

## **STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Service Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Panel**

**14 July 2021**

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Rural Sports Villages</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>Councillor Mark Deaville - Deputy Leader &amp; Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Sports</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Robert Wilks - Principal Officer (Leisure and Recreation)</b>
<b>WARDS INVOLVED:</b>	<b>Churnet &amp; Waterhouses</b>

#### **1. Reason for the Report**

- 1.1 To update the Service Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Panel on the progress of the work undertaken to date to identify and support projects with a view to allocating outdoor sports capital funding towards local projects.

#### **2. Recommendation**

- 2.1 That the Panel notes the progress made towards identifying and supporting the development of outdoor sport and recreation capital projects across the District.
- 2.2 That the Panel recommends that Cabinet approves the allocation of £6,500 to Waterhouses Parish Council and £5,000 to Kingsley Parish Council from the outdoor sports capital fund as detailed in the report.

#### **3. Executive Summary**

- 3.1 Towards an Active Staffordshire Moorlands is the Council's Physical Activity and Sport Strategy which identifies key priorities and actions that the Council will take, supported by its partners, to enable residents to become more active.
- 3.2 The Council has assigned £100,000 of capital funds in the current MTFP, to be used to towards supporting the delivery of local projects, with a focus on a 'sports village' concept and particularly projects that are located in more rural areas of the District.
- 3.3 During the last 18 months, officers have been supporting the development of a wide range of capital projects in Blythe Bridge, Forsbrook, Upper Tean,

Waterhouses and Werrington which has included building relationships with Parish Councils, community organisations, sports clubs, schools and national governing bodies of sport, in order to help them develop ideas and potential projects.

- 3.4 Waterhouses Parish Council has clear aspirations to enhance and improve the lives of their local community and have worked closely with residents to establish where financial investment can be best focussed. Improvements to the recreation ground have been identified and the Parish Council wishes to purchase a suite of specialist maintenance equipment including a tractor, roller mower and quadraplay to enable them to undertake enhanced maintenance to their sports pitches on an ongoing basis.
- 3.5 The cost to purchase the equipment is £26,000 and £19,500 (75%) of this amount can be secured from the Football Foundation. In order to do so, the remaining £6,500 (25%) match funding must have been secured first and this therefore forms the basis of the request to allocate £6,500 towards this project from the outdoor sports capital fund.
- 3.6 Should this be approved, officers will continue to support the Parish Council with their funding application to the Football Foundation and once all funding has been secured, help implement the project in partnership with the local football club over the coming months.
- 3.7 Kingsley Parish Council has aspirations to improve their local recreation area and are developing a project to install new football goals, activity frame, disabled friendly swings and other sport/play equipment at the site which would benefit children and young people of different ages and abilities. It is requested that £5,000 is allocated from the outdoor sports capital budget towards this project.
- 3.8 It is anticipated that a greater range of projects will start to come forwards as, in January 2021, the Council appointed a new Service Development Officer within the Service Commissioning Team. This role has a clear focus on identifying and supporting local projects of this nature and is already supporting a potential future project in Forsbrook alongside Forsbrook Parish Council to make improvements to recreational facilities at Jubilee Gardens. The initial plan is to help develop a process of community consultation which aims to confirm what improvements residents would like to see, and then, where appropriate, develop a costed delivery plan which could lead to a request for funds from this budget in the future.

#### **4. How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 This report links to Aim 1 of the Council's Corporate Plan "To help create a safer and healthier environment for our communities to live and work".

To deliver Aim 1 of the objective "Provision of sports facilities and leisure opportunities focused upon improving health".

## 5. **Alternative Options**

- 5.1 Recommend Cabinet approve the allocation of £6,500 to Waterhouses Parish Council and £5,000 to Kingsley Parish Council from the outdoor sports capital fund as detailed in the report. **(recommended)**
- 5.2 Recommend Cabinet do not award funding to the projects as proposed, meaning that funding will need to be secured by the two Parish Councils from other sources. **(not recommended)**

## 6. **Implications**

### 6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

Creating improved sports facilities in local communities, particularly rural communities where opportunities and travel are generally more limited helps engage people, especially young people, in positive activities.

### 6.2 Workforce

Supporting the development of community projects is delivered by Council officers as part of their role. The delivery of capital projects will primarily be the responsibility of the partner organisation receiving funds and would not require any direct involvement from the Council.

### 6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed for this project.

### 6.4 Financial Considerations

Should Cabinet approve this request, £11,500 from a total budget of £100,000 will be allocated from provisions within the latest Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) towards projects in Waterhouses and Whiston.

### 6.5 Legal

Waterhouses Parish Council and Kingsley Parish Council will both be responsible for purchasing the equipment outlined in the report and for the equipment and facilities ongoing operation/maintenance.

### 6.6 Climate Change

The provision of locally owned equipment will reduce the requirement to purchase maintenance services from external contractors who would transport their own equipment to site on a

regular basis using vehicles, thus reducing the overall carbon footprint for the project.

#### 6.7 Consultation

The project to improve the main pitch and create a second new pitch at the site in Waterhouses was identified in consultation with the local community.

#### 6.8 Risk Assessment

None. The two Parish Councils will be responsible for the purchase, storage, operations and maintenance of the equipment they are wishing to purchase to undertake the works outlined in the report.

Mark Trillo

**Executive Director (Governance & Commissioning)**

#### **Web Links and Background Papers**

Physical Activity and Sport Strategy, Towards an Active Staffordshire Moorlands

#### **Contact details**

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### 7. **Detail**

7.1 Towards an Active Staffordshire Moorlands is the Council's Physical Activity and Sport Strategy which identifies key priorities and actions that the Council will take, supported by its partners, to enable residents become more active. The strategy highlights 5 strategic objectives which are set out below;

- 1) Supporting the inactive to become active through a universal physical activity offer
- 2) Addressing inequalities in physical activity and sport engagement (with a focus on)
  - a: Women and Girls
  - b: People with limiting illness or disability
  - c: People aged 55 years and over
  - d: People in lower socioeconomic groups
  - e: Children and young people (aged 5-18)
- 3) Establish a place based approach with strategic partners
  - a: Leek North
  - b: Biddulph East
  - c: Cheadle
  - d: Forsbrook
  - e: Cellarhead
  - d: Endon

- 4) Maximise physical activity and sport opportunities using the natural environment
  - 5) Supporting our existing club and volunteer base to build capacity
- 7.2 Developing or improving community sports facilities is an important aspect of delivering the aspirations of the strategy, particularly objectives 1,4 and 5.
- 7.3 The Council has assigned £100,000 of capital funds in the current MTFP to be used towards supporting the delivery of local projects, with a focus on a 'sports village' concept and particularly projects that are located in more rural areas of the District.
- 7.4 'Sports villages' are often groups of facilities that provide a range of opportunities for local people to play sport or be physically active. In rural areas these often include facilities such as pavilion buildings, sports pitches, bowling greens, play areas and tennis courts. In many cases these are owned and maintained by community organisations or parish councils.
- 7.5 It is important to recognise that delivering any capital project takes time to develop and that appropriate levels of due diligence should be undertaken by officers in order to protect the Council's investment and assess whether a project is deliverable, meets strategic objectives, there is a robust business case and that the ongoing operation and maintenance of the asset is sustainable in the future.

## **8. Supported projects**

- 8.1 During the last 18 months officers have been supporting the development of a wide range of projects which has included building relationships with parish councils, community organisations, sports clubs, schools and national governing bodies of sport, in order to help them develop ideas and proposals. A list of these projects is included below;
- Cellarhead – Conversion of AstroTurf pitch at Moorside High School
  - Draycott in the Moors – Possible development of new junior tennis and padel tennis facility
  - Forsbrook – Possible improvements to recreational facilities at Jubilee Gardens
  - Upper Tean – Possible improvements to playing pitches at the Wentlows
  - Waterhouses – Improvements to playing pitches at Waterhouses Sports Field **(request for funds outlined at section 8.5- 8.9)**
  - Werrington – Development of pump track facility at Meigh Road
  - Whiston – Enhancement to recreational and play facilities **(request for funds outlined in section 8.10-8.11)**
- 8.2 In a number of these cases the projects which we are supporting have not yet reached the point whereby they are ready to be brought forward for funding requests, but it is our intention to continue to support these projects to a position where, if viable, they could be brought forward in a future report for consideration.

- 8.3 There are also examples where officers have been supporting the development of a particular project but an opportunity emerged for them to be delivered without financial support from SMDC. An example of this is the project to refurbish the AstroTurf court at Moorside High School in Werrington which officers were involved with for a number of months. It was anticipated that this project may require a contribution from this capital fund, however, the school identified an excellent opportunity to fully fund the project from another source which they chose to pursue instead.
- 8.4 We understand the refurbishment works to this facility have now been completed and that it is open for a range of uses meaning that the desired outcome was delivered but without the need to use SMDC funding.

### *Waterhouses*

- 8.5 Waterhouses Parish Council has aspirations to enhance and improve the lives of their local community and work closely with residents to establish where financial investment can be best focussed in order to provide maximum impact. The Parish Council has worked alongside the local Football Club, Council Officers, Staffordshire Football Association and Football Foundation to explore how to get the best from their existing sports pitches and also to add a second pitch at their site to expand the offer for junior football.
- 8.6 The sports pitches are located together with a community pavilion and bowling green and are owned and maintained by Waterhouses Parish Council. The facilities are used by the local community and sports clubs for a range of activities and events. The main football pitch requires improvement and, during 2019/20, the Club working together with the Parish Council secured a six year grant towards a pitch improvement plan from the Football Foundation's national 'Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund'.
- 8.7 Funding secured from the Football Foundation will help provide enhanced maintenance regimes on both the main pitch and new second pitch, however, as the funding award reduces each year, there becomes greater reliance on the Club or Parish Council increasing their levels of maintenance in order to sustain the overall quality. To assist with this, the Parish Council and club intend to carry out some maintenance themselves and wish to purchase their own specialist machinery that is capable of undertaking these levels using a mixture of paid contractors and/or locally trained volunteers.
- 8.8 The Parish Council wishes to purchase a suite of specialist maintenance equipment including a tractor, roller mower and quadraplay to enable them to undertake this work on an ongoing basis at a cost of £26,000. £19,500 (75%) of this amount can be secured from the Football Foundation but in order to do so, the remaining £6,500 (25%) match funding must have been secured, therefore, this forms the basis of the request to allocate £6,500 towards this project from the outdoor sports capital fund.
- 8.9 Should this request be approved, Waterhouses Parish Council will be in a position to deliver enhanced maintenance to their sports pitch facilities in a

more sustainable manner and allow funds previously spent on maintenance to be redirected into other projects which engage the community (particularly young people) and encourage them to be more physically active and play an positive role in community life.

### *Whiston*

- 8.10 Kingsley Parish Council has aspirations to improve their local recreation area and are developing a project to install a new activity frame, disabled friendly swings and other play equipment at the site which would benefit children of different ages and abilities. The overall project is costed at c£25,000 and the Parish Council are fundraising to secure the amount required from a range of sources.
- 8.11 It is requested that a £5,000 funding contribution from the outdoor sports capital budget be made towards this project to be used as match funding against further funding applications to local and national pots that are closely aligned to the aims of the project.
- 8.12 It is anticipated that in the coming year a greater range of projects will begin to develop as, in January 2021, the Council appointed a new Service Development Officer within the Service Commissioning Team. This role has a clear focus on identifying and supporting local projects of this nature and is already supporting a potential project in Forsbrook alongside Forsbrook Parish Council to make improvements to recreational facilities at Jubilee Gardens. The initial plan is to help develop a process of community consultation which aims to confirm what improvements residents would like to see, and then, where appropriate, develop a costed delivery plan which could lead to a request for funds from this budget in the future.