



**AGENDA ITEM: 5(t)**

**CABINET: 15 September 2015**

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**Report of: Assistant Director Community Services/Assistant Director Housing and Regeneration**

**Relevant Managing Directors: Managing Director (People and Places)/  
Managing Director (Transformation)**

**Relevant Portfolio Holders: Councillor Y. Gagen & Councillor I. Moran**

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**SUBJECT: OPERATIONAL ASSETS - MANAGED FISHING LAKES**

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Wards affected : Burscough East, UpHolland

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To propose revised arrangements for the management of the Council's fishing lakes.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That the new asset management arrangements, as set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.2 of this report, are applied to the Council's fishing lakes identified at Appendix 1.

2.2 That the Assistant Director Community Services be authorised to take all necessary steps to give effect to the revised management arrangements at 2.1, subject to all necessary consents and approvals being.

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**3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 The Council's Fishing Lakes at Platts Lane, Burscough, Abbey Lakes, Upholland, and Chequer Lane, Upholland are classed by the Council as Community Assets. It is possible that Clubs or Community Organisations could

manage these assets for the benefit of their members and the wider community. In some situations these Clubs and Organisations are often best able to determine those elements of investment and improvement to the assets which will benefit those wishing to use them the most. Significantly these Clubs and Organisations are able to access external funding which is not available to the Council.

#### **4.0 CURRENT POSITION**

4.1 At present there are two types of arrangement in place to deal with the management of the fishing lakes. The Council directly manages the sites at Abbey Lakes and Chequer Lane in UpHolland, whilst the site at Platts Lane in Burscough is jointly managed by the Council and Burscough and District Angling Club (BDAC).

4.2 At Platts Lane the lake and immediate surrounds are managed by BDAC, whilst the wider site, including trees, woodlands, grassland and access, is managed by the Council. BDAC have now requested that the Council consider revising the management arrangements at Platts Lane, in line with that now adopted for the Council's managed allotment sites, whereby BDAC would undertake agreed maintenance functions at the site for which they would use the rent monies previously payable to the Council.

#### **5.0 ISSUES**

5.1 On 12 October 2008, the government produced a paper entitled "Advancing Assets for Communities", which explains how to optimise the community benefit of publicly owned assets, by considering options for greater transfer of asset ownership and management to community groups.

5.2 This proposed scheme would support the desire of BDAC to widen their involvement in the management of the Platts Lane Lake site, and steer new management arrangements for the Council's two lake sites in Up Holland.

#### **6.0 PROPOSALS**

6.1 The Assistant Director Community Services will determine whether BDAC who presently have a joint management role at Platts Lane Lake are constituted sufficiently well to extend their management role, are minded to assume this responsibility, and are currently undertaking their joint management role in a satisfactory manner. The appropriate terms will be negotiated by the Estates and Valuation Manager for inclusion within their new lease.

6.2 In respect of the two fishing lakes in Upholland, where a new club/organisation is being established and is not yet constituted in an acceptable manner but indicates that they are willing to become so then they will be provided with assistance in this regard. Once this has been completed they will be offered terms for an initial 12 month period, to be followed by a longer 7 year lease if the initial arrangements are judged by the Assistant Director Community Services to be working in a satisfactory manner.

- 6.3 All of the above arrangements have been subject to the relevant title being inspected to see if there is any restriction or prohibition on the disposal as proposed.
- 6.4 Appropriate lease terms would include responsibility on the Club/Organisation for lake maintenance and management, wider site maintenance to be agreed, day ticket collection and bailiffing, site security, and insurance. The lease would also contain the right for the council to terminate should the land be needed for development or other purposes.
- 6.5 One requirement of the lease will be that the membership of the body who hold the lease produces an annual report in January which details how they propose to spend the rent monies which would otherwise be payable to the Council. This will be considered by the Council's Assistant Director Community Services to determine if the proposals will, in his opinion enhance the Community Asset. If a report is not submitted or the officer is not able to certify that the proposals are acceptable then the rent falls due in the normal manner.

## **7.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The proposals may result in the Council not receiving the annual rental income which it receives from Platts Lane Lake of £300 ground rent and approximately £1,800 per annum from day ticket income. Potential future income of approximately £1200 from the two Upholland sites may also be foregone (see Appendix 1)
- 7.2 Conservation and access management and maintenance at its fishing lakes is currently undertaken through the Council's Ranger Service and Grounds Maintenance Team and therefore an increased input from the Club/Organisation to undertake some of this work will create additional capacity within the Councils revenue budgets. There will also be a small administrative saving if the rents and day ticket income no longer need to be collected.
- 7.3 The new arrangement should make it more likely that the Community Groups will be able to attract external funding. Many grants for environmental improvements, community and volunteer development, and community devolvement of recreational facilities are available but a significant proportion of these require application from the community group itself.
- 7.4 The arrangement has worked well in other local authorities and has resulted in the Community Groups expending far more money on the Community Asset than the rental income forgone by the Council, thus improving the asset and creating a sense of ownership for the service users.

## **8.0 RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 8.1 Should there be insufficient clubs/organisations willing or able to assume responsibility for these community assets the Council would have to investigate and implement alternative management arrangements.

## **9.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 9.1 The proposed management arrangements have worked well for the allotments and fishing lakes in other authorities resulting in an enhanced asset and there is no reason to suppose that West Lancashire will be any different.
- 9.2 Fishing Clubs generally have a commitment to a site for a significant period. It is hoped that they will embrace the opportunity to take greater control of the facility which they utilise.

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### **Background Documents**

#### **Equality Impact Assessment**

There is no evidence from an initial assessment of an adverse impact on equality in relation to the equality target groups.

#### **Appendices**

1. Council Fishing Lakes

**APPENDIX 1**

**Council Fishing Lakes**

<b>Site</b>	<b>Area of lake (Hectares/Acres)</b>	<b>No of Fishing Platforms</b>	<b>Tenant</b>	<b>Income actual/potential (ground rent + fishing rental)</b>	<b>Managed by club Y/N</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Platts Lane Lake. Burscough	0.89ha/2.20a	32	Burscough and District Angling Club	£2,100	Y	
Abbey Lakes, Upholland	1.36ha/3.35a	27	None	£800	N	Seek new club involvement
Chequer Lane Lake, Upholland	0.24ha/0.59a	13	None	£400	N	Seek new club involvement