

**REPORT TO: SPECIAL POLICY & RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 12 FEBRUARY 2015**  
**REPORT ON: REVIEW OF BOWLING GREEN PROVISION**  
**REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT**  
**REPORT NO: 82-2015**

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 This report details proposals to rationalise the provision of municipal bowling greens in the city.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 It is recommended that two of the poorest performing bowling greens at Baxter Park and Victoria Park are closed and that further work is done to develop the sport at the remaining seven bowling greens in the city.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 The closure of the two bowling greens will result in annual savings of approximately £30,000, including the costs involved in operating and maintaining the associated pavilions.

## **4.0 BACKGROUND**

4.1 There are currently nine Council managed bowling greens in the city, located primarily within public parks. In addition there are a further eleven privately owned facilities. A location plan showing the provision of all council and privately owned bowling greens is given in Appendix 1.

4.2 Over the last 20 years the popularity of bowling as a sport has gradually declined and has resulted in a significant underutilisation of the available facilities. This decline has impacted upon both public and privately operated facilities.

4.3 Reference is made to report 194/2013 to the Environment Committee of 20 May 2013 at which the decline in utilisation of the existing facilities was noted and the Director of Environment was remitted to undertake a consultation exercise with bowling green users and key stakeholders.

4.4 Consultation meetings were held with many of the registered bowling clubs using council facilities and a questionnaire was issued to all season ticket holders. In addition, meetings were held with Bowling Scotland and Active Schools. The feedback from this consultation exercise confirmed the following key points:

- The quality of the bowling greens and their maintenance was generally considered to be satisfactory;
- Bowling clubs would wish to see an upgrading of the building facilities provided to enable the social aspect of the sport to be developed and to encourage greater participation;
- Bowling clubs were keen to work in partnership with the council to help develop the sport; and

- Bowling clubs and/or individuals were not interested in considering opportunities for community asset transfer of bowling facilities.
- 4.5 An asset review was also undertaken of the bowling greens themselves, the general landscaping and the associated public pavilions and buildings.
- 4.6 A recent exercise was undertaken to review the trends in utilisation of council owned facilities and this confirmed the generally low and reducing utilisation levels, details attached in Appendix 2. From this review, the bowling greens with the lowest utilisation levels were identified at the following locations:
- Whitfield;
  - Victoria Park;
  - Lochee Park;
  - Baxter Park; and
  - South Road.
- 4.7 Following the review, it is now proposed to close two bowling greens from the above list. An analysis has been undertaken and it is proposed to close the facilities at Victoria Park and Baxter Park based upon the following analysis:
- **Whitfield** - Although this facility has the lowest utilisation levels it is recognised that this is located within an area where significant housing development is planned. It is recognised that in this area there is no other private bowling provision and therefore it is proposed to maintain this facility meantime. Utilisation levels will be closely monitored as the new housing development is delivered;
  - **Victoria Park and Lochee Park** – Both of these facilities are in very close proximity to each other and both have very low utilisation levels with Victoria being less well used. There are private bowling facilities in close proximity to both of these bowling greens. There is an active bowling club that is currently based at Lochee Park facility, although no such club are based at Victoria Park. On that basis, it is proposed to close the Victoria Park facility and retain the facility at Lochee Park.
  - **Baxter Park and South Road** – These have the next lowest level of utilisation and are at very similar levels to each other. It is noted that there are private bowling facilities adjacent to the facility at Baxter Park but no such provision at South Road. There are no active bowling clubs based at either of these facilities. Adjacent to the Baxter Park site there are current plans to upgrade the tennis facilities and to introduce a multi-use games area. It is therefore proposed to retain the facility at South Road and close the facility at Baxter Park.
- 4.8 The total savings associated with this proposal are estimated to be £30,000. This will mainly come through a reduction in labour costs as well as savings in property maintenance and operating costs. The savings in labour costs will come through a VER for one FTE post.
- 4.9 For the seven remaining bowling greens the opportunity to work with existing bowling clubs, Active Schools and Bowling Scotland will be taken, to seek to develop participation in the sport and greater utilisation of the remaining facilities. Consideration will be given to physically opening up facilities and removing barriers such as hedges etc in an effort to make them more visible and accessible to the general public.

## **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of Sustainability, Strategic Environmental Assessment, Anti-Poverty, Equality Impact Assessment and Risk Management. No major issues were identified.

## **6.0 CONSULTATION**

6.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Corporate Services and Head of Democratic and Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

7.1 None.

Ken Laing  
**Director of Environment**

8<sup>th</sup> January 2015

# APPENDIX 1



APPENDIX 2



