



Portfolio Holder Report

The portfolio holder will make a decision on this item after seven days have elapsed (including the date of publication).

| Report of: | Portfolio Holder | Date of publication |
|--|--|---------------------|
| Marianne Hesketh, Director of Communities | Councillor Lynne Bowen, Leisure, Health & Community Engagement Portfolio Holder | 9 January 2025 |

Fleetwood Pitch and Putt courses – New letting

Key decision: N

1. Purpose of report

1.1 To set out the process undertaken to re-establish the old pitch and putt courses in Fleetwood, the process to seek new operators and to seek approval to proceed with the letting of the two pitch and putt courses.

2. Council priorities

2.1 Improve our leisure facilities ensuring they meet the needs of our residents and visitors.

2.2 Use our land and buildings wisely, managing them to appropriate standards, reducing their environmental impact and maximising income to reinvest in improving services.

3. Recommendation

3.1 To proceed with a lease of the courses for a rental income of £4,250 per year.

4. Background

4.1 Historically Fleetwood had two pitch and putt courses on the tsplanade, one 18-hole and one 9-hole course. These were well used in the past but since 2020 the courses have not been proactively managed and as a result the land has predominantly become an area used for dog walking and as public open space.

- 4.2** An enquiry about the resurrection of the courses was received from an operator earlier this year. Prior to reaching agreement with any party, it was necessary to advertise the land as a 'disposal' of public open space (this includes by lease) under S123 of the Local Government Act. This was carried out in July 2024 and triggered a number of enquiries.
- 4.3** All of the representations received were reviewed jointly by the council's Estates, Public Realm and Legal Services teams and a Ward Councillor. The theme of the majority of the objections was around the loss of the land for dog walking and general leisure use but the considered consensus is that there remains sufficient open space in Fleetwood to permit these activities and that it would be better from a community leisure perspective to return the land to golf use.
- 4.4** The land was subsequently advertised on the council's website seeking 'Expressions of Interest' and this led to enquiries being received from three established local golf operators, two of which went on to make offers.

5. Key issues and proposals

- 5.1** The site is laid out to two short golf courses which are currently disused meaning that the land is under-utilised.
- 5.2** Wyre Council has received offers from two operators willing to take on the land and run it not only as a commercial business but also incorporating initiatives to benefit the local community and to encourage more visitors to the town.
- 5.3** Both applicants are experienced in the leisure business and could run the courses efficiently. They have submitted business plans which have been considered by the council in terms of rent, benefits to the community and sustainability and environmental considerations.
- 5.4** The applicant who has been selected to take on the lease has previously run a mini golf course at St Annes with her husband between 2011 and 2024. The equipment from that venture is ready to bring to Fleetwood and the applicant has a background in teaching and introducing golf into the community and to schools. The proposal includes an immediate opening of the smaller course and a refurbishment of the crazy golf course. Following on from this the larger course would be redesigned to a higher standard 9-hole layout. The courses would be open all year round. Applicant 1 is offering an initial rent from the commencement of the lease.
- 5.5** A lease to the applicant is proposed as the applicant is offering a rent from the start of the lease and could bring equipment from her last business to get the Fleetwood operation up and running as soon as possible. Outline heads of terms are attached at Appendix 2

6. Alternative options considered and rejected

- 6.1** Leaving the land as it is at present. Whilst this would please those who currently use the area for walking it isn't considered the best use of the land. The new golf initiatives would benefit locals and attract visitors to Fleetwood.
- 6.2** The council could resume the maintenance of the courses for play but seek a partner to manage the attendees. This is the previous model used for this site and, whilst it worked previously, granting a lease of the land will enable the chosen operator to expand the business over the duration of the lease, invest in and improve the site and provide a modern golfing leisure attraction.
- 6.3** There was a second applicant who also had extensive experience in running golf business, however this proposal would have required significant investment and time in renovating both courses and would therefore not been able to open as quickly as the first applicant, it was based on a three – five year lease with no rent payable and would be more limited in terms of opening times during the year.

7. Delegated functions

- 7.1** The matters referred to in this report are considered under the following executive function delegated to the Resources Portfolio Holder (as set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution): "To consider the management, repair, maintenance and use of the Council's land and buildings" and the executive function delegated to the Street Scene, Parks and Open Spaces Portfolio Holder "To consider matters relating to parks, gardens, open spaces, playing fields, playground and allotments".

| Financial, Legal/MO and Climate Change implications | |
|--|--|
| Finance | The proposed lease will provide a rental income of £4,250p.a. on the land, with a rent review every five years and also reduce the current cost of the grassland maintenance, although this is not expected to be a cashable saving. |
| Legal/MO | The Legal Services Team will be consulted with regards to the granting of the proposed lease and ensuring that all relevant clauses are in place to protect the council and provide the best business model for the site. |
| Climate Change | The applicant is proposing a number of environmental and sustainability initiatives which should ensure that the site is managed in a climate friendly manner. |

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

| risks/implications | ✓ / x |
|------------------------|-------|
| community safety | x |
| equality and diversity | x |
| health and safety | x |

| risks/implications | ✓ / x |
|--------------------|-------|
| asset management | ✓ |
| ICT | x |
| data protection | x |

Processing Personal Data

In addition to considering data protection along with the other risks/ implications, the report author will need to decide if a 'Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)' is also required. If the decision(s) recommended in this report will result in the collection and processing of personal data for the first time (i.e. purchase of a new system, a new working arrangement with a third party) a DPIA will need to be completed with advice provided by the Data Protection Officer or Deputy Data Protection Officer.

| report author | telephone no. | email | date |
|----------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|------------|
| Clare Mitchell | Tel: 01253 887364 | clare.mitchell@wyre.gov. uk | 12/12/2024 |

| List of background papers: | | |
|----------------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| name of document | date | where available for inspection |
| None | | |

List of appendices

Appendix 1 Site plan

Appendix 2 (Exempt) – Proposed Heads of Terms

Appendix 3 (Exempt) – Evaluation of offers