

Report to: **EXECUTIVE CABINET**

Date: 16 December 2020

Executive Member: Councillor Oliver Ryan, Executive Member (Finance and Economic Growth)

Reporting Officer: Jayne Traverse, Director of Growth
Paul Smith, Assistant Director, Strategic Property

Subject: **PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY**

Report Summary: Approval to sell the freehold interest in the former Hartshead School site was given by Executive Cabinet on 25 September 2019. The terms of sale included an undertaking by the Council to Sport England to: refresh the Tameside Playing Pitch Strategy, install an all-weather practice cricket facility at Ladysmith Cricket Club in Ashton, the development of a School Sports Facility Strategy and provision of two additional full size adult grass football pitches in the locality with the costs met from the proceeds of sale estimated at approximately £75,000. This report sets out proposals to deliver the undertaking made to sport England and seeks approval to proceed based on the information set out in this report.

Recommendations: That Executive Cabinet be recommended to approve:

- (i) The development of an updated Playing Pitch Strategy for Tameside;
- (ii) An updated strategy for the community use of school sports facilities in Tameside;
- (iii) the installation of artificial practice cricket wicket at Ladysmith Cricket Club, Ashton;
- (iv) that £0.040m is allocated from the capital programme to fund an all-weather cricket facility at Ladysmith Cricket Club in Ashton.

Corporate Plan: The Tameside Playing Pitch Strategy will act as a key piece of planning evidence and support funding bids by both the Council and local sports clubs; it is therefore closely linked to the Corporate Plan making Tameside a more healthier and attractive place to live.

Policy Implications: An up to date Playing Pitch Strategy is integral to understanding the supply and demand of playing pitches and underpins the Authority's existing Local Plan the Unitary Development Plan and proposed Local Plan.

Financial Implications:
(Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer) Executive Cabinet approved the sale of the freehold interest in the former Hartshead School site on 25 September 2019. The table below sets out the financial detail of the sale. The net capital receipt has been used to finance the 2019/20 Council capital programme.

Capital receipt received in 2019-20	£9.450m
Disposal costs incurred in 2019-20, which include agent fees of £0.056m (0.6% of sale proceeds)	£0.260m

Net capital receipt used to support the financing of the 2019-20 capital programme	£9.190m
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A Section 106 agreement formed part of the sale which will realise £0.175m and is expected to be received in 2020/21. The terms of the section 106 agreement state that the funding is to be used towards improvements to Smallshaw Field, Knotthill Reservoir and Hartshead Pike.

The terms of the sale also included an undertaking by the Council to Sport England. Set out in section 3 of this report is an analysis of the estimated costs of delivering the committed undertaking totalling £0.078m

The cricket practice facility within table 1, section 3.1 of the report is not located in the areas defined by the section 106 agreement and so cannot be used as a source of finance (£ 0.040m). Approval will be required to resource this via any surplus capital receipts realised from the sale of Council owned land and property sites approved by the Executive Cabinet on 30 September 2020. Once approved the scheme can be included in the Council capital programme.

The updating of the Council's Playing Pitch strategy and the undertaking of a Schools Sports Strategy within table 1 section 3.1 are revenue costs. The related cost of £0.038m will need to be funded by the Local Plan revenue budget within the Growth Directorate.

**Legal Implications:
(Authorised by the Borough
Solicitor)**

This report follows from the resolutions passed by Cabinet in September 2019 and the section 77 consent permitting the sale of the former school playing fields in accordance with paragraph 1 of the Schedule to The School Playing Fields General Disposal and Change of Use Consent (No3) 2004 being obtained to instigate the steps required fulfil the undertakings given to Sports England.

An up to date Playing Pitch Strategy is a critical policy especially with regards to residents' wellbeing and also planning decisions.

Sports England provides clear guidance for councils to follow when developing their strategies. Part of the requirement for developing and updating the strategy is consultation which needs to be afforded sufficient time to be meaningful given the seasonality of some sports to ensure that all interested parties are consulted with.

In relation to the support to for the development of the strategies appropriate procurement exercises should be undertaken with the support of STAR, especially if Bloom is to be used as the procurement route to ensure that the appropriate indemnities are in place.

Similarly a compliant procurement exercise again supported by STAR will be required in relation to the cricket wicket together once planning permission has been obtained and all relevant property matters considered.

In 2010 we agreed with Sports England the arrangements for replacing playing fields at all the school sites that were no longer to be used
<https://www.tameside.gov.uk/planning/ldf/openspace/sportsfacility.pdf>

we need to resist attempts from them given that the sites have not yet been redeveloped to double count their disposal and attempt to require the Council to provide more and additional facilities than those originally agreed at the time the sites ceased to be used as school playing fields.

Risk Management:

Delays in establishing an up to date Playing Pitch Strategy may delay planning and investment decisions.

Sport England will be consulted on plans to develop Godley Green as part of the planning application process. Consultation with Sport England may be delayed if the Council doesn't have plans in place to deliver on its undertaking to Sport England.

Background Information:

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Roger Greenwood



Telephone: 07971285332



e-mail: roger.greenwood@tameside.gov.uk

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Approval to sell the freehold interest in the former Hartshead School site was given by Executive Cabinet on 25 September 2019. The terms of sale included an undertaking by the Council to Sport England to: refresh the Tameside Playing Pitch Strategy, install an all-weather practice cricket facility at Ladysmith Cricket Club in Ashton, the development of a School Sports Facility Strategy and provision of two additional full size adult grass football pitches in the locality with the costs met from the proceeds of sale estimated at approximately £75,000. The undertaking to Sport England was also confirmed in a letter from the Chief Executive of Tameside Council to Sport England dated 22 October 2018.
- 1.2 This report sets out proposals to deliver the undertaking made to sport England and seeks approval to proceed based on the information set out in this report.

2. PROPOSALS / COMMITMENT TO SPORT ENGLAND

- 2.1 The undertaking made to Sport England by the Council includes the provision of:

Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS)

- 2.2 In 2015 the Council commissioned consultants to produce a Playing Pitch Strategy for Tameside in line with Sport England requirements. The Playing Pitch Strategy, approved by Executive Decision on 15 July 2016, presented a supply and demand assessment of playing pitch facilities in accordance with Sport England playing pitch strategy guidance (An approach to Developing and Delivering a Playing Pitch Strategy). The strategy provided a clear picture of the balance between the local supply of and demand for playing pitches. The Council worked with Sport England and representatives from a number of National Governing Bodies (NGB) for sport to develop the strategy for Tameside. The outcomes formed an evidence base to help understand the current position of the existing playing pitch stock, support decision making regarding pitch provision, support funding bids from both the Council and local sports clubs and will provide evidence to inform a future Tameside Local Plan.
- 2.3 The existing Tameside Playing Pitch Strategy is now out of date and requires updating using Sport England methodology. A fact that was recognised by the Council and Sport England when discussing mitigation measures for the loss of playing fields at the former Hartshead School site. The key drivers for having an up to date PPS include:
 - Aims and objectives established for improving health and well-being and increasing participation in sport
 - Sports development programmes and changes in how the sports are played.
 - The need for evidence to help protect and enhance existing provision.
 - The need to inform the development and implementation of planning policy.
 - The need to inform the assessment of planning applications.
 - Potential changes to the supply of provision due to capital programmes e.g. for educational sites.
 - Budgetary pressures to ensure the most efficient management and maintenance of playing pitch provision.
 - The need to develop a priority list of deliverable projects which will help to meet any current deficiencies provide for future demands and feed into wider infrastructure planning work.
 - Prioritisation of internal capital and revenue investment.
 - The need to provide evidence to help secure internal and external funding.
- 2.4 To ensure that work delivered is of optimum quality, Sport England' *'An Approach to Developing and Delivering a PPS'* guidance will be followed. This ensures that the process is compliant with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This guidance is used for all playing pitch sports. The delivery of the PPS requires the appointment of an experienced sport and leisure consultant with extensive experience and local knowledge. The

development of the PPS will be overseen by a working group led by the Council, which includes the required representation from National Governing bodies of sport and Sport England along with local sports providers and specialists in strategic planning and grounds maintenance etc. The cost of undertaking the PPS is set out in section 3 of the report with and the delivery programme is set out in section 4 (attached as appendix 1). It is proposed that the consultant for the PPS will be procured through an approved framework, the bloom framework in this instance. This procurement approach is supported by STaR procurement.

- 2.5 The supply and demand analysis for playing pitches does not generally cover minority sports. This is due to the fact that some sports, such as equestrian activities, do not need a formal playing space but do need infrastructure to support the activity at recreational and grass roots level. In addition, due to the lack of devoted horse riding routes horses are often ridden on public pitches, which results in damage particularly during the winter months. It is proposed therefore that provision for equestrian sport be reviewed with the findings reported in parallel with the PPS.

School Sports Facility Strategy

- 2.6 The purpose of undertaking a Schools Sports Facility Strategy is to establish the current usage and potential demand for the community of school based sports facilities. It is hoped that the study will include all secondary schools and colleges in the borough. The strategy must be developed in partnership with schools and should be school led. It will be important to engage with the Tameside Association of Secondary Head teachers (TASH) to develop any strategy that arises out of the study. The study will:

- Assess Tameside schools indoor and outdoor sports and other community facing facilities that form the secondary school and college-based supply in the borough.
- Their scale, quality, condition and location relative to each other, public sports facilities, main population centres etc. including those in neighbouring authorities.
- Those facilities which are currently available for community use, the current extent of this, the effectiveness with which they are programmed/used and any additional capacity they may have.
- The facilities, which are not presently made available: the capacity that these might have if opened and the practical, financial and physical issues affecting the propensity of the relevant institutions in respect of making them accessible.
- Identify those with the greatest practical potential to offer greater community access to their sports facilities.
- Primarily via officer, Active Tameside, Greater Sport, Sport England and the main NGB consultation seek to gain some idea in respect of the extent of demand for community use of school based facilities.
- In tandem with the audit, consult/consider the barriers and issues that need to be tackled to encourage schools to open their facilities for community use; on a generic and individual school basis.
- Provide new community access arrangements (for those presently not used and/or increases on current levels of existing access) of schools.
- Identify a Tameside Community use standard to provide an informal/formal benchmark for schools contribution in this respect.
- Identify a Tameside 'community use standard to provide an informal/formal benchmark for schools' contribution in this respect

- 2.7 The School Sports Facility Strategy will be carried out in tandem with the PPS and undertaken by the same specialist consultant procured through the Bloom Framework. This is due to the fact that the studies are interrelated. The scope of the study, as set out in 2.1.2, is an illustration of a typical school sports facility study envisaged by Sport England. The final scope of the study will be approved/signed off by the Assistant Executive Director for Education in consultation with the Executive Member (Lifelong Learning, Equalities, Culture and Heritage)

The provision of cricket artificial proactive wickets

- 2.8 The disposal of the former Hartshead School site has resulted in the loss of an artificial cricket wicket. In order to mitigate against the loss it was agreed with sport England that a practice facility should be established at Ladysmith Cricket Club in Ashton, a site owned by the Council. It is proposed that two practice wickets be installed on the former tennis court at the club site bringing the area back in to productive use. The cost of the installation is set out in section 3 of this report. The installation is dependent upon a successful planning application, which will be submitted in December. If planning approval is achieved then the installation will take place in March in readiness for the start of the 2021 cricket season.

The provision of two additional adult sized grass football pitches

- 2.9 There was a requirement to mitigate against the loss of natural turf pitches at the Former Hartshead school site. However, there is currently no identified user demand for additional pitches in this locality so this need shall be re-evaluated as part of the new Playing Pitch Strategy.

3. COST

- 3.1 The cost of delivering the undertaking to Sport England is as follows:

Table 1

Elements	Cost £	Basis
Playing Pitch Strategy	£25,000	Firm Quote
School Sports Facility Strategy	£13,000	Firm Quote
Cricket Practice Facility	£35,000	Firm Quote
Cricket Facility Contingency	£5,000	
Total Cost	£78,000	

- 3.2 The total sum set out in **table 1** is in keeping with the estimated of cost of £0.075m estimated in the September 2019 report to Executive Cabinet

4. PROGRAMME

- 4.1 The programme for the PPS and School Sports Facility Strategy, which will be delivered concurrently, is attached as **Appendix 1**. If approved work will be concluded in August 2021.

5. RISK

- 5.1 Delays in establishing an up to date Playing Pitch Strategy may delay planning and investment decisions.
- 5.2 Sport England will be consulted on plans to develop Godley Green as part of the planning application process. Consultation with Sport England may be delayed if the Council doesn't have plans in place to deliver on its undertaking to Sport England.

6. GOVERNANCE

- 6.1 This report seeks approval to deliver the undertakings made to sport England and seeks approval to proceed based on the information set out in this report.
- 6.2 The draft Playing Pitch Strategy will be presented to members for consideration/approval in September 2021. In addition, the School Sports Facility Strategy will be presented to members for information. If approved, the PPS will be made available on the Councils

Planning pages. Once adopted the document will be refreshed and periodically updated in keeping with Sport England methodology.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 As set out at the front of the report.