

SWEYNE PARK EXTENSION UPDATE REPORT

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress being made on this project, with regard to the creation of new junior football pitches on the land adjoining Sweyne Park to the rear of Rayleigh Leisure Centre.

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 As part of the overall project and subsequent planning application to redevelop the land on the former Park School site in Rayleigh, the open space to the rear of the Leisure Centre site, was identified as playing field provision. This would also enable Sweyne Park to be enlarged through linking the existing Sweyne Park Open Space with the new area. A map of the site is included as Appendix A to this report.
- 2.2 The land in question, which measures approximately 6 acres, was transferred to the ownership of the District Council from the County Council, as part of the larger project to redevelop this area of land that now includes new housing, a new school and the currently under construction, supermarket.

3 PROGRESS TO DATE

- 3.1 Work has commenced on the development of this area now that Wimpey Homes have vacated the area and reinstated the land. A process of weed-killing has taken place and recently a topographical survey has been completed that has assessed the ground levels / contours of the site. This survey will now enable work to be commenced on producing a design for the lay-out of the site, which will include optimum positions for services (drainage, waste water etc.) changing accommodation, car parking (location and number of spaces) and the number and lay-out of the pitches themselves. Council Officers are currently putting together a specification and approximate costing for the changing accommodation, incorporating the guidelines on the nature of such a facility, from the Football Association and Sport England.
- 3.2 Officers have also been undertaking research regarding the possibilities of obtaining external grant funding for the project, and as a result of this research, discussions and onsite meetings have taken place with representatives of the Football Association (FA), around the possibility of accessing funding from the Football Foundation.
- 3.3 The initial response from the FA has been very encouraging regarding the likelihood of receiving funding, and recommended that a soil survey was undertaken which they would require as part of any bid, and that would provide useful recommendations as to the nature and extent of works required, along with estimated costs. This survey was undertaken by Agrostis Turf Consultancy in June.

- 3.4 The amount of funding possible is significant, and whilst normally awarded on the basis of a maximum of 50% of the project value, if organisations can demonstrate that attempts have been made, albeit unsuccessfully, to lever in alternative funds, then up to 70% funding can be possible. The FA have also been asked for advice around the amount of car parking that needs to be provided for such a facility. Their recommendation is that 80 spaces would be required for an area providing 5 junior pitches.
- 3.5 With regard to the use / management of the pitches, there has already been keen interest shown by Rayleigh Boys Football Club in using this site as their base and information has been received on their views on what assistance they could offer to this project and the site's future operation. Officers have also written to all junior football clubs in the District that are affiliated to the Essex FA, notifying them of the project and enquiring as to their potential interest in making use of the new facilities. The required written response has been received from 4 clubs, namely Hawkwell Athletic FC, Rayleigh Raiders Girls and Ladies FC, Rayleigh Boys Youth FC, Downhall United Youth FC and Hambro Colts Youth FC. There may also be benefit from liaising with St Nicholas C of E Primary School (located adjacent to the site) to gauge whether there are any possibilities of sharing facilities.
- 3.6 The possible use of the site by a particular club as its "base" could also be of assistance to the Council in its application for Football Foundation funding, as part of this application must include a football development plan, which a number of established clubs will already have in place. Clubs will also be able to apply for other potential funding pots that the District Council would not be eligible for, and therefore, have a significant effect on the resourcing of the project.

4 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Following the undertaking of the topographical survey, Officers will now be starting to discuss with groundwork contractors and drainage contractors, the requirements of the project prior to requesting formal quotations for the works. These works will include the creation of the levels and overall shape of the area, general preparation and development of the surface ready for seeding and installation of any additional drainage that may be required.
- 4.2 Officers will be giving further consideration to the four responses received from junior clubs in the District, as part of developing the future use and management of the site, once it is complete, with a detailed report on this aspect and the lay-out of the site, timetabled for presentation at the Council's Executive Board in October.
- 4.3 Further meetings are in place with the FA, to progress the discussions around the potential application for funding from the Football Foundation, and as part of their planning agreement, Wimpey Homes will soon be putting in a bridle path running from the existing Sweyne Park in the direction of the new school.

- 4.4 The target is to be in a position where seeding of the pitch area can be carried out, ideally in late autumn, but certainly completed in a timescale that enables benefit of the full spring / summer 2008 growth period. The aim is to have the pitches in use in September 2009, therefore giving the area time to have fully established and therefore provide a playing surface of an appropriate standard.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has £50,000 allocated in this year's budget specifically for this project, and as previously mentioned in the report, is looking at making an application to the Football Foundation for external grant funding.

6 RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 It is proposed that the Committee **RESOLVES**

- (1) That Members note the content of the report with regard to the progress being made on this project.

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Background Papers:-

None

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