

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

17

Report of Corporate Director for
Department for Place

to
Cabinet

on
23 June 2015

Report prepared by: Ian Brown, Parks Management Officer

Blenheim Park Pavilion Proposal

Place Scrutiny Committee
Executive Councillor: Councillor Graham Longley
Part 1 (Public Agenda Item)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To introduce the proposal to work with an established local football club, Catholic United FC, to develop a new sports pavilion in Blenheim Park.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That Cabinet agrees to the proposal to approve Landlord consent for Catholic United FC to develop a sports pavilion in Blenheim Park for the use of the Club and other football teams. The development will require external funding and be subject to detailed planning approval.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Blenheim Park is a local park of 9.5 hectares situated in the Blenheim Ward. The park features a small playground, and five football pitches. Three pitches serve adult sides, with the remaining two providing for junior teams.
- 3.2 At one time, the park had changing rooms in the centre of the park. Sustained vandalism and a major subsidence event led to the demolition of the building in 2005.
- 3.3 Changing facilities since that time have been provided by two tool shed/garages, and a temporary toilet. There are no showers.
- 3.4 Catholic United FC is a well-established local side founded in 1959. They have three senior teams with the first team playing in the Essex Olympian Football League. The Club also has a thriving junior section.

- 3.5 The Club rents pitches from the Council at a variety of sites and their first team is currently using the sports ground at Wellstead Gardens which is owned and operated by South East Essex College.
- 3.6 The Club does not consider its future secure at the Wellstead Gardens site and has approached the Council to discuss a possible new 'home ground' at Blenheim Park.
- 3.7 Discussions with Officers have resulted in the outline working drawing attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.8 The building would provide a clubhouse for Catholic Utd FC, made up of changing rooms, function room, bar, plant room etc. The Pavilion would also include six changing rooms to cater for other football teams hiring pitches in Blenheim Park. The building would be situated in the south east corner of the park adjacent to Blenheim Children's Centre.
- 3.9 The Club estimate that the proposed Pavilion will cost in the region of £430,000. The Club will commission the final design and construction of the Pavilion. The Club will seek funding for the project entirely through external funders notably the Football Foundation.
- 3.10 The building will be occupied under the terms of a formal lease. It will be necessary to agree Heads of Terms with the Club prior to any funding bid being submitted to the Football Foundation or other funding body.
- 3.11 Final designs for the building will be completed to seek final approval through the planning process and will need to consider some finer details about the boundary treatment, landscaping, entrance way, tree survey etc.

4. Other Options

- 4.1 One other option is to leave the changing provision as it currently exists.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 The proposal offers an innovative opportunity to develop good facilities in Blenheim Park to support football and the local community.

6. Corporate Implications

- 6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision and Corporate Priorities.

- Healthy - Promote healthy and active lifestyles for all.
- Prosperous - Ensure continued regeneration of the town through a culture led agenda
- Excellent - Enable communities to be self-sufficient and foster pride in the town
- Excellent - Promote and lead an entrepreneurial, creative and innovative approach to the development of the town

6.2 Financial Implications

6.2.1 The Club is not asking the Council to fund the project. Capital costs would be found entirely through external funders.

6.3 Legal Implications

6.3.1 The final design will be subject to planning approval, and agreement of lease conditions.

6.4 People Implications

6.4.1 There are no people implications.

6.5 Property Implications

6.5.1 It will be necessary to agree a lease setting out the basis of occupation, rents and responsibilities.

6.6 Consultation

6.6.1 Replacing the Pavilion in Blenheim Park has been an ambition since the demolition of the old changing rooms. At that time, the Council allocated funding to develop a Pavilion with local football teams. Clubs were consulted about their possible interest in becoming involved in developing and managing a new Pavilion, but little interest was expressed and the project foundered.

6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.7.1 The Pavilion will be required to meet all current accessibility standards and offer a significant improvement on the current temporary changing facility.

6.8 Risk Assessment

6.8.1 The principle risk is that the Club will be unable to secure the funding necessary for the project.

6.8.2 There is a further risk that the Council and the Club will be unable to agree terms of the lease which would prevent the development of the project.

6.9 Value for Money

6.9.1 The proposal represents value for money by providing a new public facility at no cost to the Council.

6.10 Community Safety Implications

6.10.1 The proposed location of the building is considered to offer the safest location for sustainable operation due to its visibility.

6.11 Environmental Impact

6.11.1 The building will be required to conform to planning regulations and current renewable targets.

7. Background Papers

7.1 No background papers are included within this report.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Outline floor plan

Appendix 2 – Location plan

Appendix 3 – View from the north looking to Blenheim Chase

Appendix 4 – View from the north within Blenheim Park

Appendix 5 – View from the south in Blenheim Chase