

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL – 14 DECEMBER 2009

THAME FOOTBALL PARTNERSHIP

**Report by Head of Property and
Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer**

Background

1. The capital receipts forecast, which is used as the basis for the capital receipts assumed to be available to contribute to the funding for the capital programme, includes a receipt of £193,125 from the grant of a long lease of land in Thame to the Thame Football Partnership. The receipt is expected in 2011/12. The payment is a premium for a lease to be granted to the Football Partnership and was approved by Cllr Shouler as Cabinet Member with delegated responsibility for finance and property in 2008. The amount of the receipt is less than the full value but was agreed on the basis that there is a restriction on the use of the land for sports and community purposes and that the County Council supports the provision of the community facility. The project follows the disposal of the Thame Town Football Club site and the intention that there should be a new football facility which will be available for and used by a wide range of local organisations including youth groups and local football clubs. It will include training facilities, all weather playing surfaces and a new stadium built to the appropriate league standard. The Football Partnership has secured £1.388m of funding from the Football Foundation, the FA/Sport England, South Oxfordshire District Council, and the Football Stadia Improvement Trust. There will also be a contribution of £1.7m from the developers of the former football club ground. The total funding currently available is £3.1m but the estimated cost of the project is £3.3m, i.e. with a shortfall of £200,000.
2. The Football Partnership has asked whether the County Council would provide additional support to the project by foregoing the premium for the lease.
3. The County Council does have powers to dispose of land at less than full market value if that will assist the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the community. In this case, there is likely to be a social benefit to the local community including provision of a facility which is likely to be used by young people.

Financial Implications

4. The current capital programme is already in deficit and there are substantial additional capital investment requirements that are not funded. The Capital Star Chamber has considered how the deficit can be avoided, which is likely to mean removal or deferral of several priority projects from the existing programme, and the inability of the Council to meet additional investment

needs. There was discussion at the Star Chamber meeting about the possible use of LAA funding to meet the shortfall for the Thame Football Partnership project. However, that proposal has not been agreed by other LAA partners.

5. Should there be a decision that the premium for the lease should be waived then it would be necessary for there to be an adjustment in the capital programme which would be reported to the Cabinet as part of the recommendations for the budget and capital programme for 2010/11 onwards in February.

RECOMMENDATION

6. **The Leader of the Council is requested to consider the request to waive the lease premium under his executive powers as Cabinet Member with responsibility for finance and property.**

NEIL MONAGHAN
Head of Property

SUE SCANE
Assistant Chief Executive & Chief Finance Officer

Background Papers: Nil

Contact Officers: Neil Monaghan, Head of Property Tel: (01865) 815712
Lorna Baxter, Assistant Head of Finance (Corporate Finance) Tel: (01865) 323971

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