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**CASTLE TOWARD, TOWARD, BY DUNOON**

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**1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee's consent to begin a selection process to appoint appropriate agents to assist the Council with the marketing and disposal of Castle Toward by sale or lease.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Committee instruct the Director of Corporate Services to advertise for the services of a marketing agent on the basis of the detail contained within this report.
- 2.2 That the Committee agree to form a Sub-Group comprising relevant Officers and Members to consider formal submissions received by the closing date.
- 2.3 That the Committee authorise this Sub-Group to take forward the selection process by inviting selected interested agents to make formal presentations.
- 2.4 That the Sub-Group be asked to report back to the Area Committee on the outcome of this process together with any proposed recommendations.
- 2.5 That relevant officers be instructed to conduct more detailed discussions with Actual Reality in relation to the continuation and possible development of an enhanced facility at Ardentinny Outdoor Centre.

**3. DETAIL**

- 3.1 At its meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2003 the Strategic Policy Committee remitted powers to the Bute & Cowal Area Committee to deal with the marketing and disposal of Castle Toward, by sale or lease.

- 3.2 The Area Committee were also empowered to take forward the disposal of Castle Toward in conjunction with Estates Service together with an international marketing agency.
- 3.3 Following on from the above the Estates Services prepared a basic information pack on Castle Toward including layout plans, title information, photographs and background.
- 3.4 It was decided that the Estates Manager should, because of the size and nature of this potential receipt, conduct preliminary meetings with specialist marketing agents with a reputation for operating and delivering in this particular field, to provide them with the information pack and to lead them through a question and answer process. The purpose of conducting these meetings was to initially capture the agent's interest and imagination and to encourage them to visit Castle Toward and Cowal at an early stage in order that they might fully appreciate and consider the future possibilities and options in terms of marketing opportunities. It was hoped in addition that a networking process involving potential clients might be started.
- 3.5 The agents were also asked to consider the possible effects on a marketing strategy of both the emerging Local Plan, which is currently out to Public Consultation, and the situation at Ardyne Point.
- 3.6 Accompanied viewings of Castle Toward by agents took place during November and December 2003 and of the seven major agents contacted, five have now expressed a keen interest in assisting the Council. The initial aim of generating market interest and feedback has therefore been achieved.
- 3.7 The Head of Legal & Protective Services has confirmed that, if the Committee agree to the recommendations contained within this report, formal advertisements inviting interested parties to tender for their appointment as marketing agent should be placed in the national press and a closing date be set. It is intended that as part of this process a specification of the nature and extent of an agents roles and responsibilities be prepared and issued to interested parties.
- 3.8 The Committee may wish to note that a consistency of views was expressed by each of the seven agents in relation to a marketing exercise being shaped, to a degree, by the completion of the Local Plan consultation process in early spring. Each confirmed that, ideally, a market launch in April/May would be more appropriate.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 That the suggested actions be undertaken to ensure that an appropriate marketing agent be appointed to act on behalf of the Council prior to Spring 2004 in order that all the necessary preparations can be made in

advance to ensure that Castle Toward is properly presented to the market at the appropriate time.

- 4.2 Members are asked to note that the current Tenants would have an opportunity to submit a formal bid for Castle Toward with any other interested parties when this property is marketed.

## 6. IMPLICATIONS

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| POLICY              | None                                       |
| FINANCIAL:          | Agents fees<br>Marketing/advertising costs |
| PERSONNEL           | None                                       |
| EQUAL OPPORTUNITES: | None                                       |
| LEGAL:              | None                                       |

**N STEWART**  
**DIRECTOR OF CORPORATE & LEGAL SERVICES**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> February 2004**

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