

Report on	Purchase of Lands at Drumcoo from Dungannon Enterprise Centre
Date of Meeting	3 rd March 2022
Reporting Officer	JJ Tohill, Strategic Director of Corporate Services and Finance

Is this report restricted for confidential business? If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	Yes	
	No	x

1.0	Purpose of Report
1.1	To update Members regarding lands at Drumcoo Playing Fields and to seek members' approval to purchase lands adjoining Drumcoo Playing Fields from Dungannon Enterprise Centre (DEC).
2.0	Background
2.1	In or around 2018 Dungannon Enterprise Centre (DEC) submitted a proposal to the Council in relation to plans to develop Council owned recreational land situated at Drumcoo Playing Fields at the rear of DEC's Business Park.
2.2	DEC have recently acquired land next to Drumcoo Playing Fields, which includes an access strip from Carland Road, Dungannon and had requested that the Council explore the possibility of exchanging part of Drumcoo Playing Fields with these recently acquired lands, to facilitate an expansion of their Business Park. Council approved this exchange/swap of lands, however, legal agreements were never signed.
2.3	Then, after further consideration of Council's land base and land requirements, it became apparent that the actual site as a combined site at Drumcoo has more value and significance to the Council as opposed to a split site (which would be the case if the land was exchanged). Therefore, at the end of 2021 a change in direction was recommended to Council to the effect that the lands at Drumcoo Playing Fields are to be retained in the ownership of Council, with a view to exploring the potential to develop a publically accessible town park to benefit the local community.
3.0	Main Report
	<i>Considerations</i>
3.1	The subject lands owned by Council at Drumcoo Playing Fields have been subject to ongoing considerations as part of the Council's new Estates Strategy and Asset Management Strategy, which aims to provide strategic direction on the management, maintenance, acquisition and disposal of Council property and assets.

<p>3.2</p> <p>3.3</p> <p>3.4</p> <p>3.5</p> <p>3.6</p> <p>3.7</p> <p>3.8</p> <p>3.9</p>	<p>After further consideration of Council’s land base and land requirements, it became apparent that the actual site as a combined site at Drumcoo has more value and significance to the Council as opposed to a split site (which would be the case if the land was exchanged).</p> <p>It is important to note that the existing Area Plan shows the land as existing open space with a Local Landscape Policy area stretching to the North East of the playing fields.</p> <p>Covid-19 has reminded us of the importance of parks and open spaces for the wellbeing of local communities. It is widely recognised that they have a key role to play in the delivery of health and social strategies and of course “building back greener” from the pandemic. Officers believe there is benefit to preserving the open space and pursuing the opportunity of a town park at Drumcoo.</p> <p>It is for the aforementioned reasons that officers recommended a change in direction in December 2021. In December 2021 the Council decided against proceeding with the previous decision to complete the exchange of lands at Drumcoo Playing Fields with Dungannon Enterprise Centre (DEC). This was with a view to retain and preserve the Council owned lands at Drumcoo Playing Fields as open space asset for the benefit of the local community.</p> <p>At that time, the Council also authorised officers to explore the potential to develop a Town park at Drumcoo that would enhance leisure, recreation and sporting opportunities for the local community. As part of the wider considerations of these lands, it is considered prudent to continue discussions with DEC about purchasing the lands that DEC had previously acquired in anticipation of an exchange/swap of lands at Drumcoo with the Council.</p> <p>The lands DEC acquired are outlined for illustration purposes only in red on the map at Appendix 6.1 (“the Lands”).</p> <p>An LPS valuation has been obtained in relation to the purchase of the subject Lands in Appendix 1. DEC has requested that the Council pay them £190,000 so that it is a costs neutral situation for DEC. The LPS valuation would support this figure. (The LPS valuation is slightly above the £190,000 that DEC is asking for in terms of both the purchase price and the payment of their reasonable fees and costs regarding the purchase by them of the Lands.)</p> <p>Members are being asked to approve the purchase of the Lands from DEC for £190,000 subject to the usual due diligence and an updated LPS valuation being obtained at the time of purchase.</p>
<p>4.0</p>	<p>Other Considerations</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>Financial, Human Resources & Risk Implications</p>
	<p>Financial: Legal costs and outlays are within existing budgets.</p>

	The purchase monies will be funded out of Capital reserves.
	Human: Officer time.
	Risk Management: The land would be considered as part of the Council's Estates Strategy and Asset Management Strategy.
4.2	Screening & Impact Assessments
	Equality & Good Relations Implications: N/A
	Rural Needs Implications: N/A
5.0	Recommendation(s)
5.1	It is recommended that Members approve the purchase of the Lands adjacent to Drumcoo Playing Fields for £190,000 from DEC, subject to the usual due diligence and up to date LPS valuation.
6.0	Documents Attached & References
6.1	Map indicating approximate areas of land to be purchased from Dungannon Enterprise Centre (Map to follow)