

TITLE OF REPORT: **Go Gateshead Sport and Leisure – Capital Programme Developments**

REPORT OF: **Darren Collins, Strategic Director, Corporate Resources**

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek Cabinet approval of the capital programme developments at Gateshead International Stadium and Blaydon Leisure and Primary Care Centre.

Background

2. Cabinet approved the Gateshead Sport Strategy on 13 December 2016 (minute no. C141) which clearly defines the strategic need for sports facilities across the Borough.
3. In 2012 Gateshead published a Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). In order to ensure that information on provision and use of all pitch space is up to date, and to comply with Sport England's requirements for undertaking needs assessments for sports pitches, the Council has prepared a new PPS.
4. Building upon the work of the PPS, the Council has also prepared a Football Plan (GFP), which identifies challenges and opportunities specifically relating to football in Gateshead. The GFP has been prepared in partnership with the Football Association, with the aim of developing a plan for grassroots football in direct response to reductions in public subsidy.
5. Since then officers have progressed the implementation of the recommendations specifically relating to the provision of Football Pitches which includes:
 - i. Securing, protecting and enhancing the current provision where it is needed for meeting current or future needs;
 - ii. Enhancing playing fields, pitches and ancillary facilities through improving quality management of sites;
 - iii. Identifying key strategic playing pitch sites for improvement, development and investment. Focusing on securing sites, pitch quality and ancillary facilities (changing rooms and car parking);
 - iv. Increasing the provision of 3G pitches in Gateshead to meet training and competitive demand for football and rugby; and
 - v. Identify the feasibility of converting surplus/under used sand-based pitches to 3G.

6. The Gateshead International Stadium and Blaydon Leisure and Primary Care Centre are two sites specifically referenced within the Gateshead Sport Strategy documents as key strategic sites for investment.
7. Design and feasibility work has been undertaken over the last two years to support the progression of a scheme at both sites.
8. A Capital Programme allocation of £749,594 is available to support improvements to both sites, and as such external funding applications have also been submitted to support the delivery of the projects.

Proposal

9. The proposal is to progress the projects and specifically:
 - Replace the third generation Pitch facilities at Gateshead International Stadium (including replacement artificial turf, lighting and fencing where applicable).
 - upgrade the current playing field facilities at Blaydon Leisure Centre which in line with the planning permission granted (and associated conditions) on 19 September 2018 (minute number PD279) would include;
 - Converting and upgrading the sand based artificial turf pitch to a 3G Artificial Grassed Pitch (AGP) to Football Foundation specification.
 - Upgrade the current cinder-based track facility to a modern polymeric 6 lane athletics track to Sport England specification.

Recommendations

10. It is recommended that Cabinet:
 - (i) Approves the progression of the projects at Gateshead International Stadium, and Blaydon Leisure and Primary Care Centre.
 - (ii) Approves the Appointment of Robinson Low Francis Ltd (RLF) as the Principal Designer and Project Manager via the Football Foundation Framework and delegates responsibility to the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance to agree the terms and conditions of the appointment, together with any variations that may be required during the projects;
 - (iii) Approves the awards and entering into contracts with the successful companies following a tender process (carried out by RLF through the Football Foundation framework) to deliver the schemes, subject to approval of the terms and conditions by the Strategic Director, Corporate Services and Governance in accordance with the Constitution;
 - (iv) Agrees to accept external funding from the Football Foundation and Sport England (if successful) to help finance the projects, subject to approval of the terms and conditions of the funding; and
 - (v) Delegates responsibility to the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources following consultation with the Strategic Director, Corporate Resources to formally accept the Football Foundation and Sport England awards and associated terms and conditions.

For the following reasons:

- (i) To support the recommendations of the Gateshead Sport Strategy documents, most notably the outcomes associated with the current Gateshead Football Plan.
- (ii) To improve access to sport and leisure provision for the residents of Gateshead.
- (iii) To support the sustainability of the Go Gateshead Sport and Leisure facility portfolio.

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Policy Context

1. The proposal supports the overall vision for Gateshead as set out in Council policy objectives such as 'Thrive'. The development sustainable sport and leisure provision supports conditions for volunteering and community cohesion, as well as promoting a healthy and active Gateshead.

Background

2. In 2015 Gateshead Council began the process of developing the Gateshead Sport Strategy documents to provide strategic direction in terms of current and future need of sporting facilities across Gateshead. Within the scope of this process the following three key strategic documents were produced;
 - a) Gateshead Built Sports Facility Strategy
 - b) Gateshead Playing Pitch Strategy
 - c) Gateshead Football Plan
3. In order to develop these strategic documents, Gateshead Council procured external expertise to help undertake the consultation studies and develop the strategy documents. Knight Kavanagh and Page were commissioned in 2015 to undertake this work.
4. Cabinet approved the Gateshead Sport Strategy documents on 13 December 2016 (minute no. C141) which clearly define the strategic need of sports facilities across the Borough. Since then officers have progressed the implementation of the recommendations specifically relating to the provision of Football Pitches and Bowling Greens.
5. In relation to football pitches the recommendations of the Gateshead Football Plan include:
 - a) Securing, protecting and enhancing the current provision where it is needed for meeting current or future needs.
 - b) Enhancing playing fields, pitches and ancillary facilities through improving quality management of sites.
 - c) Identifying key strategic playing pitch sites for improvement, development and investment. Focusing on securing sites, pitch quality and ancillary facilities (changing rooms and car parking)
 - d) Increasing the provision of 3G pitches in Gateshead to meet training and competitive demand for football and rugby.
 - e) Identifying the feasibility of converting surplus/under used sand-based pitches to 3G.
6. Officers have since progressed the recommendations of the Gateshead Football Plan, most notably the development of 3G pitch provision, which includes Gateshead International Stadium and Blaydon Leisure and Primary Care Centre.

Blaydon Leisure and Primary Care Centre

7. The outdoor facilities at Blaydon Leisure and Primary Care Centre consist of two grassed sports pitches (Rugby and Football), a cinder-based track, and a sand based artificial turf pitch (ATP). Both the ATP and track are in poor condition and significantly under-utilised with 6 hours of formal activity booked per week.
8. Blaydon Harriers Athletics Club (circa 300 members) currently hire the facilities for four hours per week (Tues/Thurs 6.30pm-8.30pm) and Ryton Triathlon (circa 70 members) currently hire the facilities on a Saturday afternoon for 2 hours per week. The Triathlon Club also utilise the swimming pool facilities in addition to this.

Gateshead International Stadium

9. In 2006 two third generation (3G) pitches were developed to support the growth of the site and football development. The lifespan of a 3G pitch is estimated at 8-12 years, depending on usage and the annual maintenance associated with the facility. The pitches are currently tested every 3 years by the Football Association to ensure that the playing standard is maintained and provide certification to enable competitive football to play on the facility. The current certificate is agreed annually subject to the production of a maintenance plan with a view to the development of a replacement pitch project.
10. The Capital Programme includes an allocation towards the development of these two sites, with the intention of securing external funding from both the Football Foundation and Sport England. A decision from both funders is anticipated by the 24th October 2018.
11. In order to access external funding from the Football Foundation, applicants must enter into an agreement with an external principal designer and project manager procured separately through an OJEU compliant framework.
12. An initial framework agreement was introduced by the Football Foundation in 2010 to address concerns over the quality of AGPs and the inconsistent through-life support offered by the industry at the time. The second iteration of the framework agreement commenced in October 2014 and remains valid until October 2018.
13. Robinson Low Francis LLP (RLF) was appointed as the Framework Managing Consultant working in partnership with Labosport Ltd and Surfacing Standards Ltd. who provide technical design, inspection and accredited testing services.
14. Six suppliers and installers undertake all of the work, these are: Fieldturf Tarkett SAS; Lano Sports NV; Limonta Smith JV Ltd.; Support in Sport (UK) Ltd.; TigerTurf (UK) Ltd and Thornton Sports Ltd.
15. Under the arrangements RLF will conduct a tender process with the above 6 six suppliers. The Council would then enter into a contractual arrangement with the successful contractor to deliver the scheme.

Proposal

16. The proposal is to progress the projects and accept external funding from the Football Foundation and Sport England (both awards to be confirmed by 24 October 2018) to help finance the projects, subject to agreement of the terms and conditions.
17. It is proposed to appoint RLF as the Principal Designer and Project Manager, who are responsible to undertake the tender process, carried out through the Football Foundation framework.

Sporting Impact of the Project

18. As well as the financial impact detailed above, the project will:
 - a) Deliver the outcomes of the Gateshead Sport Strategy Documents, specifically 'protecting' and 'enhancing' sporting provision in Gateshead, increasing participation in sporting activity and support the sustainability of the sports of Football and Athletics;
 - b) Support the service to deliver against the corporate policy objective 'Thrive' through;
 - i. Improving the numbers of individuals accessing sport and leisure facilities. As an example, it is anticipated that over 1000 people per week will access the Blaydon Leisure Centre site upon completion compared to the 400 people currently accessing the facilities.
 - ii. The delivery of the football development plans associated with both projects which will focus upon growing participation with targeted groups such as, women and girls, disability football, older people, and Asian/Minority ethnic groups.
 - iii. Support the development of educational activity on the sites, with the football association delivering coach education programmes to support recruit and upskill volunteers; and
 - c) Support the long-term sustainability of the Go Gateshead Sport and Leisure Service.

Consultation

19. In preparing this report, consultations have taken place with the following individuals, groups and organisations;
 - a) The Cabinet Members for Culture, Sport and Leisure
 - b) Blaydon and Felling Ward Councillors, (A number of councillors from neighbouring wards in the West of Gateshead have also been consulted throughout the process including Cllrs Bradford, Caffery, Charlton, and Geddes).
 - c) Blaydon Harriers and Athletics Club
 - d) Ryton Triathlon Club
 - e) Local Football Clubs and League Associations
 - f) Sport England
 - g) England Athletics
20. Council Officers have engaged a number of individuals throughout the development of the projects including Sport England, the Football Association, councillors, and local users of the facilities.

21. The existing users of the 3G Pitch at Blaydon Leisure and Primary Care Centre (Blaydon Harriers and Athletics Club and Ryton Triathlon Club), have expressed some concerns. Officers have conducted a number of formal consultation meetings with the users since October 2016.
22. As the project at Gateshead International Stadium is a refurbishment project, no formal planning application is required, however officers have engaged the current users such as Gateshead College who are supportive of the development. Gateshead College have confirmed that they will contribute £100,000 towards project costs.
23. A number of local football clubs (including the league associations) have been engaged in the process and provided letters of support to the projects at both Gateshead International Stadium and Blaydon Leisure and Primary Care Centre. These include;
 - a) Felling Magpies FC, Gateshead Juniors FC, Leam Rangers FC, Blaydon Youth and Community FC, Swalwell Juniors, Winlaton Juniors FC, Whickham Fellside FC
 - b) Gateshead & District Sunday League
 - c) Gateshead Apollo Youth League
24. As the proposals at Blaydon Leisure and Primary Care Centre include changes to surfacing of existing sporting facilities, Sport England must be engaged as a statutory consultee through the planning process. Officers have also engaged Sport England throughout the project development phase as well as formally through the planning process. Sport England are supportive of the proposals, however did lodge a 'technical objection' to the last set of plans considered by the Council's Planning Committee. Minor amends will be made to the final designs to accommodate this technical objection.
25. The planning application for Blaydon Leisure and Primary Care Centre was considered by Planning Committee on 19 September 2018, with permission granted, (minute number PD279).
26. Councillors from the Felling Ward have been consulted as part of the Gateshead International Stadium proposal, and the Blaydon Ward Councillors have been involved in the development of the proposals for the Blaydon Leisure and Primary Care Centre proposals. They are all supportive of the schemes.
27. The Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport and Leisure has been consulted with regards to these proposals.

Alternative Options

28. The option of not progressing with the facility will result in the inability to deliver a longer term sustainable model for football and athletics in the Borough, and therefore not support the delivery of local priorities as set out in the Gateshead Sport Strategy documents agreed by Cabinet in December 2016.

Implications of Recommended Option

29. Resources:

a) Financial Implications

The total project costs are £1.855m (Blaydon Leisure and Primary Care Centre project - £1.12m, and Gateshead International Stadium £0.735m for the project at (GIS), with the following source of funding;

- (i) Gateshead Council contributing £866,594 (40% of Project Costs), comprising S106 contribution of £117,000 and prudential borrowing of £749,594.
- (ii) Gateshead College contribution of £100,000 (GIS Project)
- (iii) Football Foundation contribution of £737,636 (Currently being assessed and will be confirmed by the 24th October 2018)
- (iv) Sport England Contribution of £150,000 (Currently being assessed and will be confirmed by the 24th October 2018).

The business plans associated with the schemes identify that the income levels associated with the developments will grow to £132,000 at Gateshead International Stadium, and £72,000 per year at Blaydon Leisure and Primary Care Centre.

The Strategic Director, Corporate Resources confirms that £866,594 is available within the Capital Programme to deliver the projects.

b) **Human Resources Implications** – There are no implications arising from this recommendation

c) **Property Implications** – In order to protect the level of investment and future sporting provision the Football Foundation, as a condition of the award, will request a legal charge be registered against the Council's freehold title of Blaydon Leisure Centre and Gateshead International Stadium. There is currently a charge registered against the freehold title of Gateshead International Stadium in favour of Sport England, the Football Foundation charge will become a second charge.

30. **Risk Management Implications** – There are no implications arising from this recommendation.

31. **Equality and Diversity Implications** – The proposals will result in improved access to Sport and Leisure facilities, and an Equality Impact Assessment Initial Screening pro-forma has been completed with no negative impact identified.

32. **Crime and Disorder Implications** – There are no implications arising from this recommendation.

33. **Health Implications** – The proposals will result in significantly improved sports provision providing increased opportunity and access to sport and leisure facilities, which are more accessible to groups less likely to access facilities.

34. **Sustainability Implications** – The proposals will result in an increase in participation and income within the Go Gateshead Sport and Leisure portfolio to support sustainability, but most importantly will support the long-term sustainability of the sport of Football and Athletics.
35. **Human Rights Implications** – There are no implications arising from this recommendation.
36. **Area and Ward Implications** – The Gateshead International Stadium is based within the Felling Ward, and the Blaydon Leisure Centre is based within the Blaydon Ward, however both facilities have a wider geographical impact.
37. **Background Information** – None.