

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of People and Places (Introduced by the Executive Member for People)	Executive Cabinet	21 November 2013

## SPORTS VILLAGE FEASIBILITY STUDY - REVIEW

### PURPOSE OF REPORT

- To inform members what has come out of a review of the 2007 Sports Village Feasibility Study and what actions are proposed for the future.

### RECOMMENDATION(S)

- That Executive Cabinet;
  - Note the review of the feasibility study, and that there is no prospect of a Sports Village, as originally envisaged, being delivered at this point in time.
  - Note that various early discussions are taking place with partners to develop sports facilities in the Borough and that officers will bring reports to Executive Cabinet, as appropriate, when any decisions are required that involve the Council's input, eg funding, land etc.

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

- The review of the 2007 Study has highlighted the following:
  - Sports clubs/organisations that have land want to keep it and enhance it, rather than pool resources in one site.
  - Clubs that are looking to lease land do not require the land to be on a single site.
  - There is an appetite amongst clubs, organisations and schools to work in partnership, on a site by site basis, to enhance the sporting offer in the Borough.
  - External funding for a large single site project is extremely limited.
  - Revenue funding, without the pooling of resources and the consolidation of assets, would be an impossible task, given the current financial climate. As mentioned above, there is no appetite for pooling and, in the case of the Council, there is no business case to support the consolidation of assets.
  - On a site by site basis, there are opportunities to work innovatively to enhance facilities. This is evidenced by the recent developments at Chisnell Playing Fields, Euxton Skatepark and Chorley Rugby Union Club, for example.
  - The draft Play, Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy provides an improved strategic context for projects.
  - The review has opened up a number of opportunities for the Council to work with stakeholders on individual projects/developments. It is recommended that these continue and that reports be brought to the Executive if any of them progress and require the Council's input.

<b>Confidential report</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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<b>Key Decision?</b> Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

### (If the recommendations are accepted)

4. Although there are no plans to initiate a Sports Village project, as originally envisaged, there are opportunities to work with a variety of partners to enhance the sporting offer in the Borough. At this stage Executive Cabinet are asked to note these potential developments and that if any of them progress, and require the Council's input, separate reports will be brought to the Executive.

## ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

5. One option would have been not to revisit the Sports Village feasibility study. Members agreed, at the policy setting Council meeting, that the review of the previous study would be a corporate project.

## CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Involving residents in improving their local area and equality of access for all		A strong local economy	
Clean, safe and healthy communities	✓	An ambitious council that does more to meet the needs of residents and the local area	

## BACKGROUND

7. In 2007, the Council commissioned Strategic Leisure Limited to undertake a feasibility study into the proposals for the development of a Chorley Sports Village. The study was funded by the former North West Development Agency.
8. For clarity a Sport Village typically comprises of a number of significant leisure facilities eg a stadium, athletics track, indoor sports hall etc, often with health\education facilities incorporated, and are based in the same location. Leigh Sports Village is a local example of such a facility.

## 2007 FEASIBILITY STUDY

9. The key recommendation from the 2007 feasibility study was:

'Based on the work undertaken to address the scope of the study, the recommendation has to be that the project does not currently move forward due to a lack of funding (capital and revenue) and a lack of any identified strategic context.'

However, the report went on to say:

'However, we recognise and understand that there is a momentum behind the project and a great deal of local interest, support from the Chorley community and a need for a central base in the borough for field based sports with good quality changing facilities.'

## REVIEW OF THE STUDY

10. In order to review the study, and the possibility of developing a Sports Village, numerous meetings have taken place with key stakeholders. This has involved meetings with sports clubs\bodies who have their own sites, land owners with land currently used or with the

potential to base sports activities, sports clubs with aspirations to grow their clubs and schools. These meetings have been in groups and then, when appropriate, have been followed up with individual meetings.

11. From the meetings, it is clear that many clubs/organisations are keen to see improved facilities they offer their existing, and potential members and users. However, all the clubs want to develop and enhance their own existing facilities. There was no evidence of clubs/organisations being willing to pool resources into one large facility. On a positive note, many clubs/organisations recognised the benefits of working in partnership and were willing to work with others to deliver improvements.
12. The consensus among partners with sports facilities is that they would prefer to develop and enhance their existing provision, and for some, to add to it. Likewise, those clubs without facilities are looking for a base to lease and it is not a requirement for this to be part of a larger complex.
13. Since 2007, a number of sports facility projects have come to fruition that has enhanced the sporting offer in the Borough. These include, for example:
  - Opening of the synthetic turf pitch at Buckshaw Village.
  - The Council's continued investment in All Seasons Leisure Centre, Clayton Green Leisure Centre and Brinscall Pool.
  - Significant improvements to Chisnell Playing Fields, by Chorley Panthers; involving a lease and funding from Chorley Council, plus a private donation and funding from the governing body.
  - The new Euxton Skatepark facility, by Euxton Parish Council; involving a lease and funding from Chorley Council, plus external funding and Parish Council funding.
  - Improvements following funding applications to various grant programmes at Chorley Cricket Club, Bretherton Parish Council bowling hut, Mawdsley Cricket Club pavilion and Brinscall JFC improvements to School Lane pitches, for example.
  - Chorley Rugby Union Club's development plans have recently received planning permission and will enhance provision for many clubs
14. The discussions have highlighted various potential projects. The Council's involvement varies with these projects. Some require the Council's advice and support, some would require the Council leasing land to clubs and some are more substantial and could require Council resources. At this stage all of the discussions are at an early stage. As and when the projects are worked up, any projects requiring Council input will be brought to the Executive for any approvals required.
15. The funding landscape has changed significantly since 2007. The opportunities to attract external capital funding for a project on the scale of the Sports Village have reduced. Members will recall that the capital funding, in addition to the revenue funding, was identified as an issue in 2007. Currently, for example, Sport England's Strategic Facilities Fund has £30m of lottery funding allocated for 2013/17. Applications are invited in a solicited-only basis and grants of between £0.5m and £2m will be considered. Competition for this funding will be extremely tough.
16. Given the very good condition of the Council's leisure centres and increasing attendances there is no business case for looking at consolidating provision. Initial financial appraisals do not provide any evidence that there would be any financial advantages of such an approach.

17. Revenue funding was also identified as an issue in the 2007 Study. Given the reduction in the Council, and potential partners, funding, this is even less viable now than it was 6 years ago.
18. The previous study also identified a lack of any identified strategic context. The review of the previous study has been included within the Council's Corporate Strategy. However, the allocation of land for a single site sports village does not feature in the Council's Local Development Framework. Chorley has not been identified as a strategic site within the development plans of sports governing bodies. That said, many governing bodies do include objectives about increasing the quality of facilities, including ancillary facilities, and innovative solutions that increase participation.. Although this does little to enhance the case for a sports village, it dose present opportunities for smaller projects to access funding, with their respective governing bodies strategic support.
19. At the last Executive Cabinet meeting, a draft Play, Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy was approved for the purpose of consultation. The consultation runs until 17 January 2014. The Strategy provides the following visions:

“To secure the future provision, improvement and maintenance of play areas, open space and playing pitches in Chorley, supporting safe, healthy and sustainable communities and serving the needs and aspirations of the residents of Chorley.

Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to access good sport, physical activity and recreation facilities promoting their usage and improving health and wellbeing of all.”
20. The Strategy provides an evidence base and rationale to help secure external funding future improvement and additional provision of facilities within the Borough. It will also provide strategic direction for the allocation of S106 resources in the future.
21. Although the strategic context does not highlight the need for a large single site sports village, there is a strategic context to support individual sites.
22. The review has highlighted the following:
  - Sports clubs/organisations that have land want to keep it and enhance it themselves, rather than pool resources in one site.
  - Clubs that are looking to lease land do not require the land to be on a single site.
  - There is an appetite amongst clubs, organisations and schools to work in partnership, on a site by site basis, to enhance the sporting offer in the Borough.
  - External funding for a large single site project is extremely limited.
  - Revenue funding, without the pooling of resources and the consolidation of assets, would be an impossible task, given the current financial climate. As mentioned above, there is no appetite for pooling and, in the case of the Council, there is no business case to support the consolidation of assets.
  - On a site by site basis, there are opportunities to work innovatively to enhance facilities. This is evidenced by the recent developments at Chisnell Playing Fields, Euxton Skatepark and Chorley Rugby Union Club, for example.
  - The draft Play, Open Space and Playing Pitch Strategy provides an improved strategic context for projects.
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## IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

23. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	✓	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	✓	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

## COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

24. There are no new direct financial implications arising from this report. There are a number of actions that could have resource implications for the Council. These will be reported to the Executive, at the appropriate time.

## COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

25. There are no comments.

JAMIE CARSON  
DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND PLACES

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
Jamie Carson	5815	1 November 2013	PP\REPORT2013\SPORTSVILLAGE

Background Papers			
Document	Date	File	Place of Inspection
Sports Village - Feasibility Study	06/09/2007	Web	<a href="http://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ielIssueDetails.aspx?IId=11385&amp;Opt=3">http://democracy.chorley.gov.uk/ielIssueDetails.aspx?IId=11385&amp;Opt=3</a>