

Subject: Marl Pits – Sport Village Proposal **Status:** For Publication

Report to: Cabinet **Date:** 12 December 2007

Report of: Chief Executive

Portfolio Holder: Leader of the Council

Key Decision: No

Forward Plan General Exception Special Urgency

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Councillors of the proposals currently being developed for a Sport Village at Marl Pits.

2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities and associated corporate objective.
- Delivering Regeneration across the Borough
 - Promoting Rossendale as a cracking place to live and visit (Economy)
 - Improving health and well being across the Borough (Health, Housing)

3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

There are no specific risks at this time.

4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

- 4.1 Rossendale Borough Council has been approached by Robson Lloyd, a specialist consultancy headed by Brian Robson (Ex England and Manchester United Captain) to enter into discussions concerning the redevelopment of Marl Pits Sports Complex. The approach came via Rossendale Leisure Trust who facilitate the Sports and Physical Activity Alliance (SPAA) which operates as part of the Local Strategic Partnership.
- 4.2 Robson Lloyd have established a concept for the development of multi club sports facilities utilizing non league football and private sector funding. The first development in the UK will happen through Bursco United in West Lancashire. This project has now progressed to the planning approval stage.
- 4.3 The concept of developing community sports villages has been discussed with the Football Association (FA) and the Football Foundation and has received strong indications of support. Rossendale, particularly Rossendale United and the development of Marl Pits Sports Grounds, has been identified by Robson Lloyd as an Ideal opportunity to develop a second pilot project in the UK.
- 4.4 Robson Lloyd have held discussions with Rossendale United and they have agreed to fully partake in the project including the possible sale of their Dark Lane grounds and relocation to a newly development Marl Pits Sports Facility.
- 4.5 Funding would also be sought from the Football Foundation. A meeting took place on 20 November 2007 where strong support for the project was indicated. In addition to this, Rossendale Leisure Trust have submitted a bid to Lancashire Economic Partnership to support the development. This bid has been accepted within the Area Action Plan 2008 - 2011. It is acknowledged however that any such funding is subject to further scrutiny by both North West Development Agency and Lancashire Economic Partnership.
- 4.6 In addition meetings have taken place with a small group of key stakeholders to assess support or otherwise for the concept. The project is designed to ensure the first phase of essential upgrades can be delivered to Marl Pits without reliance on external funding. These meetings have been coordinated through the Leisure Trust. The purpose has been to evaluate the support of those clubs who presently hold long term leases to sections of Marl Pits Sports Grounds and include
- Rossendale Amateurs Football Club
 - Rossendale Harriers
 - Rossendale Rugby Union Football Club
 - Rossendale United Football Club

Strong support from existing site users has been indicated.

5. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE

5.1 Ownership of the Marl Pits Sports Ground resides with the Council; however the Council has a number of long term tenancy agreements (ranging from 25 to 125 years) and which cover all of the main sporting activity areas. The tenancies are with:

- Rossendale Leisure Trust (RLT)
- Rossendale Harriers
- Rossendale Rugby Union Football Club

5.2 Currently the Council receives no material income from these facilities, yet will face significant capital investment pressure for the site over the medium to long term. Subject to the final details of the redevelopment and the ongoing business plans, the scheme may have the potential to mitigate the Council's longer term financial exposure.

5.3 Any final arrangements should have due regard to the security to the Council's ownership and its rights over the whole site. Amongst other things the governance structure amongst the existing and potentially new parties will need careful consideration.

5.4 At this stage no requests have been made on the Council's financial resources.

6. COMMENTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF REGULATORY SERVICES

6.1 The Council reserves its position as Planning Authority on the proposal. Any proposals will need to be the subject of pre application discussions in accordance with the Council's policies and the planning merits of the case will be fully considered at the appropriate time. The Council's statement of community involvement should also be adhered to.

7. COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF PEOPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

7.1 There are no implications at this time.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 Rossendale Borough Council are being asked to indicate their support for the project at this stage, in order that further work may take place and a project proposal be developed.

9. RECOMMENDATION(S)

9.1 That Rossendale Borough Council support further development of the proposal for a Sport Village at Marl Pits, and request a further report be brought to a future meeting.

10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

10.1 Rossendale Leisure Trust

11. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Is an Equality Impact Assessment required Yes

Is an Equality Impact Assessment attached No. A full equality impact assessment will be required as part of the project development.

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No background papers