

Committee(s)	Dated:
Epping Forest & Commons	07 March 2016
Subject: Orion Harriers – Proposed Clubhouse and staff welfare extension to Jubilee Retreat.	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Epping Forest (SEF 13/16)	For Decision
Report author: Sue Rigley – Open Spaces Epping Forest	

Summary

The Orion Harriers (the Club) has occupied premises on the Forest since 1906; initially in the former coach house at Rangers Road, Chingford and since 2011, at Jubilee Retreat, Bury Road, Chingford following refurbishment costing £152,750 from grant funding and a contribution of £42,750 from the Club.

Since occupying the Jubilee Retreat, the Club membership has grown from 600 members, and is currently standing at almost 800 members and continues to grow. The Club wishes to enlarge the changing rooms to accommodate its increased membership and the hosting of race days. Plans have been proposed that include bigger changing areas, a larger meeting space and additional storage facilities.

Separately, the Superintendent is seeking staff welfare facilities for the adjacent Chingford Golf Course. The Club's enlargement requirements provide the City Corporation an opportunity to combine its accommodation needs as a joint development.

Members will recall that the earlier opportunity reported in January to undertake a joint development with a proposed telecommunications equipment room was unsuccessful when Vodafone advised that it was unable to proceed.

The City Corporation needs to provide staff facilities at Jubilee Retreat and would expect to bear the whole costs from the Epping Forest local risk budget in the absence of a third party. Apportionment of costs for a joint development has not yet been agreed with the Club, but provided that costs are viable it is intended to seek to combine the proposals and share the costs of construction accordingly.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve in principle the extension of the changing rooms at Jubilee Retreat which is to include the provision of golf course staff welfare facilities.

- Delegate authority to the City Surveyor in conjunction with the Superintendent to enter into discussions with the Club to progress respective requirements.

Main Report

Background

1. The Orion Harriers (the Club) moved into the Jubilee Retreat in 2011 having refurbished the building at a cost of £152,750 raised through the London Marathon Trust grant funding and including a significant sum of £42,750 which it achieved through fund raising. The Club subsequently took a 3 year lease of the changing rooms at Jubilee Retreat. The lease has since been renewed for a further 3 years from 2014.
2. Presently the City Corporation has offered a 'claw back' provision to the Club, effectively providing the Club with a refund of £25,650 to be paid by the City Corporation if it declines to renew the lease in 2017 through no fault of the Club.

Current Position

3. The Club membership has now increased from 600 members to nearly 800 members and continues to grow.
4. Many junior members are role models in their school environment and the Club hosts the Orion Schools Invitation in which 20 local schools compete as well the Waltham Forest Primary and Secondary Schools championships.
5. Our government supports the investment in sports facilities and wants to further increase sports participation. Improved health, better educational attainment, improved employability and a stronger and a better sense of social integration are all cited as benefits of sport participation in our community. LBWF are supportive of the positive work the club does within the borough to achieve these benefits for young people.
6. The Club routinely has between 100 – 130 people attending the weekly training session and the existing space has reached capacity to manage this number safely.
7. The Club holds 13 'big race days' a year where between 100 – 400 people need to change, shower, eat etc. and the existing changing / meeting space is inadequate.
8. The Club would also like to hold presentation evenings and fund-raising events using its meeting room, but is very restricted by the amount of space.
9. There is now insufficient storage space for course marking equipment and marquees.

10. The size of the clubhouse and changing facilities are no longer adequate for the growing membership.
11. The Club approached the Superintendent in 2015 with a proposal to build an extension of 146m² onto the Jubilee Retreat. The initial proposal included separate external storage and flat roof extension, but the Club has been advised that if an extension is permitted, it would need to be aesthetically sympathetic to the existing building and able to accommodate all of its requirements in a single extension and that flat roofs should be avoided.
12. The Club was also informed that the Superintendent was looking to provide separate staff facilities and that its proposal presented a possible joint funding and construction opportunity.
13. Revised plans have been submitted dealing with the aforementioned issues.

Options

14. **Option 1** – Agree in principle to the proposal by the Club to extend the changing rooms at Jubilee Retreat as a joint development. Extending the current facility, which will be subject to planning permission, will ensure the continued growth of the Club for the foreseeable future and will promote the City's continuing support of a long established local charitable organisation in the community. The proposed extension provides the City with the possibility of joint funding that could be employed to achieve the requisite on-site staff facilities. **This option is recommended.**
15. **Option 2** – Decline the Club's proposal. In order to provide a safe community environment, the Club will have to take action to control or restrict numbers which would not meet the Club's vision, aims and objectives to be an inclusive organisation that accepts and encourages children of all abilities and backgrounds. This option would eliminate the possibility of joint funding for the staff facilities and would leave the Superintendent to find an alternative, and probably more costly stand-alone construction elsewhere. **This option is not recommended.**

Proposals

16. It is proposed to commence negotiations with the Orion Harriers with a view to approving proposals to extend the Jubilee Retreat Changing Rooms as a joint development scheme, which will also provide self-contained facilities for the Chingford Golf Course staff.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

17. The proposal supports the following strategic aims within the Open Spaces Departmental Business Plan by
 - Enriching the lives of Londoners by providing high quality and engaging educational and volunteering opportunities

- Improving the health and wellbeing of communities through access to green space and recreation.

Implications

18. **Financial** – The extension is expected to cost £167,000, with a pro-rata cost to the City expected to cost £35,000. The majority of the funding is expected to be met through London Marathon Grant Trust funding. Subject to your Committee's approval the current Gateway 4 will be updated to reflect the opportunity presented by collaboration with Orion Harriers.
19. **Legal** – the Club is able to operate on Forest Land by virtue of Section 33(1)(xiii) of the Epping Forest Act 1878, which provides the Conservators with the power to set apart in each or any of the Forest Parishes, such parts as they think fit, for the use of the inhabitants to play at cricket and other sports, and to lay out, form, and maintain cricket grounds and grounds for other sports, and, for the better use and enjoyment of the parts so set apart, to enter into agreements with, and confer special privileges on, particularly clubs or schools.
20. The Club is able to charge its members of the use of Forest Land through Section 8(4) of the City of London (Various Powers) Act 1977, which provides the Conservators with the power to make reasonable charges for any facilities, services or works granted or provided by them in Epping Forest, and to make arrangements for any such facilities, services or works which they have the power to provide to be provided by some other person, including arrangements authorising that person to make reasonable charges
21. **Property** – There is sufficient space to the rear of the existing Jubilee Retreat building to construct a combined extension to address the Club's additional space requirements and the Superintendent's requirements for staff accommodation. A combined development should produce economies for both parties and presents a suitable opportunity for staff accommodation that is worthy of exploration. If successful, the lease to the Orion Harriers will need to be reviewed to reflect the eventual additional accommodation.

Conclusion

22. The Orion Harriers Running Club celebrated their Centenary in 2011, demonstrating an unbroken relationship with the use of Epping Forest as a challenging cross country sports venue. The Club membership is thriving, increasing significantly since its move to the Jubilee Retreat site.
23. The size of the current facilities is not adequate for the Club to run its activities safely on the Forest. Extending the property will ensure the continuing growth of the Club and potentially address the provision of staff welfare facilities.

Appendices

- None

Background Papers

SEF 26/14

CS 109/09

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