

For publication

Future use of former Queen's Park Sports Centre site (HW210L)

Meeting:	Cabinet Council
Date:	5 th December 2017 13 th December 2017
Cabinet portfolios:	Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing Assistant Cabinet Member – Special Projects
Report by:	Michael Rich, Executive Director

For publication

1.0 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To propose a scheme for the former sports centre site and to seek Cabinet's recommendation to Council to include funding for the scheme within the capital programme.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet endorse the business case for providing an artificial sports pitch within the footprint of the former sport centre site.
- 2.2 That Cabinet note the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Project Group which has informed this report and recommendations; and thank the members of the group for their contributions as part of the pre-decision scrutiny process and for their offer of continued engagement during the implementation stage.

- 2.3 That Cabinet approve the preferred option in principle, as set out in the business case, noting that this will remain subject to the outcome of the heritage assessment currently underway.
- 2.4 That Cabinet recommend to full Council an allocation within the capital programme, as set out in section 7, to cover the capital investment required for the preferred option and endorse the further work underway to reduce costs and maximise contributions from other funding sources.
- 2.5 That Cabinet recommend to full Council approving revised income and expenditure figures for the new facility within budget setting for 2018-19 and beyond, in line with the estimates set out in the business case.
- 2.6 That Cabinet note the work underway to prepare and submit a planning application for the preferred option.

3.0 **Background**

- 3.1 On 7th March 2017 Cabinet approved in principle a preferred option of artificial sports pitches for the former Queen's Park Sports Centre site. This followed the public consultation undertaken during September and October 2016 that showed a good level of support for this option and Cabinet's consideration of an outline business case. Cabinet also approved allocating further resource in order that a full business case could be developed and preparations made for the submission of a planning application.
- 3.2 Since then, the demolition of the former sports centre was completed leaving a clear site for future development.
- 3.3 Following a procurement process, an external organisation – FMG – have been contracted to undertake the work approved by Cabinet, namely development of a full business case and preparation of a planning application for the preferred option once this is finalised.
- 3.4 Reports and updates regarding the potential future use of the site and subsequent work have been provided to the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and more recently to the Scrutiny

Project Group established as part of the agreed scrutiny work programme. This has included consideration of the draft business case report produced for the council by FMG.

3.5 During the process to develop the full business case, FMG have regularly consulted with the council in order to refine and focus the range of different options for the site. Those discussions have included a meeting, facilitated by the council's planning officers, with Historic England.

4.0 **Considerations and proposals**

4.1 The business case developed by FMG is included as appendix one. The report describes how initial options seeking to maximise the use of the footprint for sports pitches were refined following more detailed consideration of the nature of the site, in particular its location within a Grade II* listed park.

4.2 Discussions with planning officers and Historic England have indicated that it is highly likely a scheme to maximise the use of the site for sports pitches would be opposed by Historic England, which is a statutory consultee. Given the listed status of the park, opposition from this consultee could result in the application being referred to the Secretary of State.

4.3 Following further consideration, and as advised by the council, FMG then prepared alternative schemes that would deliver a mix of sports pitch facilities on the site together with a greater emphasis on enhancing the amenity of the park and restoring some park features in line with the historic plans and layout (see section 4 of the FMG report). Additional attention has also been paid to mitigating the impact of the pitch facilities within the park setting.

4.4 These refinements have led to a preferred option set out within the business case (option 3B2). As described by FMG, this option provides a blend of enhancing the sports facilities at the site, the ability for a small revenue contribution to the general fund (once capital investment has been made) and a scheme that can enhance aspects of the heritage value of the park.

4.5 A detailed heritage assessment of the site is now underway as part of the process to prepare the planning application for the scheme. It will be important for that assessment to be considered fully prior to submission of a planning application. However, subject to the outcome of that assessment, Cabinet approval for the preferred option is sought now in order to avoid further delays to bringing the site back into productive use.

4.6 As noted above, a Scrutiny Project Group, chaired by Cllr Simmons, has given consideration to the emerging proposals and prepared a report that is included here as appendix two. The group is supportive of the preferred option and has set out a number of findings that are either already being taken on board as part of preparing the planning application or can be taken into account during the implementation stage of the project.

5.0 **Next steps**

5.1 In order to submit a planning application, further surveys are required and these have now been commissioned through FMG following advice from planning officers. It is hoped a planning application, supported by the full range of required surveys, will be submitted early in 2018. Further dialogue with Historic England will take place pre-submission in order to minimise the risk of an objection from a statutory consultee.

5.2 Pending approval at full Council on 13th December, a procurement exercise will commence in order to secure a suitable developer for the pitch. This is a specialist market and so further advice on specification will be sought from FMG, Derbyshire Sport and the FA.

5.3 Beyond the pitch construction itself, most other elements of the development should be capable of being procured either through local suppliers or delivered in-house. These routes will be pursued wherever possible.

5.4 As the project moves to implementation, further consideration will need to be given to providing adequate project management in order that the development is delivered to time/cost/quality expectations.

5.5 The report from FMG includes some outline consideration of the potential case for full-size artificial football pitch provision elsewhere within the borough (see 5.17 of the report). It is noted that there remains a shortfall for such provision and that, if developed, it would complement the offer at Queen's Park and enhance the range of facilities available to drive improvements to health and well-being. There would also be good prospects of attracting external funding towards the cost of such a facility and, consequently, a greater overall return. Whilst officers will consider this for a future project, it is proposed that the focus in the short term remains on bringing the former sports centre site back into productive use.

6.0 **Human resources/people management implications**

6.1 The FMG business case includes consideration of how the preferred option could be run and the wider staffing implications (including at 5.31 of the report). No decisions have been made yet regarding the best fit for operating the new facility within the existing council structures. Drawing on the considerations in the FMG report, proposals will come back to the Joint Cabinet and Employment and General Committee setting out a preferred option for any changes to the staffing establishment required (within the costs outlined below).

7.0 **Financial implications**

7.1 The costs associated with developing the project through to full business case stage have been provided for within the Service Improvement Reserve. Further surveys required as part of the planning application will also be funded from within this reserve.

7.2 The capital cost of the preferred option is currently estimated at £688k. More detail on this cost is set out in section 4.31 of the business case at appendix one. Costs have been carefully considered and reduced from original estimates through close work with council officers. The costs include some elements that are likely to be carried out by council teams. Given that the final costs remain subject to procurement, Cabinet is asked to recommend that Council approve a provision of up to £750k within the capital programme, split across 2017-18 and 2018-19, in order to cap the overall costs of the scheme. Following

procurement, final capital costs will be reported to Cabinet through the regular capital programme monitoring.

7.3 As noted in the FMG report (e.g. at 3.21), it is very unlikely that any external funding will be available to support the capital costs of the scheme. The capital expenditure will therefore be met largely through the wider financing of the capital programme (which is a mix of borrowing and receipts each year). However, there is also work underway to consider the use of a contribution from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) towards those elements of the scheme that relate to the enhancement of the park, given that this would be eligible under the categories described on the council's 'Regulation 123 list' of approved types of infrastructure.

7.4 As well as capital costs, there are revenue costs set out within the FMG report (in section 5). For the preferred option, these show an overall expenditure of c. £39k p.a. This is off-set by a projected income of c. £55k (once fully established), bringing a modest annual net contribution of up to £16k p.a. Cabinet is asked to recommend to Council that these costs are also factored into future years general fund revenue budgets in order that the Budget set in February 2018 takes account of running costs, and income, for the preferred option.

8.0 **Legal and data protection implications**

8.1 The FMG case sets out key legal matters (including at section 6.29). This includes consideration of the covenants that apply to development on the site.

8.2 It is not thought that there are any further legal or data protection implications.

9.0 **Consultation**

9.1 As noted in the report to Cabinet in March 2017, a public consultation regarding potential uses of the site was carried out in 2016 from 12th September to 21st October. 583 responses were received and the outcomes were published in December 2016. The consultation showed 94% support for the principles set out in the consultation (fit with council plan, fit with the wider site,

evidence of demand, income generation). 69% of respondents agreed with the preferred option set out and 23% disagreed.

- 9.2 As described in the FMG report (section 2.9), further consultation took place in September 2017 with a number of local clubs. Comments received are included in the report and have shaped the work on the business case.
- 9.3 As noted above, the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee and the appointed project group members have also been important consultees through the process.
- 9.4 The Friends of Queen's Park have been updated regarding the latest proposals and will be an important consultee as detailed design work is carried out for the site, in particular the elements of park restoration.
- 9.5 The submission of the planning application will be subject to a consultation process in line with a listed site of this nature.

10.0 **Risk management**

- 10.1 Key risks and mitigations are set out in the FMG business case at appendix D of that report.

11.0 **Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

- 11.1 An equalities impact assessment is set out at appendix 3. The assessment notes a number of potentially positive impacts on groups with protected characteristics. The FMG business case notes in particular the continuing strong growth in women and girls football. The location of a pitch within the park will also make participation opportunities directly visible to families and young children using the park.
- 11.2 The latest Active Derbyshire (formerly Derbyshire Sport) strategy includes the following priority:

Addressing the inequalities in physical activity and sport engagement with a focus on:

- a. Women and girls.
- b. People from lower socio-economic groups.

c. Young people aged 5 – 18

11.3 The preferred option will make a positive contribution to each of the focus areas above.

12.0 **Alternative options and reasons for rejection**

12.1 A range of alternative options for the use of the site in line with the Cabinet decision made in March 2017 are set out in the FMG report (at section 2.12). These include consideration of alternative siting of pitch provision (e.g. at section B40). Wider alternatives were considered by Cabinet at its previous meeting.

12.2 In terms of alternatives for delivery of the preferred option, the main alternative would be to procure a partner to develop and operate the facility. This has not been developed given the policy of 'public sector first' for delivery of the council's facilities and services.

13.0 **Recommendations**

13.1 That Cabinet endorse the business case for providing an artificial sports pitch within the footprint of the former sport centre site.

13.2 That Cabinet note the work undertaken by the Scrutiny Project Group which has informed this report and recommendations; and thank the members of the group for their contributions as part of the pre-decision scrutiny process and for their offer of continued engagement during the implementation stage.

13.3 That Cabinet approve the preferred option in principle, as set out in the business case, noting that this will remain subject to the outcome of the heritage assessment currently underway.

13.4 That Cabinet recommend to full Council an allocation within the capital programme, as set out in section 7, to cover the capital investment required for the preferred option and endorse the further work underway to reduce costs and maximise contributions from other funding sources.

13.5 That Cabinet recommend to full Council approving revised income and expenditure figures for the new facility within budget setting

for 2018-19 and beyond, in line with the estimates set out in the business case.

13.6 That Cabinet note the work underway to prepare and submit a planning application for the preferred option.

14.0 **Reasons for recommendations**

14.1 The recommendations support a preferred option that offers the best mix of enhancing the heritage value of the park whilst also providing new sports facilities that can bring a revenue return to the council.

Decision information

Key decision number	750
Wards affected	All
Links to Council Plan priorities	Quality of life Value for money

Document information

Report author	Contact number/email
Michael Rich	345461
Background documents These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.	
Appendices to the report	
Appendix 1	FMG business case
Appendix 2	Scrutiny Project Group report
Appendix 3	Equality impact assessment