

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 22 MAY 2018
title: KESTOR LANE, LONGRIDGE
submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
principal author: MARK BEVERIDGE, HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report is at the request of the Leader, and Chairman of this Committee, and sets out the advantages and disadvantages of entering into an agreement with Fields in Trust (FiT) for Kester Lane recreation ground in Longridge.
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
Community Objectives – To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley, encompassing our objective to encourage economic development throughout the borough, with a specific emphasis on tourism.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Following the application by The Berry Lane Medical Centre to purchase some of the play area for their extension that was turned down by the Council, discussions have taken place between the Leader and the Committee Chairman, and Fields in Trust (FiT), about dedicating the site.
- 2.2 Although the site was not purchased by public subscription, but instead by the local council at the time, it is nonetheless very dear to many people in the Longridge.
- 2.3 Kestor Lane has a play area, skate park, and outdoor gym on it, as well as providing a green outdoor space where football is played and, in the summer, plays host to fairs and the Longridge Field Day.

3 THE CURRENT POSITION

- 3.1 Fields in Trust is a non-accountable charitable body, formerly known as the Playing Fields Association. Their purpose is to protect playing fields, where they are in danger of being sold off for development, and no replacement or enhancement is provided.
- 3.2 Sport England is the statutory body who must be consulted if planning permission is sought for development on existing sports fields.

4 PROPOSAL

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Kestor Lane becomes a Fields in Trust site, which could then lead to a dedication before the Armistice commemorations in the autumn.
- 4.2 This requires the Council to enter into a legal agreement with FiT which gives them a form of legal title on the land which then means that any future proposals for the land, including enhancement for the purposes for which it used, ie recreation, have to be approved by FiT, even though the land is owned by the Council.

5. ISSUES

- 5.1 If Kestor Lane becomes a Fields in Trust site then the control of the land moves from the Council to a third party, even though this Council and any future body which may

be formed, as occurred under the reorganisation of Local Government in 1974, will retain the freehold to the land.

5.2 The Council could dedicate the land and/or rename it to commemorate the ending of WW1, without involving the FiT.

6 **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – Technical, Environmental and Legal – The Council will need to pay a land registration fee of £40 to register the deed, and will require officer time to draw this up.
- Political – No implications identified.
- Reputation – none
- Equality & Diversity – No implications identified.

7 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

Determines whether the Council should enter into an agreement with FiT.

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HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

JOHN HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

BACKGROUND PAPERS – None

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Community Services Committee 22.5.18 / MB / IW