

**URBAN  
VISION**

**Enterprise CIC**

**Urban Vision Enterprise CIC  
Loggerheads and Ashley Community Project  
Proposed Feasibility Study  
May 2017**



# Contents

	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. The Project	4
3. Development Options	12
4. Conclusions and Next Steps	20

# 1. Introduction

This report considers the feasibility of a proposed new community centre with external recreational and sports facilities in Loggerheads. The scheme is likely to include some housing.

The Loggerheads and Ashley Business Case Document has been used as a starting point. The study considers the business case by:

- Considering the planning context for a new community centre, including policy context, and alternatives for gaining consent;
- Developing an outline project plan. The feasibility of different options for the design and specification of the new community centre have been considered; and
- Considering options for the body to be established to deliver the project and then to manage it in the longer term.

In addition to the outline project plan and outline business plan, the report suggests next steps.

The report has been prepared by:

Dave Chetwyn, MA, MRTPI, IHBC, FInstLM - Managing Director of Urban Vision Enterprise.

Dave Proudlove, BSc (Hons) - Associate of Urban Vision Enterprise.

David Williams MSc, MA, LLB, MRICS - UVNS Board Member.

## 2. The Project

### The Loggerheads Community Project

The scope of the project is set out in the Loggerheads and Ashley Business Case Document and this includes:

#### Building

A Community Centre will be built which will include the following facilities:

- Entrance Hall/Lounge which will include a Coffee and Bar facility along with a kitchen;
- Keep fit suite;
- Entertainment Hall with Stage along with articulated seating to allow film shows. As well as an entertain function. This hall will be used for Badminton and indoor bowls;
- 2 Squash courts;
- Ladies and Gents plus disabled changing and shower facilities;
- Ladies, Gents and disabled toilets;
- Conference room;
- Classroom/meeting room;
- Offices for the Centre and the Parish Council;
- Medical Centre;
- Dentists Surgery;
- Crèche/Nursery; and
- Library.

#### Grounds

The outside space will be predominantly, but not entirely, for sports pitches. A list of the potential outdoor facilities is as follows:

- 2 Football pitches with sufficient space between the pitches to allow for a cricket square, thus allowing for winter and summer sports;
- All weather 5 a side pitch;
- Outdoor fitness trail;
- Children's play area;
- Car park; and
- Skateboard park.

An initial meeting was held with the client on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017 to clarify the project, including discussion of aims, objectives, and aspirations.

#### The Site

A site for the proposed project has been identified, off the A53 (Market Drayton Road, see plan below).

## Loggerheads and Ashley Community Project – Feasibility Study



It is assumed that the western portion of the site would be utilised for the proposed facility, with the eastern portion progressed for some form of residential development.

However, since putting together the project proposal, the site owner (Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council) has progressed an outline planning application for residential use, and is in talks with a specialist developer regarding a proposed retirement village/extra care proposal. Initial discussions with the developer indicate a willingness to work with the Parish Council to incorporate some elements of the proposed community sports facility within their proposal. The developer is currently preparing masterplan options for the site, though these have not been shared with Urban Vision Enterprise. It has also been suggested that a portion of adjoining farmland could be incorporated.

### Need and Demand

In order to determine the level of need for the proposed facility, the settlement of Loggerheads has been assessed against Fields in Trust benchmarking guidelines, as follows:

**Table 1: Fields in Trust recommended benchmark guidelines – formal outdoor space**

Open space typology	QUANTITY GUIDELINE (hectares per 1,000 population)	WALKING GUIDELINE (walking distance: metres from dwellings)	QUALITY GUIDELINE
Playing pitches	1.20	1,200m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Quality appropriate to the intended level of performance, designed to appropriate technical standards.</li> <li>* Located where they are of most value to the community to be served.</li> <li>* Sufficiently diverse recreational use for the whole community.</li> <li>* Appropriately landscaped.</li> </ul>
All outdoor sports	1.60	1,200m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Maintained safely and to the highest possible condition with available finance.</li> <li>* Positively managed taking account of the need for repair and replacement over time as necessary.</li> </ul>
Equipped/designated play areas	0.25 See table 4 for recommended minimum sizes	LAPs – 100m LEAPs – 400m NEAPs – 1,000m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Provision of appropriate ancillary facilities and equipment.</li> <li>* Provision of footpaths.</li> <li>* Designed so as to be free of the fear of harm or crime.</li> <li>* Local authorities can set their own quality benchmark standards for playing pitches, taking into account the level of play, topography, necessary safety margins and optimal orientation<sup>2</sup>.</li> </ul>
Other outdoor provision (MUGAs and skateboard parks)	0.30	700m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Local authorities can set their own quality benchmark standards for play areas using the <a href="#">Children's Play Council's Quality Assessment Tool</a>.</li> </ul>

*From 'Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard' (Fields in Trust)*

The guidelines have been applied to the projected population of Loggerheads by 2033 (the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period). This has been calculated as **5,512**, as follows:

## Loggerheads and Ashley Community Project – Feasibility Study

Item	No.
Current Population (as per 2011 Census)	4,480
Extant Residential Planning Permissions	182
Tadgedale Quarry Appeal	128
Proposed Site Allocations	120
Total New Homes Pipeline=	430
Increase in population (430 x 2.4* = 1,032) *Average UK household size	1,032
Loggerheads population at 2033	<b>5,512</b>

This figure could increase depending on the final development option for the residential element of the Market Drayton Road site.

Using the projected 2033 population, and applying the Fields in Trust benchmarking guidelines in terms of quantity, the following provides the quantity benchmark for the Loggerheads settlement moving forward:

Typology	Required Quantity Guideline
Playing Pitches	6.61ha (16.33 acres)
All Outdoor Sports	8.82ha (21.79 acres)
Equipped/Designated Play Areas	1.38ha (3.41 acres)
Other Outdoor Provision	1.65ha (4.08 acres)

## Site Appraisal and Planning Context

### Site Appraisal

The site off the A53 (Market Drayton Road) is a large greenfield site which is surrounded variously by residential properties to the north, woodland to the south, the community fire station to the east, and agricultural land to the west. It is 11.46 acres in size.

The site is generally flat, but does fall away towards the woodland and a watercourse. The site is located a short distance from a SSSI.

The site is within walking distance of the centre of Loggerheads, and is accessible to a great proportion of the local community on foot.

There are two potential access points off Market Drayton Road; one could be potentially used for pedestrian access, one for vehicular.

## Loggerheads and Ashley Community Project – Feasibility Study

The site is owned by Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council who are looking to progress part of the site for residential uses, and have recently submitted an outline planning application for 65 homes. In addition, the developer HB Villages is currently exploring the potential of the site for a range of housing opportunities, including homes for the elderly and supported living.

### Planning Context

#### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was adopted in 2012, and sets out the Government's planning policies for England, and how these policies should be applied, with the aim of achieving sustainable development. Indeed, NPPF states that "the policies in paragraphs 18 to 219, taken as a whole, constitute the Government's view of what sustainable development in England means in practice for the planning system".

NPPF describes "three dimensions to sustainable development", as economic, social, and environmental, and that the planning system should perform each of these roles, acknowledging that they are "mutually dependent", but that "plans and decisions need to take local circumstances into account, so that they respond to the different opportunities for achieving sustainable development".

NPPF introduced the "presumption in favour of sustainable development", but reinforces the primacy of the development plan for the starting point in terms of decision making.

Paragraph 14 of NPPF describes the presumption in favour of sustainable development as "a golden thread running through both plan-making and decision-taking", and that "local planning authorities should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their areas".

Paragraph 56 addresses the need to achieve good design, stating that "good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, is indivisible from good planning, and should contribute positively to making places better for people".

NPPF outlines the need for the planning system to "play an important role in facilitating social interaction and creating healthy, inclusive communities", and should seek to "deliver the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs".

#### Local Policy

The adopted Local Plan is the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy (Core Spatial Strategy), and was produced jointly by the two local authorities, providing the spatial framework to guide the regeneration of the area to 2026. The Core Spatial Strategy is designed to ensure that both public and private investment is properly coordinated, with the focus on achieving sustainable development.

The strategic vision of the Core Spatial Strategy is:

*"The Borough of Newcastle-under-Lyme and the City of Stoke-on-Trent will be a prosperous, vibrant, environmentally responsible and successful area of choice for businesses, visitors and residents in the period up to 2026"*

## Loggerheads and Ashley Community Project – Feasibility Study

Loggerheads is identified as a “Rural Service Centre”, such settlements that “provide the most comprehensive range of essential rural services”, and that “development within these centres will primarily be to ensure that this offer, and therefore the sustainability of these centres is maintained”. Strategic Aim 11 of the Core Spatial Strategy seeks to “focus development within the communities of Loggerheads, Madeley and Audley Parish to support their function as rural service centres which meet the requirements of local people”.

### Emerging Neighbourhood Plan

Loggerheads Parish Council is progressing the development of a Neighbourhood Plan, which will incorporate policies to address key concerns in relation to housing, transport, heritage, the economy, sport, and health and community facilities.

The vision for Loggerheads within the Neighbourhood Plan is:

*“an enhanced sustainable rural community that provides for people of all ages”*

The plan contains five key aims, including Aim 4: Health and Well-being, which seeks to “cultivate social cohesion and healthy lifestyles through the provision of public, recreational and community spaces”.

Consultation and evidence for the plan would indicate both a need and demand for the kind of facility proposed.

### Approach to Securing Planning Consent

The main options for gaining planning permission are:

- Submission of a conventional planning application; or
- Use of the Community Right to Build.

In either case, a detailed scheme would need to be prepared. This would include plans (plan, elevation and sectional details), design and access statement and other supporting information. Given the proximity of the site to a SSSI, an Environmental Impact Assessment would be expected.

Preparation of a detailed scheme, including supporting statements, is likely to take several months.

#### *Conventional Planning Application*

A conventional planning application would need to be submitted to the local planning authority. The local planning authority would determine the application in the usual way. They could grant planning permission and, if necessary, make this the subject of planning conditions or a Section 106 Planning Obligation. A Section 106 Planning Obligation could deal with any infrastructure improvements outside of the application site, essential to allowing the development to go ahead.

If the application was refused, an appeal could be lodged and this would be dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate.

## Loggerheads and Ashley Community Project – Feasibility Study

Assuming approval, a conventional planning application would be the fastest option, taking around 8 weeks from submission, 13 weeks if the proposal was treated as a major application. However, if the application was refused, necessitating an appeal, this would increase the timescale by several months. This depends on the type of appeal. Figures provided by the Planning Portal for 2014 are as follows:

- Written representations            19 weeks
- Hearings                                    23 weeks
- Inquiries                                    38 weeks

Pre-application discussions with the local planning authority would be useful in trying to assess the likelihood of planning permission being granted or refused.

A planning application will be considered against the context of national planning policy (the National Planning Policy Framework) and local planning policy (the adopted local plan, the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy 2006-2026) and any emerging local plan documents, and the Neighbourhood Plan. Any application must be determined in accordance with the adopted local plan policies, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. In other words, there would need to be robust planning reasons to depart from local plan policies.

### *Community Right to Build*

The Community Right to Build is more complex and has a longer timeframe.

The process is as follows:

- Submit the parish area or a smaller area within the parish to the local planning authority for designation as a neighbourhood area;
- The LPA will publicise the neighbourhood area application (6 weeks) and then designate a neighbourhood area (usually based on that submitted, but could be a smaller area);
- Prepare detailed scheme and supporting information/reports (similar to those required for the planning application);
- Organise statutory pre-submission consultation (6 weeks);
- Submit the CRtBO proposal to the Local Planning Authority, together with a Consultation Statement and Basic Conditions Statement;
- LPA publicises the scheme (6 weeks);
- LPA appoints Independent Examiner, with agreement of the Parish Council (or Community Organisation);
- The Independent Examination considers whether the CRtBO meets the basic conditions (see below);
- The Independent Examiners Report is not binding, though the LPA will normally follow its recommendations and must give clear reasons if it departs from them;
- Providing the CRtBO meets the basic conditions, it will proceed to referendum;
- The Council's election unit will arrange for the referendum to take place; and
- If the CRtBO receives a majority 'yes' vote, then the scheme has planning permission.

## Loggerheads and Ashley Community Project – Feasibility Study

The timing for the CRtBO route can vary greatly. Realistically, taking into account the statutory publicity and consultation periods, it is likely to take 9-12 months, assuming good progress.

In addition to granting planning permission, there is another important dimension to CRtBOs. Any proceeds from the development could only be used for community benefit. This is clearly beneficial where housing is intended to enable the development of a community facility.

The Independent Examination for a CRtBO would involve different, though similar, considerations to those involved in determining a planning application. The focus of the Independent Examination is on whether the scheme meets the 'Basic Conditions'. In summary, these are:

- It must have appropriate regard to national policy;
- It must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;
- It must be in general conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan for the local area; and
- It must be compatible with EU obligations, including human rights requirements.

These apply to Neighbourhood Plans, CRtBOs and other kinds of Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO). In addition, NDOs and CRtBOs:

- Must have regard to the protection and enhancement of Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

It is important to note that the basic condition relating to local policy only requires general conformity with strategic local policies. Strategic policies are the main, high-level policies. CRtBO could lead to the granting of planning permission, where a planning application for the same scheme would be unsuccessful.

Whereas there are numerous Neighbourhood Plans underway, very few CRtBOs have been or are being done around the country. This is probably largely due to the relatively complex process, compared to conventional planning applications.

Often a CRtBO would be prepared in parallel to a Neighbourhood Plan, so that the independent examination and referendum can deal with both.

### Relative Advantages and Disadvantages

The relative advantages and disadvantages of each approach are as follows.

	Planning Application	CRtBO
<b>Time</b>	Much quicker, though the time period lengthens considerably if an appeal is required.	Lengthy statutory process.
<b>Flexibility</b>	Minor amendments can often be made to approved schemes.	There is no process for amending a CRtBO, once in place. A further CRtBO would be

## Loggerheads and Ashley Community Project – Feasibility Study

		necessary, or the submission of a planning application.
<b>Preparation</b>	A similar level of detail is required for either approach. However, some detail can be left to a later stage, and then be dealt with through conditions or a Section 106 Obligation.	All details of the scheme, including infrastructure improvements, will need to be developed before the scheme is submitted.
<b>Complexity</b>	The process for submitting a planning application is relatively simple, involving the preparation of the scheme and completion of application forms.	The statutory process is very complex, as set out above.
<b>Likelihood of Gaining Planning Permission</b>	The local planning authority will be responsible for determining the application, against the context of national and local planning policy.	The CRtBO would need to have regard to national planning policy, but only be in general conformity with strategic local policies. This may lead to the granting of planning permission in circumstances where a conventional planning application is refused.
<b>Cost</b>	The scheme would need to be prepared, involving professional fees.  A planning fee is involved when the application is submitted.	The scheme would need to be prepared, involving professional fees. Funding is available from the Locality-Led programme to support the development of the CRtBO.  There is no fee for submitting a CRtBO. The local planning authority would be responsible for organising and paying for the Independent Examination and Referendum.

### 3. Development Options

#### Option 1: Loggerheads Parish Council's Preferred Option

Loggerheads Parish Council's preferred option is essentially as described in Section 2 above. This would see the construction of a multi-purpose building that would house various functions, and would include the relocation of the local medical centre. Alongside the building would be an appropriately sized car park, and a range of outdoor sports and recreation facilities.

ADD INDICATIVE PLAN

#### Outline Project Plan: Preferred Option

##### *Preferred Option Construction Costs*

Estimation of costs for constructing the building, external facilities and associated infrastructure, based on Loggerheads Parish Council's preferred option:

Item	Description	Estimated Cost
Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,858 sq m</li> <li>Base cost assuming a build cost of £1,800/sq m (based on recent comparative project)</li> <li>Cost may increase due to specific requirements of end users (e.g. Medical Centre)</li> </ul>	£3,344,000
Car Parking/Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Car parking requirements will be determined through the planning process</li> <li>Assumes 50 spaces</li> </ul>	£100,000
3G Pitch, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on latest Sport England guidelines and indicative costs</li> </ul>	£885,000
Grass Pitch, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on latest Sport England guidelines and indicative costs</li> </ul>	£85,000
MUGA, Skate Area, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on latest Sport England guidelines and indicative costs</li> </ul>	£295,000
Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assume 10%; does not include local authority planning fees</li> </ul>	£470,900
	<b>Total=</b>	<b>£5,179,900</b>

These figures are derived from:

## Loggerheads and Ashley Community Project – Feasibility Study

- Latest Sport England guidance; and
- Details from two comparable projects elsewhere.

### Construction Options

Construction methodology plays an important part in determining the eventual final costs in any building project. However, it is important to recognise the constraints that the local planning authority may place on the proposed specification. Notwithstanding the above, assuming that planning requirements are not too onerous, some of the options may be summarised as follows.

The majority of small scale, low-rise construction still favours the methods that are most common – that being masonry based solutions involving brickwork and concrete blockwork for walls with timber and tile roof solutions. Internal walls may be either masonry based or timber partitions depending on a number of factors that do not relate simply to cost. This will generally form the baseline that is quoted in estimates for likely building costs. All of the following methods may be considered to add to the baseline cost level to varying degrees depending on multiple factors that may be in play at any time.

Successive recent construction industry recessions have taken capacity out of the market for masonry construction leading to some inflation busting cost increases for both labour and materials for this type of construction.

Without a finalised design it is not possible to state actual figures in terms of likely costs. The following alternatives may be considered more comprehensively once a design has been formulated even if only in feasibility levels of definition. Factors which affect costs in alternative construction methods may relate to the volume of work (prefabrication of building elements is more cost effective with large quantities of repeat units) or familiarity with a particular method in the local workforce (older construction methods involving lime, straw bale or cob).

Prefabrication methods can include timber panels for walls and timber roof trusses. These may be cost effective (particularly roof trusses) depending on the availability of local fabrication plants together with the adoption of a design that suits their use. With such methods of construction the material cost may be more expensive but site assembly time is minimised. Clearly site cost savings need to be equal to or exceed the increases of factory fabrication material costs to make it attractive.

Other types of prefabrication include SIPs (Structural Insulated Panels) which provide both the structural and insulation values required of an external wall in one unit. Again, the value of these is in the savings in site based activities. Care may be required in securing acceptance of their external appearance with local planning authorities. Having to clad such panels with acceptable materials (such as brick slips) may make them un-feasibly uneconomic.

Other than the above there is an alternative of obtaining the buildings in volumetric prefabricated form where large elements of the buildings are manufactured off site. They are then brought to site located on pre-prepared foundations and connected together giving very fast construction periods from a site activity perspective. Such methods may be similar to the porta-cabin type of concept. This type of construction may only be economical if the client selects a standard pattern book type layout that is configured to the manufacturer's

## Loggerheads and Ashley Community Project – Feasibility Study

standard sizes and interior fittings/layouts. Bespoke designs tend to drive costs up uneconomically.

Older traditional methods such as lime mortars and plasters, cob construction (clay, sand and straw) or straw baled walls with plastered finishes are used to limited extents but as they are not mainstream methods tend to cost more except where suitable materials are available locally with good local labour capability.

Such methods tend to be chosen for their green credentials as they are deemed, along with timber from managed sources, to be more environmentally acceptable and sustainable. Brick walls require the least ongoing maintenance costs and so will keep such costs to a minimum.

It is noted that it may be an aspiration to have squash courts within the facilities. This may change the dynamic on construction options as a high roof may not be suitable for many of the foregoing methods. As an alternative some form of frame building would be required which is normally based on steel columns and beams although it is also possible to utilise engineered timber or concrete solutions.

It is always possible to consider mixing the different options above to meet client aspirations from a use, cost, appearance and performance set of requirements. Such matters need to be considered as part of the design process.

There are also ways to reduce cost in buildings at the design stage that include such matters as roof pitch, type of roof coverings (concrete tiles being less expensive than clay, etc.), ceiling heights, maximising the floor area/foundation ratios and also the wall/floor area ratios.

### Funding

There are various sources of funding available that could support the development of this project, the main sources include:

- Sport England;
- Football Foundation;
- Loggerheads Parish Council;
- Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council;
- Staffordshire County Council;
- NHS (via relocation of Medical Centre); and
- s106 Contributions.

These are considered in turn below.

#### *Sport England*

Sport England has a range of funding programmes, though the most appropriate programme for the project in Loggerheads would be the **Strategic Facilities Fund**.

The Strategic Facilities Fund is designed to provide financial support on a strategic basis in order to deliver outcomes essential to local communities.

## Loggerheads and Ashley Community Project – Feasibility Study

Key objectives of the fund are:

- To encourage the market to be clear about the purpose of their investment, encouraging development of sustainable environments capable of supporting service delivery which delivers against their local outcomes;
- To encourage the market to work collaboratively (cross-sector and boundaries) using insight to determine local outcomes, target audience and to understand the behaviour change needed to achieve outcomes; and
- To attract capital investment into local facilities, providing new opportunities to encourage people to live healthier and more active lifestyles.

Projects that can provide an integrated offer of services and facilities will be prioritised.

The project at Loggerheads is a clear fit with the Strategic Facilities Fund. However, the big challenge is that the project would need to be a priority for the local authority, and presently, it is not clear that this would be the case.

### *Football Foundation*

As with Sport England, the Football Foundation has a range of different funding programmes. The programme most appropriate for the project at Loggerheads would be their **Premier League and the FA Facilities Fund**.

The fund is available to football clubs, schools, councils and local sports associations, and is designed to support the development of new or refurbished football facilities to improve the football experience at grassroots levels.

The programme will make grants towards projects that:

- Improve facilities for football and other sports in local communities;
- Sustain or increase participation amongst children and adults, regardless of background, age, or ability; and
- Help children and adults to develop their physical, mental, social and moral capacities through regular participation in sport.

The types of facilities supported include:

- Grass pitches drainage/improvements;
- Pavilions, clubhouses and changing rooms;
- 3G Football Turf Pitches (FTPs) and multi-use games areas; and
- Fixed floodlights for artificial pitches.

All applications must have security of tenure either by freehold or leasehold. Where security of tenure is via leasehold, a minimum of 25 years is required.

Where applications are from a professional club's community programme, priority will be given to projects located in areas of high deprivation. For projects outside of such areas, it must be demonstrated that a significant proportion of participants would come from neighbouring deprived areas.

Projects that are a joint application between professional club community schemes and

## Loggerheads and Ashley Community Project – Feasibility Study

grassroots football will be prioritised, as will those that provide 3G FTPs.

Demand for grants is high, and therefore applications will be assessed and weighted towards priority projects.

The maximum grant available would be £500,000. Applicants must demonstrate a financial need for the grant, and provide evidence that all other available options have been exhausted. Applicants will be expected to make a financial contribution themselves, and to also secure match funding. The Football Foundation will expect match funding to be maximised, although each project will be assessed based on individual circumstances.

Again, the project at Loggerheads would be a clear fit with the programme. However, a number of issues would need to be considered and addressed, including:

- It would appear that the Football Foundation would only be able to contribute towards certain aspects of the project, though this isn't necessarily an issue;
- A robust argument will need to be made to demonstrate the need for the project and the funding, as more deprived areas will be prioritised;
- Confirmation would be needed that grant from the Football Foundation could be used alongside Sport England funding; and
- Before proceeding with an application, a legal interest in the site will need to be secured.

It may prove advantageous to develop a working relationship with one of the three local professional clubs (Stoke City, Port Vale, and Crewe Alexandra), all of whom have well-established and respected community programmes, and would bring to the table resources and expertise.

### *Loggerheads Parish Council*

It is understood that the Parish Council would consider being directly involved in the project through relocating to the completed development.

The Council would be in a position to raise funding towards the project, and also help with the long-term financial sustainability of the scheme.

The Parish Council's presence as a key player in the project would also have the advantage of attracting other partners and users.

### *Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council*

In the current climate, funding from the Borough Council may prove difficult to attract. Indeed, in terms of the Borough Council's involvement in the project, it would probably be more important for them to work positively with the Parish Council to enable the provision of the land required.

However, it has been suggested that the Borough Council may be considering investing in improvements to the football pitch at the former sanatorium site. Clearly this project would present the opportunity to secure betterment, and a more sensible solution may be for the Borough Council to redirect their proposed investment to helping enable this project. In addition, they could also dispose of the existing pitch and contribute the receipts to this

## Loggerheads and Ashley Community Project – Feasibility Study

project.

In addition, there could also be dialogue with the Council regarding any services that they offer in the area with a view to relocating them.

### *Staffordshire County Council*

The position with the County Council may be similar to the Borough Council. However, it is understood that there would be the potential for dialogue, and there would be the potential to relocate the village's library to the scheme. In addition, there would also be the potential to discuss the relocation of other County Council services.

### *NHS*

It is understood that the village's medical centre is experiencing a number of different challenges in terms of its capacity and various service related matters.

It is considered that the proposed project would provide an opportunity to address those issues, and there has been an indication of a willingness to consider options.

Inclusion of a revamped medical centre within the scheme would provide additional resources for the project. There would also be the potential to generate resources from the current medical centre for use within the project.

### *s106 Contributions*

A range of residential developments are planned across the Loggerheads area over the coming years, and these will have the potential to provide financial contributions through s106 agreements.

It is considered that a case could be made for the Borough Council to divert s106 contributions towards the project, and dialogue should be established through local members.

\*

These are the main sources of funding available for a project of this nature. However, there are other sources that could be explored (e.g. the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation).

### **Delivery**

One of the biggest challenges that the project currently faces is that there is presently no clearly identifiable delivery mechanism to take the project forward. Given the challenges facing local government, it is highly unlikely that either the Borough or County Council would want to take the project on.

Loggerheads Parish Council have already committed time towards the development of an outline business case, and the preparation of this pre-feasibility study. However, it is questionable as to whether the Parish Council would have the capacity and expertise to take the project much further, unless they were able to buy these in. In addition, there will be the need to properly address the long-term management and development of the facility.

## Loggerheads and Ashley Community Project – Feasibility Study

The most appropriate solution may be the development and formation of a new asset-based organisation, specifically designed to address the delivery of the project and its long-term sustainability. Options could include a charitable trust, or a Community Interest Company.

There are a number of advantages to this approach, for example:

- Such organisations can often access funding that public bodies can't;
- A Community Interest Company would have an 'asset lock' to ensure that any assets would remain community assets; and
- Such organisations would be independent in nature.

It is considered that these options should be explored further as part of business planning activity.

### Option 2: Delivery of Facilities as Part of a Wider Development

As this report was being prepared, two issues have arisen that have the potential to change the direction and nature of the project. Firstly, the owner of the site – Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council – has submitted an outline planning application for residential development on the site, and secondly, it has become apparent that the Council is in negotiations with a developer – HB Villages – who are examining the potential to develop a mixed residential scheme which would include a range of housing options, including homes for the elderly.

Having discussed the scheme with the developer, they have confirmed that they are examining masterplan options for the site, and also talked about the potential of bringing in part of the adjoining farmland, and that they would be willing to work with the Parish Council with a view to incorporating some form of facility within their development. However, although their scheme would incorporate some of what the Parish Council is looking to achieve, it is clear that the preferred option would not be achievable in its entirety.

Working with HB Villages would be advantageous in that the development and management of the project could be handled by them, but there are a range of issues that would still need to be addressed:

- Funding would still need to be secured in order to support the community and sports elements of the proposal;
- There would need to be complex negotiations with the developer in order to secure the proposition;
- The proposition would be predicated on the developer securing the site from the Borough Council, and given that they have submitted an outline planning application for residential use, it is clear that they will be seeking to achieve a residential land value. This may not be viable for HB Villages given their particular model, and the non-residential uses that would form part of the scheme; and
- The Parish Council would have a limited influence on the design and development of the scheme, and so it would be advisable to agree a brief for the project with the developer, which would form part of any legal agreement.

## Loggerheads and Ashley Community Project – Feasibility Study

Although the establishment of a relationship with HB Villages would provide a delivery mechanism for the project, the Parish Council would still need to address the other issues described in Option 1, namely:

- Funding; and
- Long-term management and governance.

### Income Generation

There would be a range of opportunities to utilise the new facilities to generate an income stream which could be used to support the long-term maintenance and sustainability of the site. Opportunities would include:

- Making the sports facilities available for use by local sports clubs. The inclusion of a 3G FTP would be crucial in that respect as it would provide a facility that could be used all year-round. The pitch could also be divided into three. This approach could generate £90-£120 an hour when in use;
- Clearly the community space could be hired for events such as parties, weddings, and also for corporate usage; and
- End users (e.g. medical centre, local authorities) would also provide income as tenants. Rental levels should reflect market conditions, but also recognise the sustainability of the individual end user.

## 4. Conclusions and Next Steps

### Conclusions

Having examined the Parish Council's preferred option, it is considered that in the current context, it would be unachievable, for the following reasons:

- There is much uncertainty regarding the site, and what land would be available for some form of community-led initiative;
- Even if the negotiations with HB Villages fail, it is highly probable that the Borough Council would pursue some other form of residential development, and if they could be persuaded to sell the site to the Parish Council or another body, they would still probably seek a residential land value for the site;
- The outline planning application sees the omission of part of the site which could be available, but this would not be big enough to support the size and scale of facility envisaged by the Parish Council;
- There is no guarantee that any of the adjoining land would be available; and
- The main source of funding for such a project (Sport England) would require that the project be a priority for the Borough Council. At this moment in time, it would appear that this would not be the case.

However, that is not to say that a project of some description is not feasible. The following describes possible development scenarios, and how the Parish Council could respond.

#### **HB Villages acquire the site from the Borough Council:**

The Parish Council should work with HB Villages to develop a project that achieves as much as the original vision as possible. This would include:

- Developing a brief and legal agreement that secures the delivery of the scheme;
- Helping to enable the development of an appropriate body capable of the long-term management and development of the scheme; and
- Looking to secure grant funding to contribute to the delivery of the scheme.

The Parish Council could also work alongside HB Villages with a view to bringing in a portion of the adjoining farmland.

#### **The Borough Council looks to progress the site for residential development in accordance with an outline planning application**

The Parish Council should work with the Borough Council to secure the portion of the site omitted from the proposal. It would also be possible to reconfigure the layout of the residential proposal to ensure that the development's open space contribution is located alongside the omitted part of the site; this would have the effect of making more land available.

In this scenario, the Parish Council could also seek to acquire a portion of the adjoining farmland.

The Parish Council would also need to:

## Loggerheads and Ashley Community Project – Feasibility Study

- Help to establish an appropriate body capable of the long-term management and development of the scheme; and
- Look to secure grant funding to enable the delivery of the scheme.

### Next Steps

Whichever scenario arises, the Parish Council would need to continue to develop their approach to the project, which will include:

- Working on a detailed brief for the project;
- Examining funding sources; and
- Establishment of an appropriate delivery body.

In addition, it is also considered that the Parish Council makes a formal approach to the Borough Council, County Council, and the medical centre with a view to working together to progress the project. This could be formalised by way of a Collaboration Agreement. In addition, the discussions should also focus on the potential of the Borough and County Councils as end users.

If HB Villages successfully acquire the site from the Borough Council, the Parish Council should seek to work with them by way of a Collaboration Agreement. It would be possible to include the other public bodies within the agreement. This could lead to a Development Agreement for the delivery of the new facility in accordance with an agreed brief.

It is also recommended that the Parish Council approaches the three local professional clubs to gauge their interest in being involved in the development and delivery of the project. This could be a big help in securing funding.



# Contact



## Urban Vision Enterprise CIC

### Main Office:

Foxlowe Arts Centre (1<sup>st</sup> Floor)  
 Stockwell Street  
 Leek  
 Staffordshire  
 ST13 6AD

### Liverpool Office:

National Architecture Centre  
 Mann Island  
 Liverpool

[www.uvns.org](http://www.uvns.org)

Phone: 01538 386221 (Leek Office)  
 Mobile: 07713 133257  
 Email: [dave.proudlove@uvns.org](mailto:dave.proudlove@uvns.org)

