

# Executive

## Council Investment in District Sports Facilities Post 2012 Olympics

7 January 2013

### Report of Director of Community and Environment

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is intended to identify the need for investment in the stock of the Council's current and proposed sports facilities and to do so in a manner which responds to the increased demand for sports participation arising from the highly successful 2012 Olympic Games.

This report is public
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#### Recommendations

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Executive is recommended to consider:

- (1) The Council establishing a medium term Olympic Legacy Fund to support increased sporting participation in football, cricket, rugby, hockey, athletics and tennis.
- (2) Investment in the Council's stock of existing and proposed facilities which meet the above requirement should be given priority, especially where there is a focus on sports participation by young people.
- (3) The first call on the fund to be the facility investment projects for North Oxfordshire Academy Athletics Track, Kidlington and Gosford Leisure centre Artificial Turf Pitch, Stratfield Brake and the Phase 2 balance of funding for the SW Bicester Sports Village as detailed in the draft capital programme and subject to its approval.

#### Executive Summary

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##### Introduction

- 1.1 The Council has an extensive stock of sports facilities, many of which require further investment to maintain to a good standard to encourage participation in sport.
- 1.2 This investment requirement coincides with an increase in demand for sports participation as a consequence of the successful 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

## **Proposals**

- 1.3 To establish an Olympic Legacy Fund to support the investment needed in District wide facilities which provide opportunities for participation the most popular sports.

## **Conclusion**

- 1.4 Investment in sports facilities is required to support increased sports participation by young people. The Council should respond to the increased interest in sports participation in Cherwell arising from the successful 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games by creating an Olympic Legacy Fund which supports facility improvements to cater for this demand.

## **Background Information**

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### **Introduction**

- 2.1 The Council has in the past been progressive in its investment in sport across the District in terms of both activities and facilities. This is best demonstrated by its £29m Sports Centres Modernisation project which it completed successfully in 2010. This and indeed many other earlier investment decisions the Council has taken have been underpinned by the recognition of the value of sport in terms of health benefits, crime prevention, community development and social interaction, and the highly beneficial personal development it offers, particularly for young people.
- 2.2 The 2012 Olympics Games were not only successful during the relatively short period they took place, but also triggered the expected post Games increase in interest nationally and locally to participate in sport. This has certainly been evident in Cherwell in terms of the number of young people who have contacted local sports clubs.

### **The Council's Sports Facilities**

- 2.3 The Council has a very good level of sports provision which reflects the progressive policy position it has taken over the years. Its direct and indirect provision of facilities include the following;

Spiceball Leisure Centre  
Woodgreen Leisure Centre and Outdoor Pool  
North Oxfordshire Academy Joint Use Sports Facilities  
Bodicote Park Sports Pitches  
Bicester Leisure Centre  
Cooper School Joint Use Facilities  
Kidlington Leisure Centre  
Stratfield Brake Sports Ground

- 2.4 In conjunction with Bicester Town Council, it is also developing the South West Bicester Multi Sports Village as a major town venue for outdoor sport. This is intended to provide an outdoor sports focus for the town with a strong emphasis on developing different sports opportunities, particularly for youngsters.

## Current Investment Requirements

- 2.5 Over the years, this stock of facilities has required substantial investment to establish and maintain through reinvestment. It was this issue which was the main driver behind the Council's sports modernisation project. The approach to this has been varied depending on the circumstances and requirements at any one time. Most years, the Council considers its capital investment requirements on a three year planned basis. This means that when capital investment has been required, it has been planned over the medium term. An example of this is the investment in 2010 for the replacement artificial surfaces to the all weather pitches at North Oxfordshire Academy and Cooper School. The alternative has been a whole life costing approach adopted for the Council's sports centres modernisation project where there is a planned and funded replacement schedule built into the contract cost.
- 2.6 The 2009 capital project reflected the need for a periodic investment requirement applicable to most public sports facilities. Artificial sports surfaces normally need replacing between 10 and 15 years as they become worn out. The Council adopts a rigorous maintenance schedule which extends the life of these surfaces to their near maximum. This was the case with North Oxfordshire Academy and Cooper School as they were almost 16 years old. Similarly, some facilities need a major facelift or refurbishment after a similar period as otherwise they become tired, lose their public appeal, increase maintenance costs and reduce income potential. This position was relevant to the Council's sports centres before modernisation and is also applicable to Stratfield Brake.
- 2.7 The current position is that there are a number of facilities for which the Council has a responsibility which despite the maintenance programme and minor regeneration works are now in need of investment and which feature in the Council's draft capital programme for 2013/14. They are;
- a) North Oxfordshire Academy Athletics Track – a replacement track surface is needed after 16 years of use. Estimated cost £165,000
  - b) Kidlington Artificial Sports Pitch – a new surface is required after 10 years of use. Estimated cost £180,000
  - c) Stratfield Brake – a number of building and pitch refurbishment requirements in conjunction with Kidlington PC and local clubs. Estimated cost over the next two years of £130,000 of which it is proposed the Council contributes £80,000
  - d) SW Bicester Sports Village – the completion of phase two of the project. Estimated cost of a further £450,000. NB Phase three remains unfunded.
- 2.8 The SW Bicester Sports Village project is split into three phases. Phase 1 (the grass pitches) is fully funded by the Council. Phase 2 (pavilion, access, car park, paths and floodlighting) is partially funded by the Council and developer contributions and it is this phase which is subject to the £450,000 capital bid in 2013/14 in order to progress the procurement process for the whole phase. Phase 3 (athletics track, synthetic pitch and tennis courts) has no funding and will not progress unless external and other funds can be secured. This phase is estimated to cost almost £2.5m.
- 2.9 When comparing these investment requirements, each is very different and as a consequence, provides different procurement opportunities. The replacement of artificial surfaces has to be undertaken by specialist

contractor(s) because of their very nature. However, the investment in Stratfield Brake can be undertaken on a tripartite basis with the sports clubs and Kidlington Parish Council and likewise, the association of the SW Bicester Sports Village with the Kingsmere development provides some potential for benefit to be secured by using the local contractors on site.

- 2.10 The list of the initial investment requirements has been restricted to those in greatest need. Further consideration can also be given if required to increasing sporting use of other facilities which are strategically important in the District and which have need for further investment to maintain current high levels of sporting use such as at Bodicote Park for rugby and football and North Oxfordshire Academy for hockey.

### **Post Olympic Effect in Cherwell**

- 2.11 From officer contact with many sports clubs across the district, there is clear evidence of an increased interest in participating in sport. This has ranged from a greater number of participants in sports club open days, a greater number of entries to the Cherwell Sports Awards, double the usual attendance figures at children's holiday 'Hub' activity sessions, to a greater number of membership and sports course enrolments. This in turn has put more pressure on clubs to deliver, whether through their own or parish council facilities or through the Council's facilities. The more progressive and well organised clubs have responded very well to this extra sporting demand and are supported where necessary by the Council's Sport Development Team and the Oxfordshire Sports Partnership programme. Demand for facility use continues to increase and fundamental to maintaining the Olympic Legacy 'surge' is to ensure facilities standards are maintained to a good playing standard.
- 2.12 When reviewing the Council's sports facility stock, it is clear that the Council is not in a financial position to provide for every Olympic sport. The approach taken has been to concentrate on the most popular sports as a means of addressing the majority of public demand whilst using the scale and flexibility of its leisure centres to accommodate many other sports. The current investment requirements again reflect this position in that the District's most popular sports will benefit – football, cricket, rugby, hockey, athletics and tennis. Where new facilities are being created such as at South West Bicester Sports Village, all facilities will be suitable for disabled use.
- 2.13 The timing of the SW Bicester Sports Village which is not planned to be available for use until 2015 is a little late in relation to the Olympic effect as this was determined by the availability of the land. It is also important to acknowledge that this extensive development is very much a one off and is intended to serve the needs of the whole town of Eco Bicester, not just the SW Bicester residents. In addition, it will play a critical role in the provision of future sporting opportunities over the medium term as it will provide facilities for five of the six sports listed above.

## **Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options**

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- 3.1 If the Council does not invest in the facilities, then over time, sporting usage will fall. This has consequences not only for level of club use and participation but consequential affects down stream on the health of our community both in terms of the physical health and well being of residents and in social well being as there is potential for increased anti social behaviour if there are not the opportunities for positive activities, particularly for young people.
- 3.2 This Olympic Legacy approach will help to coordinate investment across the District to ensure availability of facilities and with some opportunities to achieve procurement savings.
- 3.3 If the Executive is minded to set up an Olympic Legacy fund, it is proposed that those capital investment requirements for sports facilities included in the draft 2013/14 capital programme become the first call on the fund. Future decisions on further calls on the balance of the fund will be preceded by detailed consideration by the Executive on each proposal.

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

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| <b>Option One</b>   | Do nothing- facilities will gradually fall into a state of disrepair and be withdrawn from use.  |
| <b>Option Two</b>   | Piecemeal investment as and when individual facilities require investment through annual cycle of bids through the Council's capital programme.  |
| <b>Option Three</b> | A planned approach through an Olympic Legacy fund to secure benefits of developing a District wide approach and maximise opportunities for joint procurement and reduced costs. This is the recommended option |

## **Consultations**

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| <b>Public consultation</b> | <p>Public consultation has taken place for the SW Bicester Sports Village project for which clear public support was provided and a demand for the delivery of all three phases.</p> <p>In compiling this report, liaison has taken place on individual projects as appropriate with Oxfordshire County Council, the schools on which the facilities are located, relevant town and parish councils and Parkwood Community Leisure.</p> |
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## **Implications**

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| <b>Financial:</b> | All the above investment requirements are subject to the relevant budget approval and competitive procurement |
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processes and until these have been completed, the costs quoted can only be regarded as best estimates. In addition, there are a number of external funding opportunities which are being or will be progressed where the nature of the proposed developments meets the relevant external funding criteria of the awarding bodies.

The estimated cost of all the possible developments identified above will be in excess of £4m. It is assumed that with the right Council support and say 10% minimum pump prime funding, up to £1m externally could be raised. Council funding for this could be from a variety of sources;

- Reuse of redundant earmarked reserves
- New Homes Bonus
- Forward funding of future anticipated contributions from new housing developments

Further consideration to funding will be given as part of the 2013/14 budget setting.

Comments checked by Karen Curtin, Head of Finance and Procurement 0300 003 0106

**Legal:**

Any works or investment would be subject to the usual competitive procurement processes. Otherwise, there are no direct legal consequences arising from this report.

Comments checked by Nigel Bell, Team Leader – Planning & Litigation, 01295 221687

**Risk Management:**

There are no notable risks arising from this report. It has been highlighted that setting up an Olympic Legacy Fund which targets the six main sports in the District might draw criticism from some minor sports.

Comments checked by Ian Davies, Director of Community and Environment; 030000 30101

**Wards Affected**

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All Council wards as whilst the facilities are located in the main in the three urban areas, their catchment of use is District wide.

**Document Information**

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Appendix No	Title
None	
Background Papers	
None	
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