

ACTIVE AND COHESIVE COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 20th November, 2014

Present:-	Councillor Reginald Bailey – in the Chair
Councillors	Councillor Mrs Burgess, Miss Cooper, Eastwood, Councillor Harper, Councillor Mrs Heesom, Councillor Plant, Councillor Mrs Rout, Councillor Tagg and Councillor Miss Walklate
Officers	Executive Director Operational Services Head of Leisure and Cultural Services Sport and Active Lifestyles Manager Scrutiny Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Hambleton and Mrs Johnson.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING - MONDAY 6TH OCTOBER 2014

The minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 6th October 2014 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. KIDSGROVE SPORTS CENTRE WORKING GROUP REPORT

The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services presented the Kidsgrove Sports Centre Working Group's feasibility report on the future of Kidsgrove Sports Centre, which would be presented to Cabinet and inform a future detailed business case for the replacement or refurbishment of the Centre.

The report covered a number of aspects; what was the demand for different types of sports facilities in Kidsgrove, what was the right facility mix for the area, who should be responsible for providing what, what were the best locations and what would the different options cost to build and operate and what options required investigating to bring the project to fruition.

There was a need to maintain a six lane, 25 metre swimming pool and a teaching pool in Kidsgrove, as well as a gym and flexible studio space. If the swimming pool was lost at Kidsgrove it would leave the Borough severely under for water space.

The Working Group considered eight sites in total but did not uncover any funding available through the disposal of surplus land assets.

Birchenwood (bowling green, tennis courts and pavilion) and
Birchenwood (Mount Road)

Both of these sites were in Council ownership but fell within a green belt and would take until 2018 for the Local Plan review to consider the possibility of moving out of the green belt. Former land use/filled land – sites were not suitable.

Liverpool Road

There were significant topography concerns and heavily wooded – the site was not suitable

Heathcote Street

The site was on a steep hill and was allocated for sheltered housing – the site was not suitable.

Clough Hall Park

The site was in the Council ownership but had poor access and there would have been a loss of the playing field – the site was not suitable.

This left a short list of three sites and one was subsequently ruled out – Station Road due to insufficient space for a sports centre.

Thus resulting in two sites remaining:-

Hardingswood Road Workingmen's Club

The Council would need to procure the site and in so doing probably relocate the Workingmen's Club.

New Build on Existing Site

This would be to Sport England specification.

The following questions were raised by Members and answers provided:

Q1 Would there be adequate car parking space for a new build on the existing site?

A1 It would depend where on the existing site the Borough develops.

Q2 How long would it take to demolish and rebuild?

A2 Two years. There would be a possibility to build behind the existing sports centre enabling the Centre to continue working.

Q3 When construction commences traffic flow would increase, particularly with the movement of lorries, on to the site which would prevent the public visiting the sports centre.

A3 There was additional car parking to the back of the lower section of the school, which the Headteacher agreed the public could utilise, but significant difficulties were foreseen if shared access was granted.

Q4 Would there be an impact on the local residents within the surrounding area?

A4 The Planning Committee had considered and objected to the planning application. Sport England had submitted a number of recommendations regarding the impact on local residents and the options around space had been considered on the planning application from Clough Hall Technology School.

There would be an issue when the current agreement expired in March 2016 and it was anticipated that Clough Hall Technology College would be granted planning permission resulting in the school being constructed by July 2016 for occupation by September 2016 academic year. Once the school takes occupation no further financial contribution would be received, which currently was £65,000 and the repairs and maintenance would revert to the Borough Council, resulting in an increase in costs.

The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services advised that East Staffordshire Borough Council had refurbished a sports centre/swimming pool of around £5m. A visit by the Members of the Working Group would be arranged.

Conclusion

No funding had been identified from the disposal of assets by the Council. The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services advised that Committee recommend Cabinet considers the site options and facility mix and, following this, focuses on an affordable funding solution linked to the procurement of a replacement sports centre for Kidsgrove.

Resolved:-

- (a) Committee agreed for the feasibility report to be submitted to Cabinet on the 10th December 2014.
- (b) A site visit to East Staffordshire to be arranged for the Members of the Working Group.

5. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 9th March 2015, 7.00pm in Committee Room 1

COUNCILLOR REGINALD BAILEY
Chair