

# Moredon Recreation Ground Sports Hub

## Scrutiny Committee

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> November 2019

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Author: Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Operational Excellence  
Corporate Director of Communities and Housing / Head of Planning, Regulatory Services and Heritage

Wards: Rodbourne Cheney

Parishes Affected: Central Swindon North

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### 1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Scrutiny Committee on the progress of developing a sports hub at Moredon Recreation Ground, as approved by Cabinet in 2018 (Cabinet Minute 86, 2018/19 refers).
- 1.2 The reason for this report is to afford Members the opportunity to understand progress on the above matters and the project programme and delivery.
- 1.3 This proposal links to the Vision for Swindon Priority Three: to “ensure clean and safe streets and improve our public spaces and local culture.” Working with community groups and promoting high quality facilities for sports, leisure, and cultural activities across the town and aids the health and welfare agenda. The sale of the enabling residential development land would offer opportunities to benefit the Swindon economy creating employment during construction and new homes for residents.

### 2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Note the current project progress and put questions to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Operational Excellence on issues relating to:
  - 2.1.1 Planning Permissions gained
  - 2.1.2 Occupiers and Operators
  - 2.1.3 Budget position
  - 2.1.4 Project programme and delivery

### 3. Detail

Background

- 3.1 Moredon Recreation Ground Swindon (‘the Grounds’) outlined in red on the plan attached as Appendix 1 - Site Location Plan and Proposed Layout is a Council owned asset providing 4 adult football pitches, 2 cricket wickets, croquet, a model

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car club as well as informal open space and recreation. A sports pavilion and changing rooms serves the facilities but is in need of major refurbishment or replacement. There is also a par 3 golf course on part of the site, the use of which was suspended in 2014, as it was no longer economically viable.

- 3.2 On 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018 Cabinet approved the creation of a multi sports hub at the Grounds. Updates on project progress are provided below.

## Progress - Planning Permission

- 3.3 Cabinet authorised the Head of Property Assets to apply for planning consents for the proposed multi sports hub, ancillary retail, community related facilities, associated car parking and enabling residential development ('the Development') at the Grounds. Planning consent is required to be in place by both British Cycling and the Football Association prior to grant bid submissions to them. As the enabling development is necessary for and therefore linked to the sports hub development, Planning Officers recommended that the Planning Committee should consider two submissions at the same time. A full application for the sports hub and a development brief for the enabling residential development were considered by the Planning Committee on 13 November 2018.
- 3.4 Planning Application S/18/1394/TB was submitted on 17 August 2018 for the 'Erection of new pavilion, installation of cycling closed road circuit, BMX track, full size 3G artificial grass pitch, improvements to access routes and car park, and refurbishment and enhancement of existing recreation ground'. This gained approval on 13 November 2018, Minute 35
- 3.5 Planning Committee 13 November 2018, Minute 36, further resolved to approve 'A Development Brief: Land at Moredon Recreation Ground, Swindon' a brief describing the enabling development submitted to provide Development Management Guidance and for adoption by the Planning Committee.

## Progress – Occupiers and Operators

- 3.6 Cabinet authorised the Head of Property Assets in consultation with the Director of Law and Democratic Services (now the Chief Legal Officer) and the Cabinet Member of Communities and Place (now the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Operational Excellence) to identify potential occupiers and operators; to agree the terms for leasehold land transfers of the whole or part of the proposed sporting hub to third parties in exchange for taking responsibility for future management and maintenance and on such other terms and conditions that are considered appropriate in order to protect the Councils interests.
- 3.7 In detailing the planning submissions, officers have considered a range of on-site sport facilities and potential occupiers of a new pavilion that would enhance the business case and provide a sustainable operation for future operators. Business planning and advice has been gained from consultants, negotiations have been

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held with national sporting organisations and preliminary discussions with potential occupiers. The operating model sought is to minimise revenue costs and keep the project within the capital budget determined by approved funding as reported to Cabinet with grants, s106 and a capital receipt from the land sale.

- 3.8 The Central Swindon North Parish Council ('the Parish') had expressed a strong desire to be considered as the operator for the developed sports hub and would have been likely custodians of the Grounds had no improvements been gained. Officers from the Parish, Property Assets and Community and Housing have discussed objectives and operating models and developed and considered business plans with sporting organisations. A presentation of this sports hub project was given to the Parish on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2019 as an update and for their consideration as a potential operator. On 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019, the Parish Council resolved to support being 'named partner' in project negotiations. The intention is to be in a position to recommend an operator to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Operational Excellence in the early months of 2020 within the envelope of available funding.
- 3.9 In order to progress formal arrangements to accord with the Cabinet approval, Council Standing Orders and apply due governance, the Head of Property Assets will in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Operational Excellence offer terms for a leasehold land transfer of the whole or part of the Grounds to a third party/parties in exchange for them taking responsibility for future management and maintenance.

## Progress - Budget position

- 3.10 Cabinet authorised a budget of up to £290K, funded from section 106 Planning Agreement income to meet the costs of working up and submitting a planning application and for the project delivery of the multi sports hub. Given the commercial sensitivity of works not yet tendered and estimated land sale prices, budget details are set out in the private and confidential Appendix 2. Should Members wish to consider this information at the meeting, it is recommended that there is an appropriate resolution to exclude the press and public for that discussion.

## Progress – Project Programme and Delivery

### 3.11 Programme

Date	Action
October 2019	Submission of Football Foundation grant application bid for AWP
	Secure commitment from the Parish and in tandem prepare marketing park

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from David James, 07769 281719, djames@swindon.gov.uk.

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	for operator interest should Parish interest not be confirmed.  Finalise designs for layout and pavilion  Cycle Stakeholder consultation events
November 2019	Presentation of cycling proposals to stakeholders  Submission of British Cycling grant application bid for cycling facilities
December 2019	Planning condition submissions
January 2020	Notification of grant bid outcomes
February 2020	Planning condition clearance. Tender procurement for the development works. Formalise arrangements for asset transfer with operator.
February to April 2020	Tenders received and evaluated
May 2020 – May 2021	Acceptance of grant awards Implementation and handover

## 4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Grounds could continue to support recreational use in its current form being maintained by the Parish under the agreed maintenance deed. However under this option the opportunity for the Council to directly enable the improved facilities may be lost.

## 5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

### Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The anticipated capital costs and funding arrangements are set out in in Appendix 2, which is private and confidential for the reasons set out in paragraph 3.10 above.
- 5.2 There are no revenue implications following the development of the new sports hub facilities as any proposed asset transfer arrangements will require the operator/tenant to take all responsibility for future management and maintenance.
- 5.3 Procurement of the new sports facilities will be undertaken in accordance with approved Council protocols.

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## Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.4 All legal documentation will be issued will by the Chief Legal Officer in consultation with the Head of Property Assets and the Head of Planning, Regulatory Services and Heritage in order to protect the Councils interests.
- 5.5 It is possible that the Council may be required to permit legal charges to be placed on the land ownership title in order to secure the necessary grant funding.
- 5.6 All terms and conditions imposed upon the Council within any grant funding award will be novated to the operator / tenant as part of any asset transfer.
- 5.7 There are no known human rights implications and it is believed the recommendations are compatible with Convention rights

## All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.8 There is the potential for this project to increase sport and leisure patronage in the Borough by improving facilities to aid the Councils health and wellbeing agenda. Increased use and presence of organised activities at the Grounds could result in a reduction in crime and disorder in the immediate area.

## Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.9 A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) was completed for the 14<sup>th</sup> March 2018 Cabinet Report and no new adverse or other significant issues have been identified since this time. A copy of the DIA can be obtained from the report author.

## Risk Management

- 5.10 Planning Approval has been obtained but there remains a risk that the necessary planning condition clearances and other match funding grants are not secured for the Grounds and/or that an operator will not be secured to manage the completed sports hub. Necessary reports will be funded to conclude details for planning submissions. Market testing and engagement with grant funding bodies has been undertaken indicating full support for these proposals and in any event to mitigate against this risk the development of the sports hub will not proceed until there is formal legal and binding commitment from suitable operators.
- 5.11 The market value of the enabling development has only been assessed in principle at this time although its delivery now benefits from the successful adoption of the Development Brief. Remaining risks are ground condition and other relevant surveys and assessments and the market conditions prevailing at the time of sale.

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## **6. Consultees**

- 6.1 The author has consulted, where appropriate, with Corporate Directors, Directors, Heads of Service, other officers, and relevant partners on the purpose, content, and recommendations of the report.

## **7. Background Papers**

- 7.1 None.

## **8. Appendices**

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan and Proposed Layout.
- 8.2 Appendix 2 – Finance (Private and Confidential).