

Downs Committee March 2025

Business Development Report

Current update on the business development opportunities on the Downs.

Zoo - North Car Park

Following further planning advice, there will be a Section 192 application made seeking a Certificate of Proposed Lawful Use for the land as a car park. This application once submitted has an 8 weeks determination period and if unsuccessful then there is a right to appeal the decision.

In terms of the works that will be required to get the car park up and running, there will be only limited works required. The operator will need to install a camera, pay machine and signage. The signage will state the terms and conditions for use, the charging rates and hours of use.

There are also ongoing discussions with a few parties about the potential to provide a concession on part of the site.

Stoke Road - Pitches

There is a proposal for an application to be made by the Bristol Downs League for a pitch improvement grant. The application will be for the improvement of the 10 pitches next to the Downs café. The applicant will receive the money and be responsible for the works to improve the pitches over a 10 year period.

Following last committee, it was requested for further legal input for members in relation to the appropriation of land for padel and mini golf whilst also ensuring legal privilege. A legal officer is to brief and go through this with the committee members in a closed session. The land required would be appropriated by the Downs Committee under section 11 of the Downs Act, extract below. This section of the act provides the powers to the Downs Committee to appropriate land for the purposes of recreation or exercise.

XI It shall be lawful for the Downs Committee from time to time to exercise the following powers with respect to the said Downs, and make all necessary orders for carrying the same into effect:

They may from time to time suggest, for the approval of the Corporation and Society respectively, such Rules and Bye-laws as they may deem expedient for carrying this Act into execution; and they shall carry into effect such Rules and Bye-laws as shall be made:

They may open new roads in or over the said Downs, and from time to time may close the same, and they may close or divert any of the existing roads or ways, subject, however, as to any such last-mentioned roads or ways to any rights of way which may exist therein:

They may prevent all obstructions and nuisances, and from time to time remove any encroachments on the said Downs; they may erect thereon temporary fences for improving and preserving the turf and preventing injury thereto by carriages or horses, and may from time to time direct what parts of the said Downs shall or shall not be used by carriages and horses:

They may drain, plant or improve the said Downs, may inclose parts thereof for ornamental purposes only, and may appropriate portions thereof for particular purposes of recreation or exercise:

Mini Golf

The proposal to provide a mini golf facility where it will be located on land adjacent to the water tower and the existing toilet block. Under this proposal the toilet block would be refurbished to include a

public toilet facility that will be managed by the tenant. We are currently awaiting the initial proposed plans and visuals for the site.

Padel Courts

The proposed padel courts are to be located next to the current café and where the now redundant former football pitch 1 was. The pitch is no longer used so there are no implications to the Downs League or the Bristol University Student Union league. We are awaiting the initial proposal with the plan and images for the courts.

Stoke Road - Changing Rooms

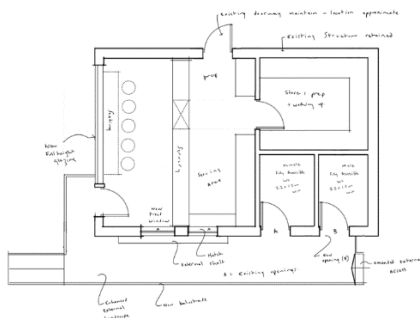
The proposal is for a two storey building which will continue to provide changing facilities on the ground floor, but will provide an upper floor for hospitality/leisure opportunities. It is intended that this would form part of a Heritage Lottery application. There are ongoing discussions with some potential interested parties to take the upper floor.

The new scheme will provide up to date changing facilities that are compliant with the latest standards and make the space more usable to all groups who may wish to use the space. The outcome of applying the new standards will mean that number of changing rooms will be reduced to circa 10 to 14 changing rooms.

Discussions are being had with the football foundation to secure potential funding to assist with funding to the redevelopment. There is also the intention to try and secure CIL funding towards the project.

Sea Walls Site

An initial proposal has been worked up for the refurbishment of the existing toilet building to be changed into a new café/kiosk and public toilet. This proposal will retain the existing building with changes to the elevations and no increase to the footprint of the building.



Currently there are ongoing discussions with a few parties who may take on the project to operate the café and take over the management of the toilet facilities. Interested parties will review the proposals based on no increase in the building's footprint and providing public toilets.

PT Operators

The proposal has been approved and now the council is working on setting up the scheme to implement it as soon as possible in 2025. Currently the details of the scheme are being worked up and this includes finalising the fee. For now, it is envisaged that given the scale of the use on the Downs and the additional work and maintenance issues that this generates a 25% premium should be attached to the Downs.

Lottery Heritage Funding

Currently there is a working group working up a EOI for funding towards the Downs. If there is funding available, then this would be used to assist with the delivery of new facilities including the proposed new changing rooms and the ongoing management on the Downs.