

**4 December 2017**

## **Community Health and Housing Committee**

### **Courage's Playing Fields**

**Report of:** *Kim Anderson, Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager*

**Wards Affected:** *All Brentwood Borough Wards*

**This report is:** *Public report*

#### **1. Executive Summary**

- 1.1.** The report considers a possible option in the development of an alternative cricket pitch site in Courage's Playing Fields. It recommends the further scoping of using soil relocation as a means of facilitating the development of an alternative viable cricket pitch within the whole site.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1** That officers scope the viability of using soil relocation to provide a second alternative cricket pitch location in Courage's Playing Fields.

#### **3. Introduction and Background**

- 3.1.** At the 18 September Community Health and Housing Committee (Min. Ref. 101). Members agreed unanimously that the recommendations contained in the Health and Safety report be implemented without delay and prior to the 2018 cricket season; and that a consultation exercise be undertaken with the adjacent affected residents on the proposal that the club transfer its use of the adjacent cricket ground in response to the Health and Safety report to the land 'part 776' enabling Shenfield Cricket Club to have greater use of the field for its new initiative.
- 3.2.** Due to the topography of the landscape it is proposed that a feasibility study is undertaken to ascertain whether soil relocation could be a viable option to assist in the transfer to an alternative site within Courage's Playing Fields.
- 3.3.** An initial survey has been undertaken on the site which is set out in the Powerpoint presentation before Members tonight.

- 3.4.** Further assessment work is required to fully understand whether this option is viable and identify any impact that it will have. Once this work is completed the project would be subject to planning consent.

**4. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 4.1.** Within the report to the Community Health and Housing Committee on 18 September 2017 (Min. Ref 101), there was a recommendation that options for an alternative site be explored for the 2<sup>nd</sup> cricket pitch away from the play area.
- 4.2.** An initial Feasibility Study has been undertaken on the site with a soil relocation company, to ascertain whether this would be a viable option. This method has been used by both Havering and Barking and Dagenham Councils to improve leisure facilities.
- 4.3.** The results of this study is set out in the Powerpoint presentation before Members tonight.
- 4.4.** It is estimated that 20,000m<sup>3</sup> of soil would need to be relocated to re-grade the site to form a level and viable cricket pitch. This would involve a number of vehicle movements and short-term disruption over an estimated 3-month period. Therefore, if Members wish to proceed with this option then it is recommended that further assessments are undertaken to determine the impact and identify what mitigations should be put in place. These would include Highways, Archeological, Hydrology, Noise and close liaison with the Environment Agency on the source and grade of soil that will be relocated. The works required would be, removal of top soil and store for re-use, Import and re-grade site to new level, replace top soil and seed site.
- 4.5.** It is estimated that if approved it will mean that cricket will be able to be played on the alternative site in two years.
- 4.6.** These other assessments should Members wish to proceed, will also help to inform any separate planning process.
- 4.7.** Officers will also explore whether external funding could be used to assist in the funding for the project.
- 4.8.** One of the key elements in the development of the Council's Leisure Strategy is to look at ways of improving existing facilities to provide a sustainable leisure facility with minimal cost to the Council for both current and future Brentwood residents.

## **5. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 5.1** Comments received from Sport England as part of the Local Development Plan consultation, stated that a Leisure Strategy is required that assesses Council owned sports and leisure facilities in order that the Council can continue to work with partners to ensure that appropriate provision is made for the residents of Brentwood. The strategy should not only consider how the Council can provide services, but also how other partners can. The strategy should also use current sports facility evidence to identify strategic priorities to then inform what will be included in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Following this feasibility work, the Council will then be able to determine which projects will be funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and those funded by planning obligations.
- 5.2** The Council's Asset Management Strategy 2014/15 also sets out the need to obtain maximise income where possible from its asset portfolio.

## **6. References to Council Priorities**

The Leisure Strategy sits under two main strands of the Vision for Brentwood 2016-19: Environment and Housing Management to develop a Leisure Strategy to provide strong and sustainable leisure facilities for residents and businesses; and Community and Health - to work with community and voluntary organisations to develop the priorities for community development. There are also strong links for the priorities of the Council's Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2014-2017, the Local Development Plan, Active Brentwood/Essex and the Council's Asset Management Strategy 2014/15.

## **7. Implications**

### **Financial Implications**

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- 7.1** One of the key drivers for the Leisure Strategy is to reduce the Council's current revenue and capital costs on its leisure facilities and ensure that they are affordable, sustainable and fit for purpose for the future requirements.
- 7.2** Any procurement of services will need to go through the Council's normal procurement processes and procedures.
- 7.3** There will be associated costs for the impact assessments to be undertaken. Where possible these will be met from existing budgets within the Medium Term Financial Plan.

**Legal Implications**

**Name & Title:** Daniel Toohey, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

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- 7.4 The works are necessary to establish the viability of the development which ultimately will constitute a material consideration in any decision in any Planning Decision in the matter.
- 7.5 In respect of the procurement of contracts if required, the Council must comply with approval and selection procedures as set out in its Constitution and where relevant, procurement regulations including the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. Legal Services are available to advise and assist as the project proceeds.

**8. Background documents:**

Local Development Plan  
National Planning Policy framework  
Fields in Trust - Guidance for Outdoor sport Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard  
PLC report  
4Global report  
Sport England  
Leisure Strategy summary report

**9. Appendices to this report.**

None

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