

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board  
**DATE:** 5 September 2013  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Communities  
**PORTFOLIO HOLDER:** Community & Sport  
**SUBJECT:** Widnes Recreation Site Development  
**WARDS:** All

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To provide an update on the re-development of the former Widnes Recreation Site, Liverpool Road, Widnes

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:- That**

- i) **The proposals for redevelopment of the former Widnes Recreation Site, Liverpool Road, Widnes be approved.**
- ii) **That Council be recommended to approve inclusion of the former Widnes Recreation Site Development within the Council's Capital Programme.**
- iii) **To authorise the Strategic Director Communities, the Operational Director, Legal & Democratic Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community & Sport to implement the project, provided planning permission can be obtained and the indicative prices outlined in this report are not exceeded.**
- iv) **The officers be authorised to begin public consultation and with Sports England on the sports facility proposed within the Business Plan attached as Appendix A.**
- v) **Proceed to make planning applications, place the proposed housing land on the open market and obtain tendered prices for the build cost.**

**3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Further to the reports presented to Executive Board on 28 June 2012 and 28 March 2013 in respect of the project the Strategic Director, Communities, was given delegated authority, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community & Sport and the Leader of the Council, to take all necessary steps to progress proposals for the

redevelopment of the former Widnes Recreation Site.

- 3.2 Several proposals have now been reviewed and discussions on the previously submitted proposals ended in 2012.
- preferred bidder options
  - the development of a community sports hub combined with a health facility.
- 3.3 A business plan has now been prepared, containing the background detail, project outline, and associated financial implication for the development of a sports facility at the former Widnes Recreation site.
- 3.4 The sports facility proposed would include:
- Sports facility reception/foyer
  - 10 changing rooms primarily to serve outdoor pitches
  - 6 official changing rooms
  - 2 accessible changing cubicles
  - Indoor activity room/social area
  - Meeting Room
  - Internal and external equipment storage for sport and community groups
  - Kitchen and external serving hatch
  - External Multi Use Games Area
  - New cricket pitch
  - Reconfigure outdoor sports pitches
  - Install perimeter fencing to secure the site
  - Improvements to existing car park

This creates enhanced facilities for existing users and through a targeted programme attracts new participants from the wider community. Illustrations of the project will be presented at the Executive Board meeting. The building will incorporate a fire sprinkler system in its design. Hearing Induction Loop will be included in the community space. Relevant parts of the building will be Wi-Fi enabled.

- 3.5 A programme of works for the current project has been prepared it anticipates further design work requirements, tender processes, site mobilisation and construction period. It is anticipated that the facility will become operational during the financial year 2014-15. The proposed pavilion is likely to have a lifespan in excess of 30 years.
- 3.6 The draft business plan will be sent to Sport England for comments.
- 3.7 It is proposed that the estimated £2.680m required to fund the scheme be raised by the sale of 3 acres of land at the Widnes Recreation Site and that Council be recommended to modify the council's capital programme accordingly.

3.8 Estimates are given for the revenue required in section 4 of the business plan.

3.9 The Council submitted an application for grant funding for a community sport hub site. This application was unsuccessful due to the fund being over-subscribed. Further grant aid will be sought as identified within section 4 on the business plan. However, we have been encouraged by positive discussions with the Football Foundation and we hope to explore funding opportunities further with such organisations. In addition, a number of local sports organisations have generally welcomed the initial proposals put forward and we hope that this dialogue will continue in a constructive manner.

3.10 In addition to providing a programme of activity sessions, the indoor facility would also offer the opportunity to provide space for meetings, training sessions and other community events.

#### **4.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The sport facilities and other aspects proposed (including the housing development) will require planning permission. The planning processes will proceed independently of the Council's decisions as a manager of its land and as a provider/enabler of public services.

#### **5.0 FINANCIAL AND COMMUNITY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The cost estimate for the sports facility is £2.680M.

5.2 Receipts from land sales would provide a source for funding the development of the Widnes Recreational Club site as a community sports facility with associated playing fields.

#### **6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 The proposal as outlined accords with the Council's Sports Strategy, Playing Pitch Strategy and existing strategic objectives.

#### **7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Legal Services have been involved in the project, they have reviewed the report and confirm that they are happy with it. There are no known unusual legal issues arising. Project legal risk is considered normal.

#### **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### **8.1 Children & Young People in Halton**

These are contained within the report and business plan.

## 8.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

These are contained within the report and business plan.

## 8.3 **A Healthy Halton**

These are contained within the report and business plan.

## 8.4 **A Safer Halton**

These are contained within the report and business plan.

## 8.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

These are contained within the report and business plan.

## 9.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

9.1 Sports England is a priority consultee and their requirements, when notified, will need to be addressed.

9.2 Planning and highways need further consideration and will need to be addressed, as identified within the business plan.

9.3 Should the tender costs returned or scheme alterations be required due to planning, this may impact upon the funding package available.

9.4 Total net receipt of land sale will be determined by Planning, Highways and Ground Conditions.

## 10.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

10.1 The facility is to be constructed and operated consistent with the requirements of equality and diversity legislation. Decisions about this site are subject to the Public Sector Equality Duty.

## 11.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Executive Board Report – 08/04/10; 28/06/12; 28/03/13	Municipal Building Widnes	Chris Patino Operational Director Community & Env