

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 29 AUGUST 2017
title: BERRY LANE MEDICAL CENTRE, LONGRIDGE
submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: MARK BEVERIDGE, HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide Committee with details of a proposal received from Berry Lane Medical Centre, Longridge, to buy a piece of Council land to enable the centre to be expanded and seek a Committee decision on the proposal.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives – To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley
- Corporate Priorities - To help make people's lives safer and healthier
- Other Considerations – To develop, with relevant partners, measures to support the visitor economy

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council has been approached by the Berry Lane Medical Centre who would like to expand the size of their practice. They have drawn up a scheme which is worth over £1m.

2.2 The Medical Practice, one of two in the town, has seen an increased roll of patients in the past few years and has been able to access capital funding to enable it to expand, some of which is from the NHS. The expansion would accommodate more treatment and consultation rooms, enabling it to provide a wider range of services to the patients registered there. As well as providing a degree of future proofing for the centre, enabling it to accommodate more patients in the future.

2.3 The Centre has had plans drawn up which require a piece of land owned by the Borough Council, in order for it to be built. The Centre has submitted a planning application which will be considered by the Council's Planning Committee at some point.

2.4 The main part of the recreation ground land was originally purchased by Longridge Urban District Council in 1926 and subsequently became part of Ribble Valley Borough Council when it was created in 1974. Other parts of the land were subject to a land swap between Longridge Urban District Council and Longridge Co-Op in 1973.

3 ISSUES

3.1 The development which the Medical Centre would like to build, subject to land acquisition and planning approval would require part of the Kestor Lane play area. The Centre adjoins the play area on one side. The current play area although large in

physical area has a limited amount of play equipment. There have been requests in the past from residents for improvements to be made to the play area; however this has not been possible due to the costs of enhancing the play value of the site.

- 3.2 There is the potential to enhance the play value of the facility with a redesigned area; however there is no current capital provision for this with the Council's programme. If the Council were to sell the piece of land sought, that piece plus a potential contribution sought from the Medical Centre could result in a much improved play area, albeit on a reduced area of land. If Committee agree to recommend to Council the sale of the land it could also ask P&F to ring fence the proceeds to be used for enhancing the play area.
- 3.3 The Kestor Lane recreation site is used annually for a range of events which are staged on the town, including the Longridge Field Day and fun fairs, apart from the day to day amenity value it provides. In addition there are football pitches on the field.
- 3.4 The proposal from the Medical Centre would not impinge on the recreational use of the field, although it would reduce the physical size of the play area.
- 3.5 The Medical Centre have informed officers that their funding source from the NHS is time limited, therefore they would wish to avoid a protracted negotiation about a potential sale. The District Valuation Office has been asked to provide an indication of value for the land being sought.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – The Council does not have any current capital programme allocation for a major development scheme for the play area. The annual budget for all play areas is £40,000. A potential scheme to substantially enhance the play area on a different footprint would cost up to £150,000.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – The Council has in the past sold land in order to assist developments to take place. Providing that it receives a fair price for the land this could be done again in this instance and a search of the land registry documentation has shown that there are no impediments to the Council agreeing to such a sale of the land at Kestor Lane.
- Reputation – The history of house building is well catalogued in Longridge and the Medical Centre is seeking to respond to the growth of the town. The loss of any land designated for play inevitably is an emotive issue; however there is the possibility for a positive outcome in this instance for both the Medical Centre and the Council, which benefits residents of Longridge.

5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

- 5.1 Considers the request from the Medical Centre to purchase the land from the Council.
- 5.2 If Committee agrees to the purchase being recommended, requests that Policy and Finance Committee agrees to ring fence the proceeds of the sale for the redevelopment of the play area at Kestor Lane.

MARK BEVERIDGE
HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

JOHN HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

For further information, please contact Mark Beveridge 01200 414479.