

Area North Committee – 23 November 2011

8. Huish Episcopi – Sport and Leisure Facility Update

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Purpose of the Report

This report provides an update on the future management and development of sport and leisure facilities at the Huish Episcopi Academy.

Public Interest

This report seeks to provide Area North members with a progress report on the work being undertaken to protect and improve the communities use of the sport and leisure facilities at Huish Episcopi Academy, following the contribution of £250,000 of District Council funding in 1991.

Recommendations

That the Area North Committee:

- 1) Note the need to update the 1991 Agreement relating to the joint use of facilities at the Huish Academy.
- 2) Provide feedback on the future management and control of community use.
- 3) Note that the Academy and the Council have agreed to undertake a feasibility study to assess the viability of the potential development of a new artificial grass pitch.
- 4) Appoint two members to form a working group to oversee:
 - a. The update of the 1991 Agreement.
 - b. The feasibility study to assess the viability of a new artificial grass pitch and community use of the playing pitches.
- 5) Agree that the revised Agreement and completed feasibility study are brought back to Area North Committee for final consideration and approval.

Background

In 1991 the County Council, District Council and Huish Episcopi Association became parties to a 30 year agreement to make existing school facilities (outdoor pool, gym, sports hall, and 5 tennis courts) available for community use, together with a range of

new facilities (fitness room, exercise room, squash courts). The new facilities were developed by £250,000 of District Council funding and £30,000 from the South West Council for Sport and Recreation, and the facilities were managed by a Management Committee. A copy of the 1991 Agreement is attached as Appendix A.

Subsequent to the agreement the County Council's responsibilities for the facilities were delegated to the governing body under the Local Management of Schools, however, the County Council retained responsibility for the non-education areas. The Huish Episcopi Association ceased to exist and the responsibilities for running the centre transferred to the County Council's in-house leisure service.

In response to the County Council's decision to transfer the in-house leisure service into a Trust, the school decided to take up the management of the centre. This commenced on the 1st April 2010 and the school subsequently became an Academy on the 1st September 2010. Through this process the school assets have transferred to the Academy by a 125-year lease. The County Council no longer retains any control or involvement of the site. In respect to the agreement, the obligations and responsibilities of the County Council have now transferred to the Academy.

Report

Re-negotiation of the 1991 Agreement

As a consequence of changes explained above there is now a need for SSDC and the Academy to amend the 1991 agreement to reflect the new role of the Academy and most importantly, the way in which community use will be managed and controlled in the future.

In seeking to do this it is recognised that obligations relating to areas such as the range of facilities, hours of facility use by the community, duration of the agreement, and early termination grant repayment would simply transfer.

The more challenging area centres upon what the future role, composition, and authority of a Management Committee entrusted with the operation and administration of the facilities should be. In seeking to progress this, the Academy has proposed that these responsibilities would continue to be entrusted to a Management Committee that would fit within the Governing Body structure. The proposed composition of the Management Committee is set out in the table on the following page:

Original Management Committee Composition:	Academy Proposal for Future Management Committee Composition:
2 members of the District Council	2 representatives of the District Council
1 member of the County Council	
3 members appointed by the Governors	3 members appointed by the Governors
2 members appointed by the Parish Councils contributing towards the costs of the centre	
5 members representing the Huish Episcopi Association	1 user representative
Head Teacher ex officio	Head Teacher ex officio
Head of PE ex officio	Leisure Centre Manager ex officio
Head of Community Education ex officio	

Under this proposal, the financial budget for the operation of the centre would be set annually by the Governing Body following consideration of the budget prepared by the Management Committee, and the Governing Body would effectively retain the operating revenue risk.

Members are asked to note that initial discussions have commenced and to provide guidance at this early stage on the way they would like to see community use being managed and controlled in the future.

To support progress discussions and negotiations with the Academy, the Committee is asked to appoint two members to form a working group to oversee the update of the agreement in conjunction with Governors at the Academy.

It is suggested that details of the proposed revised Agreement will be brought back to Area North Committee for final consideration and approval.

Potential Artificial Grass Pitch / Community Use of Playing Pitches

Strategic Need

The Council's Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) Assessment (Appendix B) identified that a significant proportion of Area North residents are living beyond the 20 minute travel time catchment for Artificial Grass Pitches. In 2008, this amounted to 13,739 people, resulting in a current shortfall equivalent to 4,675 m², or 0.73 pitches in 2008, and this shortfall is projected to increase further to 0.82 pitches in 2028 as a consequence of new housing development and population growth.

To address this deficiency and to improve provision for community sport in the area, the Council's PPG 17 Assessment considered a range of options and set out proposals to develop a new third generation (3G) AGP in the Langport area of Area North. This option was adopted since it would have the greatest impact on reducing the current spatial and quantity deficiencies, whilst also avoiding any adverse impact upon existing facilities, and meeting the sporting needs in the area for all-weather floodlit football training facilities.

In order to make efficient use of resources, discussions have been held with the Academy to ascertain their desire to partner with the Council to see this facility located on the school site, recognising that there would be significantly greater benefit to be gained by Area North residents through a joint development of a new third generation AGP facility and the opening up of the school playing fields for community use. Essentially, by working together in this way both parties will be able to provide a better quality and more sustainable facility than either could do in isolation.

The Academy has confirmed its interest in this joint development and a feasibility study will now be undertaken to assess the viability of the project prior to a decision being taken on whether to progress to the next stage of the project.

Potential Financing

Opting for a 3G surface opens up the opportunity to seek financial grant aid support from the Football Foundation. Initial discussions with the Football Foundation indicate that a grant of up to 50% of the total project cost, estimated to be in the order of £550,000 - £600,000, could be available. Typically the Football Foundation plans and prioritises its grant programme on a rolling two-year basis. Decisions are based solely on the delivery of community football development outcomes and the indications are that this project would be prioritised for support in 2012/13 – 2013/14 providing it can be demonstrated that the rest of the required capital financial package is in place.

In order to assist with the financing of this provision, the Council has been and is continuing to negotiate Section 106 contributions from new housing developments towards playing pitch and artificial grass pitch provision. At this stage the Council has secured contributions amounting to £98,540 which could be used towards the project and similar sums are anticipated from other developments within the catchment in the course of the next 12 months.

Subject to the successful conclusions of these negotiations, the Council may be able to bring in the order of £200,000 towards the project in 2012/13-2013/14. Please note this sum is indicative and it is important to note that this sum may vary if housing market conditions deteriorate and receipt is subject the payment trigger clauses related to levels of house sales/occupancies specified within the Section 106 agreements, which can lead to payments being delayed in the event of slower than anticipated house sales. The remaining funding requirement would be provided by the Academy.

Financial Implications

No new implications.

Corporate Priority Implications

The facilities at Huish Episcopi contribute to the following Corporate Priorities, Key Targets and Actions:

Corporate Plan Priority: Improve the housing, health and well-being of our citizens

Key Targets:

3.19 Support SST to develop a long term (20 year) action plan to reduce obesity in children and adults, delivering one initiative by 2012.

3.20 Increase children and young people's satisfaction with parks and play areas and adult participation in sport and active recreation from 23.3% to 25.4% by 2011/2012.

Corporate Plan Priority: Ensure safe, sustainable and cohesive communities

Key Targets:

4.22 Outcome: Sustainable local communities. Measured by: Increasing those who participate in regular volunteering at least once a month.

4.1 Deliver positive activities for children, young people (especially those at risk of exclusion or offending) and families, designed to reduce antisocial behaviour by October 2010.

Equality and Diversity Implications

All facilities and services are accessible.

Background Papers: None
