

12. Ilminster Multi Use Games Area - Update (Executive Decision)

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Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to update members on the situation regarding the implementation of a management agreement for the Ilminster Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Swanmead School.

Recommendation

It is recommended that members endorse the action in setting a deadline of 21st August 2007 for the County Council to produce a satisfactory management agreement for the Swanmead School MUGA.

Background

In September 2000, Area West Committee approved a grant of £40,000 towards a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) in Ilminster subject to the following additional terms and conditions:

- a) Partnership funding from other sources be secured
- b) The works being approved by the Area West technical officer
- c) A satisfactory community use agreement being signed by relevant partners (including SSDC).
- d) Detailed sports development plans relating to the facility being drawn up by Ilminster Community Education in liaison with the Sports Development Officer.

Despite the numerous problems from escalating costs to planning issues, the project was eventually completed in autumn 2005. A stage payment of £18,875 (representing 50% of the total to be charged to SSDC) was made to Somerset County Council in July 2005 with the balance to be paid when officers were satisfied that all grant terms and conditions had been met. Conditions a) and b) above have been met.

Swanmead School took over the management of the MUGA from CRESTA Sports Centre on 1st May 2007 and the facility is available for the community to hire. However, the continued absence of a management agreement means that the District Council currently has no influence over the programming of the facility, and therefore free public open access is not guaranteed.

Report

The Community Education unit formerly based at Swanmead School originally initiated the Swanmead MUGA project. However, following Somerset County Council's restructure of Community Education, and the subsequent change in personnel, the management of this project has fallen between a number of County Council teams and this has hindered the implementation of a management agreement for the facility.

Despite this, the Governors at Swanmead School, and representatives from Ilminster Town Council, the County Council and SSDC did work together to produce an

acceptable draft agreement last year. All representatives were happy that there would be a minimum of 12 hours of public open access (at no cost) to the new facility.

County Council officers committed to progress the agreement once the requirements of other project funding partners had been included in the documentation and the content checked by their legal department. It was suggested that the agreement would be signed by 1st April 2007; this still has not taken place.

Given that the District Council has had capital money allocated to this project for a number of years, a 2-month deadline (21st August 2007) was recently put in place for the County Council to deliver a satisfactory agreement; this was done with the support of the Head of Area Development (West).

Members may wish to consider reallocating the funding earmarked for this project if a satisfactory agreement cannot be reached by 21st August 2007. A further report will be brought to Area West Committee for consideration if this deadline is passed without a satisfactory agreement.

Financial Implications

There are no new financial implications for the Area West Committee.

Implications for Corporate Priorities

No new implications.

Background Papers: *Area West Committee Agenda and Minutes: September 2000, April 2002 and May 2005.*
