

BRISTOL CITY COUNCIL

DOWNS COMMITTEE

31st January 2011

Report of: The Director of Neighbourhoods

Title : Proposed gifting of assets of Clifton Down Charitable Trust

Officer presenting report: Chris Woods, Principal Project Officer - Corporate Property

RECOMMENDATION

That the contents of this report be noted.

Summary

This is an update report advising the Downs Committee of the current position with regards to the proposal by Clifton Down Charitable Trust to gift two areas of land on the edge of Clifton Down bordering the Portway to Bristol City Council.

The significant issues in the report are:

1. The proposal to incorporate the land in to the Downs Management regime
2. The future maintenance costs of the land.
3. The condition of the rock faces that form part of the land and the condition of the engineered safety works to the rock faces that was undertaken over 30 years ago.

Policy

Not applicable

Consultation

Internal

1. Robert Westlake - Downs Ranger
2. Cellan Michael - Parks Estates Manager
3. Frances Horner - Legal Services

External

None

Context

In March 2010 the Clifton Down Charitable Trust (CDCT) wrote to Bristol City Council proposing a gift of two parcels of land on the Portway adjoining Clifton Down. The two parcels of land are shown edged blue and red on the attached plan.

The proposal suggested that there would be significant economies of scale if the responsibility for the management of this land and the Clifton and Durdham Downs all fell to one body ie Bristol City Council.

The CDCT wanted to mark the 150th Anniversary of the Downs Act of 1861 with a gift of this land.

This proposal was supported by the Downs Committee at the meeting on 6th September 2010.

Proposal

Bristol City Council officers have been considering this proposal with the intention of submitting terms and conditions to CDCT for the transfer of land.

This has been delayed however because officers have been waiting for a Engineers report on the condition of the rock faces that form part of the land that is the subject of the proposal. This delay has arisen because of the rock slippage that has led to the closure of Bridge Valley Road.

The Engineer has however now completed the annual rock safety inspections throughout the length of the Gorge, and as part of this the inspection team were specifically instructed to carry out a initial inspection of the main rock faces to be included in the transfer. These inspections have raised some major and minor issues of stability, which include concerns that the engineered safety works carried out in the Gorge over 30 years ago have reached an age where it is likely that major refurbishment will be required in the next ten years. There are also additional questions of ground stability throughout the tracts of land which would come in to Bristol City Council ownership under the transfer.

It is therefore proposed that a decision on whether to proceed with the transfer is delayed until Bristol City Council has received the detailed reports on the condition of the rock faces and the engineered safety works, and full details of the likely future liability is known.

When full details of the condition of the rock faces are known, a report detailing the proposal will be submitted to the Director of Corporate Services . A decision on the proposed gifting of assets will be made in conjunction with the appropriate Executive Members of the Cabinet. A report for information will then be brought back to this Committee.

Other options considered

None

Risk Assessment

Not applicable

Equalities Impact Assessment

None

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal To be added

Financial

Revenue

Capital

Land: The land that is the subject of the proposed transfer is within the ownership of the CDCT.

Personnel

Appendices

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Background Papers