

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 07 July 2014

Portfolio:	Leisure and Community
Subject:	Cams Alders Recreation Ground - Vision for New Sports Facilities
Report of:	Director of Community
Strategy/Policy:	Leisure Strategy
Corporate Objective:	Leisure for Health and Fun

Purpose:

To consider proposals for developing a vision for new and improved sports facilities and enhancements to the public open space at The Cams Alders Recreation Ground.

Executive summary:

Cams Alders Recreation Ground is situated in South Fareham and is one of the largest open space areas for formal outdoor sport in the Council's ownership. The site is approximately 14 hectares with sports pitches and a mix of built facilities.

The existing sports facilities are tired and dated and both Fareham Town Football Club and Fareham Heathens Rugby Club, who are the main sports users, are seeking help and support from the Council to deliver new and improved facilities.

The site is an important area of public open space and has the potential to provide modern quality sports facilities and high quality public open space, which will benefit residents of the Borough and increase participation in physical activity.

If the site is to accommodate new sports facilities and enhancement to the open space it will be essential to ensure the long term viability of the facilities and to take into account the needs of the wider community.

It is considered that this will be best achieved by the Council leading on the preparation of a vision for the site in partnership with the different user groups as a prelude to any re-development proposals being considered.

Recommendation/Recommended Option:

That the Executive is requested to:

(a) establish a steering group to develop a vision for new and improved sports facilities and enhancements to the public open space at Cams Alders Recreation Ground; and

(b) nominate an elected member to act as chairman for the group.

Reason:

To inform any future decision to re-develop the sports facilities on the site, ensuring that appropriate consideration is given to the needs of the wider community and the long term sustainability of any new sports facilities.

Cost of proposals:

The cost of the proposals in this report can be met from current revenue budgets.

Appendices: **None**

Background papers:

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date: 07 July 2014

Subject: Cams Alders Recreation Ground - Vision for New Sports Facilities

Briefing by: Director of Community

Portfolio: Leisure and Community

INTRODUCTION

1. Cams Alders Recreation Ground is situated in South Fareham and is one of the largest sites for formal sport in the Council's ownership. The site is approximately 14 hectares with sports pitches and a mix of built facilities with ample car parking located on the site.
2. The Council has recently been approached by Fareham Town Football Club and Fareham Heathens Rugby Club, who are the main outdoor sports users, about proposals they are considering to enhance the facilities that they currently lease from Fareham Borough Council.
3. Both clubs are seeking help and support from the Council to bring their proposals to fruition and they will require substantial financial contributions from external sources in order to deliver any new and improved facilities.
4. The site has real potential and there is an opportunity to provide modern high quality sports facilities and to enhance the quality of public open space, which will benefit residents of the Borough and increase participation in physical activity.
5. However, the site is a valuable area of public open space and the needs of the wider community as well as the sports facilities need to be considered. It is felt that this can be best achieved by the Council leading on the preparation of a vision for the site in partnership with the different user groups.

BACKGROUND

6. The site itself is poorly laid out as a result of ad hoc development of facilities which have occurred as opportunities have arisen over a number of years. Apart from the modern Rainbow Centre and Palmerston Indoor Bowls Centre, the built facilities have a tired and run down appearance and the poor landscaping of the site does little to enhance the vista across the exposed and open area of land.
7. Access to the site is through the industrial estate on Palmerston Drive and this is controlled by a height barrier to deter unauthorised access. There is a secondary access from Highfield Avenue, although this is permanently gated to avoid the

disruption of traffic movements through the site.

8. There is car parking capacity of approximately 150 spaces including 6 accessible bays at the entrance to the Rainbow Centre and a further car park with 102 spaces that serves the Palmerston Indoor Bowls Centre.
9. The recently constructed Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) link runs north to south on the eastern boundary of the recreation ground.
10. On the southern border of the site there is a plant community that has resulted in this area being designated as a SINC.
11. There are a number of different organisations who are based at the Cams Alders Recreation Ground. The following provides a summary of their activities and the arrangements they have in place.

Fareham Town Football Club: T

12. In October 1999 the club was granted a 99 year lease of the Cams Alders Stadium plus football pitches situated to the north and the east of the stadium respectively. The lease included for the provision of an artificial football pitch to be constructed by the tenant within the stadium compound. In addition in 2004 a sub-lease was granted from the Council for the former public toilet block which the club have converted into changing rooms.
13. The construction of the 'V-Club' lounge under the main stand was completed in 2010.
14. A number of planning applications have previously been submitted by the club to re-develop the stadium including a driving test centre in 2007, a private all weather five a side football facility in 2011 and a care home development in the 1990's.
15. Most recently the club has approached the Council regarding proposals for developing entertainment and community facilities on the site and improvements to the existing football stadium.

Fareham Heathens Rugby Club:

16. In 1999 the club was granted a 20 year lease for the changing rooms and bar facility to the south of the access road. It also holds a short term 3 year lease for the two rugby pitches situated on the south of the site, which commenced in October 2012. The club holds a lease for two ancillary buildings on the site which commenced for a 17 year term in October 2012.
17. The club runs two senior men's teams and women's rugby has expanded rapidly over recent years and the colts section currently has 5 mini and four junior teams.
18. The club has started to consider ambitious plans to develop a community club house and changing facilities on the site of the existing pavilion.

Palmerston Bowling Club:

19. In 2004, the Palmerston Indoor Bowls Club was granted a 42 year lease of the indoor bowls facility. The facility has its own dedicated car park with approximately 102 parking spaces.

Rainbow Centre:

20. In 2006 The Rainbow Centre entered into a 125 year lease for the “Bradbury” building located adjacent to the main car park. The Rainbow Centre works with children with Cerebral Palsy and adults with a stroke, MS and Parkinson’s disease through a system of learning called Conductive Education.

PLANNING POLICY

21. The site is designated as “open space” and so the most relevant Planning Policy to consider is CS21 (Protection and Provision of Open Space) of the adopted Core Strategy. This Policy states that *“development which would result in the loss of, or reduce the recreational value, of open space including public and private playing fields, allotments and informal open space will not be permitted, unless it is of poor quality, under-used, or has low potential for open space and a better quality replacement site is provided which is equivalent in terms of accessibility and size”*.
22. Therefore any development proposals that would result in a loss of open space will need to consider the justification for the loss and the potential issue of replacement provision. Any loss of playing fields is also likely to result in objections from Sport England.
23. New proposals will also need to consider design implications, given the open nature of the site, and potential impacts on neighbouring development. Existing neighbouring development should have their amenity and outlook protected and should not be subjected to adverse light and noise impact.
24. Traffic implications will need to be considered, with access to the site currently via Palmerston Business Park and by Highfield Avenue, although there is no through route. Additional traffic via Highfield Avenue should be avoided where possible to limit the impact on the existing residential properties in this area. Sufficient parking will also need to be provided on site to meet the requirements of the existing or replaced facilities as well as any additional development.

PROJECT BRIEF FOR DEVELOPING THE VISION

25. It is proposed to establish a steering group to oversee the preparation of a vision for the provision of high quality and sports facilities at the Cams Alders Recreation Ground.
26. The Executive is requested to nominate an elected member to act as the Chairman for the steering group.
27. The group will be made up of an elected member (to act as chairman), officers and representatives from the two sports clubs. Other users of the site and interested parties will be invited to join the meeting of the steering group as and when required.
28. The purpose of the steering group will be to prepare a vision for Cams Alders for consideration by the Executive. The steering group will prepare a project brief to engage specialist advice to inform the development of the vision. The brief will include consideration of the following:
 - a) Identify the current and future strategic sports development needs in the Fareham area, including the needs of the clubs and organisations that use the sports facilities at Cams Alders.

- b) Determine the best mix of facilities that are required to meet the identified need, given consideration to the need to provide a revenue stream that will enable the facilities to be managed on a sustainable basis.
- c) Determine the development space requirements and resultant land take necessary to deliver the facilities and provide an illustration of the most efficient and effective lay out of facilities.
- d) Consider how the quality of the site can be enhanced to ensure there is an appropriate balance of formal sports facilities and high quality accessible public open space.
- e) Evaluate the planning policy considerations for the site and how these may influence or constrain any development proposals.
- f) Identify the potential to replace lost open space in accordance with planning policy.
- g) Determine the capital costs for developing new facilities and any open space improvements.
- h) Evaluate the different opportunities for generating both capital and grant funding required to deliver the facilities.
- i) Develop a long term business plan that reflects the need to ensure facilities are maintained to a high standard and managed on a sustainable basis ensuring provision is made for future investment.
- j) The business plan should illustrate how the facilities can be operated to ensure that general public have can access the facilities.
- k) Consider the opportunities for establishing a charitable trust that will hold the lease and oversee the management, maintenance and future investment in the facilities.

CONCLUSION

- 29. The sports facilities at the Cams Alders Recreation Ground are tired and dated and both the main sports users are seeking help and support from the Council to deliver proposals they are considering to improve the facilities they lease.
- 30. As a valuable area of public open space, the site has real potential and there is an opportunity to provide modern high quality sports facilities and enhance the quality of public open space, which will benefit residents of the Borough and increase participation in physical activity.
- 31. If the site is to be redeveloped to accommodate new sports facilities and enhancement to the open space it will be essential to ensure the long term viability of the facilities and that the needs of the wider community are taken into account. It is considered that this can be best achieved by the Council leading on the preparation of a vision for the site in partnership with the different user groups as a prelude to guide any future re-development of the sports facilities.

Reference Papers: None