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## **EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 AUGUST 2004**

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### **COS.130/04 PROPOSED TRANSFER OF TALKIN TARN FROM COUNTY COUNCIL TO CITY COUNCIL**

The Head of Culture Leisure and Sport presented a report by the Head of Property Services (PS.16/04) on the proposed transfer of Talkin Tarn from the County Council to the City Council. Mr Beveridge explained that the Head of Property Services was unable to attend the meeting and he presented the report in his absence.

Members were reminded that the Executive, at its meeting on 26 April 2004 (EX.094/04) had confirmed that it wished, in principal, to proceed with the transfer of ownership of Talkin Tarn, subject to final terms being negotiated which the Executive were able to approve.

Taking into account community needs, it was intended that the City Council propose to take ownership and responsibility of the Talking Tarn estate and then invest in its refurbishment, renewal and environmental enhancement through a pro active strategy. The freehold title of Talkin Tarn estate would transfer from the County Council to the City Council with a programme of building works to commence to update the estate to a standard similar to City Council assets over a period of three years. Mr Beveridge outlined the programme of works which will be involved, the pro-active management ethos which would be introduced on the site and the aspects which will be included in a five year management plan.

City Council Officers were currently working on costed options through the appointment of architects, compiling detailed estimates of capital and revenue costs, setting out budgetary implications and preparing a detailed business plan. It was noted that there would be a budget shortfall because Talkin Tarn would have to be run as a community asset and new income sources would need to help pay for the scheme, these would be fully detailed in the business plan.

The proposed timetable included a capacity for a full and detailed report with all the potential benefits, capital and revenue costs and a comprehensive business plan to be submitted to a special meeting of this Committee during October 2004. The Portfolio Holder commented that the report which would be submitted to the special meeting of this Committee would enable full scrutiny of the detailed costs and business plan. He emphasised the benefits and the possibilities for the Talkin Tarn area and advised that in compiling the business plan, a number of options were being investigated which would lead to the overall improvement of the Tarn and enhance potential for its use by the public of Carlisle.

In considering the report Members commented on and raised the following issues:

(a) Members sought assurances that the next report to the Committee would contain a comprehensive and detailed business plan which would enable Members to scrutinise the proposal in detail and which would provide full and detailed costs and revenue implications which would enable the Council to make a fully informed decision.

The Portfolio Holder gave assurances that such a comprehensive business plan would be included with the report.

(b) Options for dealing with the blue/green algae and associated costs should be clearly set out in the report to the next meeting of the Committee as this was a significant issue. Mr Beveridge advised that this would be included in the next report.

(c) In relation to paragraph 6.1 of the report on the elements of work which are being undertaken in order to provide appropriate advice, a Member commented that all of the information outlined in that paragraph would need to be included in the report to the next meeting, this would include proper costings for remedial work, means of dealing with the blue/green algae and associated costs and options for catering etc. All these matters would need to be clearly set out in order that it was totally transparent what the Council would be taking on.

(d) Members referred to the surveys which had been conducted in relation to community needs, the most recent of which was a Talkin Tarn customer attitude survey which had been conducted in the year 2000. They suggested that some of this information may now be out of date and that there needs to be an up to date survey of public wishes for the Tarn.

Councillor Bloxham commented that a consultation meeting with invited stakeholders had been programmed for October 2004 and that wants and needs regarding the Tarn would be discussed at that meeting. He accepted that people's wants and needs did need to be examined.

(e) A detailed Environmental Impact Statement should be prepared outlining the implications for wildlife, flora and fauna and seeking a balance between the wants and needs of people for the Talkin Tarn and the impact on the environment in the area.

The Portfolio Holder advised that East Cumbria Countryside Project had been involved with this and the environmental impact was of great concern to everyone involved.

(f) In response to a Member's question about the negotiations with the County Council on the transfer of Talkin Tarn, the Portfolio Holder stated that he believed that the City Council had got the best deal possible from the negotiations.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report, including the proposed timetable for proceeding, be noted.

(2) That the comments of the Committee be referred to the Executive as outlined above be taken on board by Officers in the preparation of a report to be submitted to a special meeting of this Committee. That report should include a full and detailed business plan

setting out the implications and costs of various options which would enable an assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal.

(3) That the Overview and Scrutiny Manager liaise with the Chairman to agree a date for a special meeting of this Committee to consider the next report on Talkin Tarn.