

Hambleton District Council

Report To: Cabinet

Date: 10 August 2021

Subject: **Bedale – Leisure Improvements**

Portfolio Holder: Leisure
Councillor P R Thompson

Wards Affected: Bedale Wards

1.0 Purpose and Background

- 1.1 Commitment was given by Cabinet in September 2020 to a range of improvements focussed around the gym and studio at Bedale, with an allocation of £314,000 being provided from CIL funds to deliver the works. After consideration of a number of options, the project scope and deliverables for these works have now been finalised, and include the refurbishment of the health & fitness areas including the replacement of all gym and studio equipment, providing an up to date experience in line with the other Hambleton leisure centres. It is anticipated that the scheme will be delivered in 2021.
- 1.2 In addition to these works a range of improvements are to be undertaken at the centre as part of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. In order to deliver these improvements across all the Authority's leisure facilities the Council is awaiting clarification from Northern Power Grid as to the requirements for incoming electricity supplies. Once details of these are known the Council can confirm the programme of decarbonisation works across all leisure facilities with Salix (the Government's Climate Change co-ordinating organisation) and, at Bedale, the works can then be integrated with some other capital repairs that require undertaking.
- 1.3 In addition to the works identified above there is considerable interest within the Bedale and Aiskew community for a full-size 3g artificial turf football pitch. Discussions have been had between the various stakeholders including HDC, the local football clubs, Football Association and the High School, with the School site being a favoured location. Whilst the provision of such a facility is not identified within the Football Association's pitch delivery strategy, they are flexible and willing to consider it subject to a successful feasibility study and stakeholder funding being available. The Council has well-developed plans for the provision of 3g facilities at Northallerton (Sports Village); Stokesley (Sports Club) and Thirsk/Sowerby (Sports Village), having worked with Easingwold Secondary School to deliver the facility there. The cost of such a facility is circa £750,000, on the basis that the land is provided 'free', and the model of delivery relies upon significant funding from the Football Foundation (approximately £500,000); HDC (approximately £200-250,000) and smaller contributions from the local football club and other organisations. Clearly costs can vary depending upon specific circumstances and market conditions.

- 1.4 The Council already has a small artificial turf pitch on the site operated by the leisure centre under a long-term lease with the School/NYCC. This is a good quality facility suitable for informal sport and sports training but not suitable for full size matches. Consideration would need to be given to its future operation and the implications of having a full-sized facility on the same site.
- 1.5 The proposal would be that the Council looks to support the community in the evaluation, and if suitable, potential provision of a full-sized 3g pitch for the town, consistent to the approaches undertaken at other Hambleton towns. A capital allocation of £250,000 is proposed, with consideration being given to accessing any CIL funds in the first instance. A preliminary stage would be to undertake a feasibility study of the proposal and it is proposed that this is supported with an allocation of £10,000 from the £250,000 capital fund. Clearly this is provided 'at risk' as the feasibility study might not substantiate the need for a full-sized 3g pitch. Bedale Football Club would supervise the feasibility study through the appointment of an independent specialist. Only after the completion of a feasibility study that recommends provision of a 3g pitch would consideration start to be given to responsibilities for operation. These would need to be agreed before the submission of any grant application to the Football Foundation.

2.0 Link to Council Priorities

- 2.1 Whilst these projects primarily impact upon the Council's 'Enhancing Health and Wellbeing' priority, by providing an improved community facility it also enhances the vibrancy of Bedale and the attractiveness of the area to residents and visitors, 'Providing a Special Place to Live' and helping to 'Drive Economic Vitality'. The Council plays a major role in improving public health and wellbeing, particularly in terms of prevention, and the continued improvement of this facility will help to tackle the physical and mental activity needs of the local population. The Decarbonisation works underpin the Council's 'Caring for the Environment' priority.

3.0 Risk Assessment

- 3.1 There are no significant risks associated with the report's recommendations.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The budget to deliver the health and fitness improvements has already been approved at £314,000 from CIL funds. The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme works will be paid for from the £4.72m Government grant previously reported.
- 4.2 It is proposed that there is an increase in capital expenditure of £250,000 for a potential 3g pitch which will be funded from CIL funds or by the Council through the capital programme. An allocation of £10,000 will be drawn down from this for the feasibility study and it is proposed that final approval of the remaining £240,000 funds will be based upon consideration of the conclusions and outcomes of the feasibility study and that this decision should be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report at this stage though the necessary considerations would be required should the 3g pitch project progress.

6.0 Equality/Diversity Issues

- 6.1 Equality and diversity issues have been considered however there are no major issues associated with this report. All facility and equipment improvements will look to improve accessibility to all sections of the community. Assurance is given that any approved development meets the Council's obligations with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

7.0 Health and Safety Issues

- 7.1 Full risk assessments and method statements will be obtained from providers of equipment and contractors who carry out any capital works.

8.0 Recommendations

- 8.1 That Cabinet approves and recommends to Council:
- (1) that capital provision of £250,000 is allocated to the 3g pitch project, with £10,000 of this being used to undertake a feasibility study; and
 - (2) that the decision to allocate the remaining £240,000 funds is based upon evaluation of the feasibility study, with this decision being delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

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Background papers: None.

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