependent on the funding available and the intricacies of the building requirements, the new facility would either be a boat house with basic toilet/changing facilities or a Boat/Club House that will include fitness and functions rooms to enable the LTRC to run training camps throughout the winter and summer; currently they teach Learn to Row Programme in the open air, with all the associated limitations. The opportunity would also be taken to work with Southend Marine Activity Centre (SMAC) to maximise the use of the new facility.
- 3.6 British Rowing fully supports the club and the proposal to build a Boat/Club House.
- 3.7 LTRC is a club that has an enormous potential to grow, if it has the right facilities. Rowing is a priority sport identified within the The Council's Leisure & Sports Strategy. Consultation has been undertaken with British Rowing and the LTRC in regard to how participation could be increased and what would facilitate this. It was agreed by all parties that the provision of a Boat/Club House would ensure the development of rowing in Southend.
- 3.8 The Council has identified £200,000 in the 2013/2014 capital programme towards cost of a boat house building.
- 3.9 The £200,000 capital funding would only cover the cost of a boat house with basic changing facilities. If the LTRC were to apply for the Sport England Inspired Facilities funding stream they are only eligible for a grant up to £50,000; local authorities are able to apply for up to £150,000. Therefore the opportunity exists for the Council to apply into the last round of the funding in October 2013 when the bidding stream opens.
- 3.10 If the Council is not successful in obtaining the £150,000 from Sport England, the £200,000 capital money from the Council will enable the smaller scale project to be progressed, which will include storage for the boats, toilet and foreshore facilities with the potential to further develop the facility at a later date.
- 3.11 The development of the boathouse is also intended to provide facilities for the Pier and Foreshore services including a foreshore office.

- 3.12 The Boat/Club House would be used during club training sessions and rowing competitions to provide a warm and comfortable environment for members, competitors, spectators and officials. It would also be used for meetings arranged by the LTRC for the purpose of club business.
- 3.13 The Boat/Club House will help support the delivery of the following objectives for the club:
- Attract new members
  - Increase participation
  - Raise standards in coaching
  - Improve the quality of experience of the club for all users
  - Gain Clubmark accreditation
  - Develop opportunities for athlete development
  - Increase volunteer base
- 3.14 The Council architect has drafted plans, which further to discussions with the LTRC, and Sport England will be submitted to planning. The exact location of the boat house within the car park area will be determined following consideration of the foreshore access requirements and included in the planning application (See draft outline proposed drawings & area of land for proposed build in Appendix 1, 2 & 3)
- 3.15 To enable the Council to meet the requirements of Sport England lottery funding criteria, the club will be required to have a long term lease on the facility.
- 3.16 An Officer from the Council has been identified who will submit the funding application to Sport England.
- 3.17 The Authority has also been asked to consider improving facilities at Bell Wharf for the maintenance of fishery fleet craft and privately owned boats. These proposals are to be subjected to consultation with sailing clubs and commercial fishing operators and if they are agreed they will be subject to external funding bids.
- 3.18 Proposals

Members agree to support the development of a Boat/Club House to enable increased participation in rowing from grass roots to elite standard, and help promote a healthy life style; and lease the Boat/Club House (Appendix 1) to the Lower Thames Rowing Club for a period of 25 years.

Members authorise the Corporate Director for Place and the Corporate Director for Corporate Services to agree the terms of the lease in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Culture & Tourism based on advice and assistance from Asset Management.

#### **4 Other Options**

There are no other options to be presented.

## **5. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 5.1 This is a great opportunity to provide a unique rowing facility at Two Tree Island.
- 5.2 The Lower Thames Rowing Club is committed to delivering opportunities to participate in rowing for the residents of Southend.

## **6. Corporate Implications**

- 6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities.
  - 6.1.1 **Healthier Southend:** The proposed Boat/Club House would provide an environment that would encourage more people to participate in rowing, thereby improving health by becoming more active.
  - 6.1.2 **Prosperous Southend:** The proposed Boat/Club House could see an investment of approximately £350,000 into the area, the provision of this facility would enable more official's courses to be organised thereby giving those that have undertaken the training to officiate at local, regional and national competitions.
  - 6.1.3 **Excellent Southend:** The LTRC has already demonstrated that it can compete and win in competitions both locally and regionally, and the provision of a Boat/Club House will only enhance the opportunities for the LTRC to compete in more competitions and excel.

## **6.2 Financial Implications**

- 6.2.1 The cost to develop a Club/Boat House is £350,000; the Council's contribution towards this would be £200,000, with £150,000 from Sport England if the funding application is successful.
- 6.2.2 The current capital programme contains provision of £200,000 for this proposed scheme. The associated borrowing cost linked to this expenditure will be approximately £16,000 per annum and is currently provided for in the Council's budget for capital financing costs.
- 6.2.3 The lease arrangement will be prepared and agreed by the Council to ensure the Council's financial and future interest with this asset.

## **6.3 Legal Implications**

- 6.3.1 The council will be required to obtain planning permission for the building.
- 6.3.2 The site would be leased to LTRC on terms to be agreed.
- 6.3.3 Legal advice would be sought as required during the project and for the drafting and completion of the legal documentation.

- 6.3.4 The proposed Boat/Club House will be located on Two Tree Island. Land ownership and assorted issues will be fully considered.
- 6.3.5 The Council must demonstrate it has secured the best consideration reasonably possible and good value for money in accordance with s.123 local Government Act 1972. The Asset Management Team will be involved in the negotiation of the lease terms and the transaction will need to be certified for best consideration before the lease can be entered into.

#### **6.4 People Implications**

- 6.4.1 A Boat/Club House will ensure that the LTRC is providing an environment fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and will improve on satisfaction levels of members, coaches and officials.

#### **6.5 Property Implications**

- 6.5.1 The Boat/Club House will form part of the overall leisure portfolio and enhances resident's opportunity to take part in physical activity.
- 6.5.2 The Asset Management Team in consultation with Cultural Services will work to agree detailed lease terms and ensure that the Council's position is suitably protected.

#### **6.6 Consultation**

- 6.6.1 The LTRC have expressed their need for a Boat/Club House, and have consulted with their members.
- 6.6.2 The Council has consulted with the LTRC, British Rowing and Sport England in regard to this project.
- 6.6.3 The Cultural Advisory Working Party have been consulted (Pre-Cabinet Scrutiny) at their meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 2013. The background to the report and the long term development of the project to date was outlined. This included the previously approved Capital Programme funding allocated (2011/12), the discussions held with the Lower Thames Rowing Club, British Rowing and Sport England which covered design, construction, club development and the national targets to increase participating by all ages in rowing. Members also noted that the timing of the report has been prompted by the imminent opportunity to enhance the amount of match funding.

An in depth discussion took place with a general consensus expressed that this is a worthy project, however concerns were raised regarding the level of capital investment for an individual sport in light of the current economic climate. Environmental and Biodiversity concerns were raised and Members suggested the project should be considered by the Environmental and Biodiversity Working Party. Members would like to have a strong business case put in place.

## 6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.7.1 This will be addressed through the design process to ensure that the design meets the required access requirements.
- 6.7.2 In regard to use of the Boat/Club House after it has been built LTRC will aim to ensure that all its activities are as accessible as is practicable; and coaches will attend workshops which will include working with coaching disabilities.
- 6.7.3 It is anticipated that Sport England will require the club to have a separate Equalities Diversity Policy in place.

## 6.8 Risk Assessment

<b>RISK</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Funding Application not successful	Officers to work with LTRC & British Rowing to try and indentify alternative funding opportunities
Planning Application not approved	Officers to work with colleagues in planning and attend pre application meeting to identify potential pit falls.
Unable to agree heads of terms for the lease	Officers will work with LTRC representatives to agree terms

## 6.9 Value for Money

- 6.9.1 The build will be commissioned by The Council via the usual procurement processes thereby ensuring value for money.

## 6.10 Community Safety Implications

- 6.10.1 The Boat/Club House will be built with all the appropriate measures in place to prevent vandalism etc, particularly as it will be built on a remote site.

## 6.11 Environmental Impact

- 6.11.1 The Boat/Club House will be built to current environmental specifications.

## 7. Background Papers

None.

## 8. Appendices

Appendix 1 Rowing Club – Sketch Scheme SK05  
Appendix 2 Rowing Club – Sketch Scheme SK06