

22 June 2017

Agenda Item: 7

**REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING, RESOURCES
AND CULTURE**

FUTURE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS – RUFFORD COUNTRY PARK

Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks approval for the commencement of an options appraisal that will examine the best way to deliver the grounds maintenance and rangers estate operations at Rufford Abbey Park in the future. A further report will then be brought back to Committee with recommendations.

Information and Advice

2. The Council is committed to maintaining Rufford Country Park both as a key tourism destination venue for Nottinghamshire, and as an important local leisure-time and heritage amenity for local people. Approximately 350,000 people visit Rufford each year.
3. In February 2017, following the completion of a competitive procurement process, Parkwood Leisure Ltd (a large leisure services company) assumed responsibility for the long term management and development of the commercial operations at Rufford. These operations include the catering and retail provision at the Park, and the overall visitor and event offer.
4. The new arrangement with Parkwood will see £1million worth of capital investment in the facilities at Rufford over the course of the current financial year, and a consequent reduction in the overall cost of operating the Park of around £300,000 per year for the duration of the contract, which initially extends to 2032.
5. At present, the County Council has retained direct responsibility for Park rangers and grounds maintenance work at Rufford. The cost of this work is approximately £250,000 per year.
6. Council officers meet with Parkwood Leisure representatives on a monthly basis to monitor contract performance and delivery. As a consequence of these meetings, it has become apparent that there could be potential benefits for the Council from delivering the grounds and rangers services differently.

7. When examining any options the Council will be looking to ensure there is a more:
- seamless visitor offer
 - cost effective grounds and environment management/development arrangement.

Other Options Considered

8. This report seeks approval for officers to explore the operational and financial viability of different options to deliver the grounds and rangering services. Should no options prove worth pursuing, then it is anticipated that current arrangements will remain in place.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

9. To enable officers to examine the best option for delivering the grounds and rangering services in the future at Rufford Country Park on behalf of the Council.
10. The outcome of the options appraisal will be reported back to the September meeting of the Communities and Place Committee, with resultant recommendations.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, sustainability and the environment and ways of working and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

12. These are detailed earlier in the report.

Human Resources Implications

13. In the event of an external partner taking over the grounds and rangering staff, any transferring employees would be protected under the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) regulations.

Implications for Service Users

14. A key consideration in the options appraisal would be a seamless visitor offer.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

15. The future operations of the grounds maintenance and rangering arrangements at Rufford would be governed by an appropriate service specification that would be monitored through the already established contract monitoring arrangements.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) approval be granted for officers to commence an options appraisal for future management of the grounds maintenance and rangering operations
- 2) a further report be brought back to this Committee with recommendations.

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Constitutional Comments (CEH 02/06/17)

16. The recommendations fall within the remit of the Communities and Place Committee under their terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SAS 25/05/17)

17. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Commercial operations at Rufford Abbey Country Park – report to Culture Committee on 1 November 2016

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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