

# Agenda Item 39.

ITEM NO:

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Ground lease to The South East Reserve Forces and Cadet Association (SERFCA), on Land at Elizabeth Park, Wokingham</b>
<b>FOR CONSIDERATION BY</b>	The Executive on 30 July 2015
<b>WARD</b>	Norreys
<b>LEAD OFFICER</b>	Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive
<b>LEAD MEMBER</b>	Philip Mirfin, Executive Member for Regeneration and Communities

## **OUTCOME / BENEFITS TO THE COMMUNITY**

Improved and enhanced community facilities.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

To agree to the grant of a new 25 year ground lease to The South East Reserve Forces and Cadet Association (SERFCA) on Land at Elizabeth Park, Wokingham which will replace their existing facilities on the Carnival Pool site

## **SUMMARY OF REPORT**

The report sets out the reasoning behind relocating the Air Training Corps (ATC) and Army Cadet Force (ACF) facility in Wokingham Town which is being co-ordinated with the masterplanning of the wider Carnival Pool site, for which a planning application has been submitted in April 2015.

The purpose of the issue coming before the executive is that the proposed length of lease is greater than the 14 years delegated to Officers.

## **Background**

The re-development of the Carnival Pool site as a leisure quarter for Wokingham town, including a new multi-storey car park, was identified in the Wokingham Town Centre Masterplan SPD, adopted in June 2010.

The Regeneration team have been developing the principles and ideas for the site in line with this document. There are several site constraints involved with the project including the location of the existing ACF and ATC facility, which sits on the footprint of the proposed multi-storey car park, construction of which is planned to commence in Spring 2016, subject to the satisfactory granting of a Planning Consent

WBC has been working with the MoD's managing body known as South East Reserve Forces and Cadet Association (SERFCA) to identify an alternative site for them based on their criteria, and have agreed on the land at Elizabeth Park, Wokingham. Elizabeth Park is an area of public open space, which includes one football pitch and is owned and managed by WBC. The site identified for the Cadet facility is in the south-eastern corner of the park and currently on the site is a redundant and boarded up changing facility adjacent to a tarmac car park. The changing facility was last used in 2012 and is surplus to the Council's requirements. The proposal co-locates the ATC and AFC on the site allowing the football pitch usage to continue. The redundant changing facility will be demolished and a new, purpose- built facility will be constructed by and for the ACF and ATC

## **Analysis of Issues**

The combined Army Cadet Force (ACF) and Air Training Corps (ATC) have occupied the current cadet compound on Carnival Field under a series of protected leases for many decades. Following the expiry of their most recent lease, a new lease has been granted on what the Council calls "regeneration terms".

The key characteristic of these regeneration terms is that the new lease explicitly acknowledges the Council's intention to redevelop the site and provides flexibility for the Landlord to terminate the lease on notice to enable demolition and redevelopment to proceed in line with Masterplan imperatives. Exactly the same principal has been applied to all the retail leases in the town centre to enable the delivery of the Peach Place scheme.

The new cadet lease of the current facility has been negotiated with SERFCA and their solicitors. This new lease provides for the Council to terminate on notice subject to either payment of the equivalent of statutory compensation (de minimus in this case) or the provision of a suitable alternative site on which SERFCA can provide a new Cadet facility.

In tandem with the grant of the new lease for the current facility, the new site has been identified and approved by the Council and SERFCA at Elizabeth Park. Pre-planning advice has been provided by the Local Planning Authority and this advice has shaped the detailed design of a new building for the sole use of the ACF and ATC, with an application now submitted. At the same time Heads of Terms for the grant of a new lease of the site are being agreed between respective property teams and solicitors.

The lease will be drawn up by SLS and approved by solicitors for SERFCA whilst the planning application runs its course and completed once planning consent has been achieved. Possession of the Premises will be granted as soon as required for the construction of the new building.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATION

***The Council faces severe financial challenges over the coming years as a result of the austerity measures implemented by the Government and subsequent reductions to public sector funding. It is estimated that Wokingham Borough Council will be required to make budget reductions in excess of £20m over the next three years and all Executive decisions should be made in this context.***

	How much will it Cost/ (Save)	Is there sufficient funding – if not quantify the Shortfall	Revenue or Capital?
Current Financial Year (Year 1)	Nil	Yes	N/A
Next Financial Year (Year 2)	Nil	Yes	N/A
Following Financial Year (Year 3)	Nil	Yes	N/A

### Other financial information relevant to the Recommendation/Decision

None

### Cross-Council

This proposal has and will continue to require input from other services, mainly the Cleaner and Greener team around the co-location of services and the sharing of the car park.

### List of Background Papers

None

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