

**STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Cabinet**

**8 February 2022**

<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>Angela Dale - Service Development Officer</b>
<b>WARDS INVOLVED:</b>	<b>Brown Edge &amp; Endon, Leek North</b>

**1. Reason for the Report**

- 1.1 To update the Cabinet on the progress of the work undertaken to identify and support projects with a view to allocating outdoor sports capital funding towards these.

**2. Recommendation**

2.1 That the Cabinet:

- Notes the progress made in supporting projects that were previously allocated capital funding and the work undertaken to develop new projects.
- Approves the allocation of £10,700 towards two projects in Endon and Leek from the outdoor sports capital budget as detailed within the report.
- Approves that future reports requesting funding can progress via delegated decision reports to be approved by the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Sports.

**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 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 At the Cabinet meeting on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2021, approval was given to allocate £11,500 funding from the outdoor sports capital budget towards projects being delivered by Waterhouses Parish Council and Kingsley Parish Council. Both projects are progressing well, new maintenance equipment has been purchased by Waterhouses Parish Council, whilst the funds given to Kingsley Parish Council has enabled them to access additional funding from a local business to complete the installation of a new play area during spring 2022.
- 3.4 It is now requested that allocation of further funds totalling £10,700 to Endon & Stanley Parish Council and Leek Cricket Club. Should approval be given, £77,800 would remain available to allocate towards projects identified in the future.
- 3.5 Endon and Stanley Parish Council wish to improve the walking/running track which borders the playing fields at Hillswood Playing Fields. The total cost to upgrade the track is £6,700 and it is proposed to allocate the full amount towards this due to match funding being unavailable. As an 'in kind' contribution towards the project, the Parish Council will be planting a variety of trees in the vicinity, installing picnic tables, bird/bat boxes and improving the outdoor gym area that is on the edge of the track.
- 3.5 Leek Cricket Club has aspirations to improve their grounds maintenance programme and develop their intergenerational work within the club, through the refurbishment of existing grounds maintenance equipment. The cost to refurbish their equipment is £6,650 and the club have raised £2,650 towards this project. It is therefore proposed that £4,000 funding is allocated to this project from the outdoor sports capital budget.
- 3.6 Officers are also working on a project to develop a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) at Hot Lane playing fields in Biddulph Moor. In order to assess the viability of developing this project further, a feasibility study is required which would include various site surveys that would enable an accurate cost to complete the project to be identified. A recent enquiry to a reputable company has provide a cost of this study at around £6,500. It is recommended that revenue funds will be allocated to commission this study. Once this has been completed an updated report will be brought forward with a request to allocate capital funds from the Rural Sports Villages Fund.
- 3.7 In order to maintain momentum when developing projects, working with partners and planning, it is proposed that future reports which request funds to be allocated from the outdoor sports capital budget be made via a delegated decision report, to be approved by the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Sports.

#### **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 There are two options available:

1. Recommend that Cabinet approve the allocation £10,700 towards the two projects in Endon and Leek from the outdoor sports capital budget as detailed in the report **(Recommended)**.

2. Funding to the proposed projects is not allocated, meaning that funding would need to be secured via alternative other sources which may prevent the projects from progressing **(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 the request to allocate funding as detailed in the report, £10,700 from a total budget of £100,000 will be allocated from provisions within the latest Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The sum of £11,500 has previously been allocated from this budget and which would mean that £77,800 would remain available to allocate towards other projects in the future.

### 6.5 Legal

Nothing specifically arising from this report.

### 6.6 Climate Change

All projects consider, as part of their design and planning, the mitigation of any impact on the environment from their development and look to secure sustainable enhancements in future use where appropriate.

6.7 Consultation  
Nothing specifically arising from this report.

6.8 Risk Assessment  
Risk assessments to develop projects will be carried out as appropriate.

**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 to become more active. The strategy highlights 5 strategic objectives 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. As a result 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.

- 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.
- 7.6 During the last 24 months officers have been supporting the development of a wide range of projects which has involved 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:

**Projects progressed;**

- Cellarhead – Conversion of AstroTurf pitch at Moorside High School
- Werrington – Development of a pump track facility at Meigh Road
- Whiston – Enhancement to recreational and play facilities
- Waterhouses – Improvements to playing pitches at Waterhouses Sports Field

**Projects in development;**

- Draycott in the Moors – Possible development of new junior tennis and padel tennis facility
- Forsbrook – Possible improvements to play and recreational facilities at Jubilee Gardens
- Upper Tean – Possible improvements to playing pitches at the Wentlows

**Projects proposed for support**

- 8.1 Endon & Stanley Parish Council, together with the support from officers, has worked alongside their local community to explore how to get the best from their Hillswood Playing Fields to encourage greater use by the whole community.
- 8.2 The Playing Fields are located together with a cordoned off area for dog walking, small football pitch, a large green space and play facilities which are owned and maintained by the Parish Council. The facilities are used by the local community of all age ranges. The main play area does require improvement and the addition of more accessible equipment and it is recommended that officers continue to work with the Parish Council to actively look for any future funding opportunities that may arise to help with this.
- 8.3 There are currently items of fitness equipment located adjacent to the existing

track. Part of the project will be to ensure that this equipment can become more accessible and, to assist with this, the Parish Council will replace matting positioned underneath the equipment.

- 8.4 It is requested that a £6,700 funding contribution from the outdoor sports capital budget be allocated towards this project and, should this be approved, Endon & Stanley Parish Council will be in a position to tender and appoint contractors who will complete the proposed works.

#### *Leek Cricket Club*

- 8.5 Leek Cricket Club has aspirations to improve their grounds maintenance programme and develop their intergenerational work within the club, through the refurbishment of an existing roller adding a push button start. The roller refurbishment will ensure better grounds maintenance and allow older members to share their knowledge and train the junior members to ensure future sustainability and develop a cross generational community. A push button start on the roller will make it much lighter and easier to work with than the existing and more suitable for the role.
- 8.6 The cost to refurbish the roller is £6,650 and the club have raised £2,650 towards this project. It is requested that a £4,000 funding contribution from the outdoor sports capital budget be made towards this project.

#### *Hot Lane playing fields, Biddulph Moor*

- 8.7 Hot Lane playing fields is located in Biddulph Moor and contains a fully refurbished play area, a senior football pitch (grass) and a small area of hard-standing with one basketball hoop. Recently a breeze block wall which was located at the far end of the site and used to play football against was deemed unsafe following an inspection and removed.
- 8.8 There is an opportunity to reuse the multi-use games area fencing recently removed from Brough Park in Leek. The fencing was removed due to a new system being installed earlier this year, as part of a wider improvement project, and therefore the opportunity to reuse this at Hot Lane would not only reduce costs, but it would repurpose a fencing system which is in very good condition and avoid it being disposed of.
- 8.9 This project proposes to develop a multi-use games area in this part of the site which would consist of a tarmac base to be installed on the existing grassed area with sports rebound fencing installed to make up an enclosed court that could be used for a range of sports. It is also proposed to construct a new pathway linking the entrance of the site to the MUGA. As there is considerable earthworks involved, it is recommended that a feasibility study is commissioned to provide a more clear understanding of the ground conditions and an estimated cost to complete the works.
- 8.10 Hot Lane is identified in the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Football Facilities Plan and, as such, is likely to receive funding support from Football Foundation should a project be feasible. Initial conversations with the Football

Foundation have been positive and they have recommended that a full feasibility study is undertaken at the expected cost of circa £6,500. It is proposed that the Council funds this feasibility study and that a further report will update on the outcome of the study and outline the key actions and costs associated to completing this project as outlined in section 8.9 above.