

**Southend-on-Sea Borough Council**

**Report of the Corporate Director of  
Adult & Community Services**

**to**

**EB**

**on**

**22<sup>nd</sup> January 2013**

Report prepared by: Kate Trueman  
Leisure & Sports Manager

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**Southend Athletics Club House  
Community Services & Culture Scrutiny Committee  
Executive Councillor: Councillor Derek Jarvis**

**“A Part 1 Public Agenda item.”**

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**1. Purpose of Report**

Inform members of the proposal to build a Club House for the Southend Athletics Club at Southend Leisure & Tennis Centre at Garon Park.

**2. Recommendation**

**2.1 That members support Southend Athletics Club proposal to develop a Club House at Southend Leisure & Tennis Centre that will be funded by Sport England and the Athletics Club.**

**2.2 That members approve in principle to lease the footprint of the Club House (Appendix 1) to Southend Athletics Club to allow construction of a building for use as a Club House for a period of 25 years.**

**2.3 That members agree to authorise the Corporate Director of Adult & Community Services and Corporate Director of Support Services to approve the terms of the lease in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Culture & Tourism based on the terms negotiated and recommended by Asset Management.**

**3. Background**

3.1 A cross country run on the 7th October 1905 was the first activity of the Southend Harriers which was later to become Southend Athletics Club in 1937 when they amalgamated with the Leigh-on-Sea Harriers.

3.2 The club has trained in a various venues including Roots Hall Field (early 1900's), more recently 1970/1980's Southchurch Park and since 1996, when the Southend Leisure & Tennis Centre was built at Garon Park.

- 3.3 The Athletics Club has always aspired to having its own Club House, and currently use a corner of one of the large equipment storage areas at Southend Leisure & Tennis Centre as a Club House, which is not ideal as where it is located does not allow direct line of sight onto the athletics track.
- 3.4 Southend Athletics Club has approached the council, outlining proposals for the construction of a Club House at Southend Leisure & Tennis Centre. The proposed site is located by the store area close to the athletics track. (Appendix 1)
- 3.5 Southend Athletics Club are intending to apply to the Sport England Inspired Facilities funding pot when it opens in March 2013 and will put in partnership funding of up to £80,000 to contribute towards the cost of the build.
- 3.6 The proposed building will overlook the athletics track and be of a size that will enable access by vehicles to the fire exit of the indoor tennis courts. It is anticipated that the Club House would be in the region of 85m<sup>2</sup>.
- 3.7 The design of the Club House will be sympathetic to the current design of the surrounding buildings and include a small kitchen area, a social area and a toilet.
- 3.8 The Club House would be used during club training sessions and athletic meetings to provide a warm and comfortable environment for members, competitors, spectators and officials. It would also be used for meetings arranged by Southend Athletic Club for the purpose of club business. The Club House will help support the delivery of the following objectives for the club:
- Attract new participants
  - Raise standards in coaching
  - Improve the quality of experience of the club for all users
  - Support and recruit officials, coaches, volunteers and new members
  - Address the needs of the current members
- 3.9 Southend Athletics Club has commissioned an architect and has already put in a pre application to planning, and is scheduled to meet with a council planning officer in January 2013. (See outline proposed drawings in Appendix 1)
- 3.10 To enable the Southend Athletics Club to meet the requirements of Sport England and lottery funding criteria, the club will be required to have a long term lease on the facility.
- 3.11 It should be noted that if Southend Borough Council were to make the funding application, as a local authority they would be required to match fund any project, this is not necessarily the case with clubs/community groups and it is hoped that the £80,000 contribution that the Southend Athletics Club are able to contribute to the project will put them in good stead with Sport England when they assess the application.

3.12 Officers from the Council will support the Athletics Club in completing the application to ensure that have the best opportunity of being successful in their funding bid.

### 3.13 Proposals

Members agree to support the creation of a Club House to enable increased participation in athletics from grass roots to elite standard, and help promote a healthy life style and lease the footprint of the Club House (Appendix 1) to Southend Athletics Club to allow construction of a building for use as a Club House for a period of 25 years.

Members authorise the Corporate Director of Adult & Community Services to agree the terms of the lease in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Culture & Tourism based on advice and assistance from Asset Management.

## 4 Other Options

There are no other options to be presented.

## 5. Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 This is a great opportunity to improve a fantastic sporting facility at Garon Park, without any capital investment required by the authority.

5.2 Southend Athletics Club is a club with a long and strong commitment to delivering opportunities to participate in athletics for the residents of Southend.

## 6. Corporate Implications

6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities

6.1.1 **Healthier Southend:** The proposed Club House would provide an environment that would encourage more people to participate in athletics, thereby improving health by becoming more active.

6.1.2 **Prosperous Southend:** The proposed Club House could see an investment of aproximatley £160,000 into the area, the provision of this facility would enable more official's courses to be organised thereby giving those that have undertaken the training to officiate at local, regional and national competitions.

6.1.3 **Excellent Southend:** The Garons site is already a centre of sporting excellence, and international basketball competitions have been held on site, and the GB Diving Squad trained at the site prior to the 2012 games and continues to do so. The Lawn Tennis Association will be part funding a new lighting system and resurfacing of the floor in the indoor tennis courts in early 2013, and the addition of an Athletics Club House will only enhance the sporting value of this site.

## **6.2 Financial Implications**

- 6.2.1 There are no capital funding implications for the council
- 6.2.2 Subject to the lease being agreed Southend Athletics Club would undertake to pay all running costs and maintain the building.
- 6.2.3 The leasing arrangements will be prepared and agreed by the Council to ensure there is no financial liability on the Council.

## **6.3 Legal Implications**

- 6.3.1 Southend Athletics Club will be required to obtain planning permission for the building.
- 6.3.2 The site would be leased to Southend Athletics Club on terms to be agreed.
- 6.3.3 Legal advice would be sought as required during the project and for the drafting and completion of the legal documentation.
- 6.3.4 The proposed Club House will be located adjacent to the athletics track and adjoining the existing leisure centre building, all of which are managed on our behalf by an external leisure operator, whom the council has legal obligations with. Land ownership and assorted issues will be fully considered.
- 6.3.5 The Council must demonstrate it has secured the best consideration reasonably possible and good value for money in accordance with s.123 local Government Act 1972. The Asset Management Team will be involved in the negotiation of the lease terms and the transaction will need to be certified for best consideration before the lease can be entered into.

## **6.4 People Implications**

- 6.4.1 A Club House will ensure that the athletics club is providing an environment fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and will improve on satisfaction levels of members, coaches and officials.
- 6.4.2 Cultural Service Officers time will be used to assist the club to submit the funding and planning applications.

## **6.5 Property Implications**

- 6.5.1 The Club House will form part of the overall leisure portfolio and enhances resident's opportunity to take part in physical activity.
- 6.5.2 The Asset Management Team in consultation with Cultural Services will work to agree detailed lease terms to ensure that the Council's position is suitably protected that there is no detrimental effect on the sports centre and to ensure that best consideration and value for money are addressed relating to the disposal

## 6.6 Consultation

6.6.1 Southend Athletics Club has over many years expressed their need for a Club House, and have consulted with their members.

6.6.2 The Council has consulted with leisure operator whom manages the site on behalf of the authority.

## 6.7 Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.7.1 This will be addressed through the design process to ensure that the design meets the required access requirements.

6.7.2 In regard to use of the Club House after it has been built Southend Athletics Club Constitution states that “ *membership of the Club shall be open to any person (regardless of gender, age, disability, ethnicity, race, nationality, sexual orientation, occupation, religion, political or other beliefs)*”

6.7.3 It is anticipated that Sport England will require the club to have a separate Equalities Diversity Policy in place.

## 6.8 Risk Assessment

<b>RISK</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>
Funding Application not successful	Officers to work with Southend Athletics Club to try and indentify alternative funding opportunities
Planning Application not approved	Officers to work with Southend Athletics Club at pre application to identify potential pit falls.
Unable to agree heads of terms For the lease	Officers will work with Southend Athletics Clubs representatives to agree terms

## 6.9 Value for Money

6.9.1 The Council will not need to contribute financially to the development of delivery of the project or ongoing revenue costs.

## 6.10 Community Safety Implications

6.10.1 The Club House will be built with all the appropriate measures in place to prevent vandalism etc, and will be located on a site that is already covered by CCTV.

## 6.11 Environmental Impact

6.11.1 The Club House will be built to current environmental specifications.

## 7. Background Papers

## 8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Concept Plan