



Report for:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	24th April 2018
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Proposal to build a new athletics track and pavilion at Cupid Green Playing Fields, Grovehill
Contact:	<p>Cllr Neil Harden, Portfolio Holder for Resident and Corporate Services</p> <p>Author/Responsible Officers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Robert Smyth, Assistant Director (Performance, People & Innovation)
Purpose of report:	For Cabinet to consider the potential to build the new athletics track and pavilion at Cupid Green Playing Fields, Grovehill
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the undertaking of consultation with local residents and key stakeholders on the potential for a new athletics track and pavilion at Cupid Green Playing Fields, Grovehill 2. Approve the undertaking of necessary due diligence to confirm that Cupid Green Playing Fields, Grovehill is a suitable site for a new athletics track and pavilion 3. Note that officers will bring a further report back to Cabinet with a final recommendation for the location of the new athletics track following all required due diligence and consultation with residents and stakeholders.

Corporate Objectives:	<p>Clean, Safe and Enjoyable Environment – Having good quality, athletics provision is vital to improving participation and ensuring that residents can enjoy the borough and boost their health and wellbeing.</p> <p>This review will therefore, ensure our approach to athletics continues to meet the needs of current and future residents.</p>
<p>Implications:</p> <p>Value For Money Implications'</p>	<p><u>Financial</u> The recommendations ensure that the Council's previous decision is implemented in the most cost effective way.</p> <p><u>Operational</u> The recommendation ensures that the track (and its ongoing management) is delivered.</p> <p><u>Value for Money</u> The recommendations would ensure that the project is undertaken in a way that delivers value for money.</p>
Risk Implications	A detailed project management proposal (including risk assessments) has been put together.
Community Impact	<p>A Community Impact Assessment has been carried out and is available.</p> <p>It found that the project will improve access and availability for athletics and will therefore have a positive impact on the community.</p>
Health And Safety Implications	The construction of the new track and pavilion would be undertaken in line with the Council's health and safety policies and responsibilities. A member of the Health and Safety team would be part of the Project Team.
Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments	<p>Monitoring Officer:</p> <p>A preliminary review of the legal title to the site has indicated that there are no apparent legal restrictions for the development of the site; however, there are some title documents which are not currently available at the land registry and therefore further work will be required to locate these documents before a full title report can be produced.</p> <p>As indicated in the report, further planning, ground condition, design work and consultation will be required before a final report is brought back to Cabinet.</p> <p>S.151 Officer:</p> <p>The viability of relocating the track from its current location in</p>

	<p>Jarman Park to a new site in Grovehill will depend on the net development value of the Jarman site compared with the construction costs at the Grovehill site.</p> <p>The full range of financial implications will need to be considered through the due diligence exercise, and reported back to Members in advance of a decision being made.</p>
Consultees:	<p>Council Leader Portfolio Holder for Residents and Corporate Services Chief Executive Assistant Director – Planning, Development and Regeneration</p>
Background papers:	<p>Cabinet Report ‘Proposal to build a new athletics track and pavilion at Longdean School’ – June 2017</p> <p>Cabinet Report ‘Options for the provision of an athletics track’ – September 2016</p>
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In September 2016, Cabinet “approved that further, more detailed work be undertaken for the possible relocation of the athletics track from Jarman Park to Longdean School, to be funded from the sale of the location of the current track.
- 1.2 In June 2017, Cabinet approved the “design, plan and costing for a new athletics track and pavilion”, which was proposed to be built on the site of Longdean School.
- 1.3 The Council and Longdean School had therefore been discussing the terms under which the new facility would be built, including the impact on the existing dual use agreement (which covers the sports hall and pitch).
- 1.4 However, it has not been possible to come to an agreement that is acceptable to both the Council and Longdean School.
- 1.5 On that basis and following a review of potential alternative sites, this report sets out a proposal to build the new athletics track and pavilion at Cupid Green Playing Fields, Grovehill

2. The Case for Change of Location

Reduced Complexity

- 2.1 The requirement to achieve agreement with the School on a number of complex legal, technical and financial issues has meant that the process of building the new facility has been significantly delayed.
- 2.2 This delay and the associated challenges can happen when having to negotiate with a third party who owns the land (as is the case with a Dual Use Agreement (DUA)).
- 2.3 Building the site on Council owned-land ensures that the Council has full landowner control regarding any future development decisions.

Financial Implications

- 2.4 In order to approve the build of the facility, the School have indicated that they would be looking for an improved financial and management arrangement (compared to the current DUA).
- 2.5 This would have negative financial implications for the Council's management fee of at least £25,000 per year and the figure could be higher depending upon negotiation. The Council could also be required to make further capital investment into the site as a whole.
- 2.6 By relocating the facility, the Council is able to continue to operate the Longdean Sports Centre under the terms of the existing Dual Use Agreement.

Community Benefit

- 2.7 The athletics track would be located next to the cycle hub, APG, tennis courts, and football pitches. This means there is a real opportunity to create a high profile 'sports hub' within the area.
- 2.8 The Council would be able to utilise the café facilities within the hub, which in turn will generate more income and support other clubs.
- 2.9 The proposed site is also situated near four local schools, all of whom could benefit from use of the facility.

Disposal of Current Jarman Park Site (Cabinet Report – September 2016)

- 2.10 The Cabinet Report - 'Options for the provision of an athletics track' (September 2016) set out the case and financial benefits for the decision to relocate the athletics track to a new site.
- 2.11 This proposal would enable the new track and pavilion to be delivered and thus release the site for disposal in line with the Cabinet report.

3. The New Site – Cupid Green Playing Fields, Grovehill

Location

- 3.1 While the orientation and final design will need to be agreed, it is likely to be located within the pitch area adjacent to the tennis courts at Cupid Green Playing Fields (off Redbourn Road) HP2. This is Council owned-land.
- 3.2 A high level desktop review by specialist consultants has concluded that the site should be suitable; however, additional topographical and geotechnical surveys will be required. This would be in addition to necessary impact assessments regarding issues such as lighting, traffic, ecology and flooding.
- 3.3 The additional survey work is estimated to be £12,500. This is expected to be accommodated as part of the contingency built into overall project costs. The contingency level was set in line with good practice and in discussion with the Assistant Director – Finance & Resources.

Development and Opportunity Costs

- 3.4 The Cupid Green Playing Fields site is designated as ‘open land’ in the adopted Dacorum Borough Local Plan and therefore it would not be considered as appropriate for the development of new housing.
- 3.5 The primary aim of ‘open land’ areas “is to maintain the generally open character” and initial discussions with the planning service indicate that this proposal would be considered to constitute “open use” in terms of planning policy.

Design

- 3.6 The design is intended to be the same as previously approved (and it will be orientated to fit the site). Attention will be given to ensuring a satisfactory relationship with nearby residential properties and adequate parking and access arrangements.
- 3.7 Depending on the outcome of the initial consultation with residents and further technical work, a detailed design will be worked up for submission through the planning process and for the purposes of subsequent tender specification.

4. Next Steps – Consultation and Due Diligence

- 4.1 It is proposed that a two-month consultation process will be held. This will include an online survey, consultation meetings at the site and detailed interviews with key stakeholders, which will include the Highways Authority and Sport England.
- 4.2 The Council will also undertake detailed assessments and survey work necessary to confirm that the location would be suitable for a new track and pavilion.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 That Cabinet:
 1. Approve the undertaking of consultation with local residents and key stakeholders on the potential for a new athletics track and pavilion at Cupid Green Playing Fields, Grovehill
 2. Approve the undertaking of necessary due diligence to confirm that Cupid Green Playing Fields, Grovehill is a suitable site for a new athletics track and pavilion
 3. Note that officers will bring a further report back to Cabinet with a final recommendation for the location of the new athletics track following all required due diligence and consultation with residents and stakeholders.