

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE - November 2006.

REPORT OF THE SPORTS SERVICES MANAGER

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Clark

This matter addresses the Corporate Priorities of Crime, Health and Delivery.

PROVIDING SPORTS PAVILIONS IN TAUNTON

Executive Summary:

TDBC needs to replace the wooden sports pavilions on Hamilton Gault and Galmington Playing Fields. They are in poor condition and no longer provide fitting facilities for sport in the 21st Century.

There is a possibility of securing significant funds from the Football Foundation to replace these facilities with the balance being found from S106 agreements for sport.

The Football Association support replacing these pavilions particularly when aligned to the Clubs that use them adopting the FA Charter Standard Award.

The Executive is asked to consider the progress made on replacing these pavilions and to approve continuing work towards this goal.

1. Purpose Of The Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline the need for capital investment in two ageing facilities. To explain how Officers intend to secure funds and to seek Executive approval for an application to the Football Foundation.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Council provides sports pavilions on the Hamilton Gault and Galmington Playing Fields. Chiefly football teams use these on Saturdays and Sundays. Both adults and children, male and female, use them.

The pavilions are several decades old and of wooden construction. They are prone to both malicious and accidental damage (from footballs). The facilities provided for both players and officials are poor. Access is difficult for disabled users and the general standard of provision falls well below current expectations.

3 Football Pitch Pricing & Charter Standard

- 3.1 The cost of preparing and repairing a football pitch for a game is £68 (DLO figures). The charge for an adult team to use a pitch for the 2006/07 season is £34 (and half of this for juniors). The Council has historically and consistently set the charge below that of the maintenance cost to support healthy activities.
- 3.2 In December 2002 the Council agreed to a detailed review of Parks and Sports Services fees and charges. This was to set up an effective and equitable policy, which contributes to the Council's vision and service priorities.

An Issues Paper was presented in July 2003 that outlined the background to charging policies in the public sector and the guiding principles as set out by the Audit Commission. In September 2003 the then Lead Councillor agreed the following principles for a charging policy for leisure: -

- Adopt policies to maximise accessibility for all sections of the community, irrespective of income and ethnicity;
 - Charges should be subsidised based on (in) ability to pay rather than status.
 - Charges for clubs and organisations that use Council facilities should be set based on the activity fulfilling corporate objectives.
 - Promote services in terms of healthy lifestyles particularly for older people and the financially disadvantaged. In those areas where there is a preponderance of these groups seek to improve access by providing facilities within these communities.
- 3.3 Since the Issues Paper and the resulting agreement on the principles for a future charging policy at the HLRP in July 2005 it was agreed there should be widespread consultation with the clubs that use the Council's facilities.

There have been several meetings with clubs and with the Football League Secretaries where the principles were outlined.

Most representatives support the idea of rewarding organisations based on good practice.

- 3.4 The Council adopted a new charging structure for the 2006/07 season as a result of these discussions. Clubs will pay the entire cost of providing the pitch (£68) unless they meet certain criteria that help to deliver the Council's Corporate Priorities. Namely the Clubs will have to commit to gaining the 'FA Charter Standard' by the end of the 2006/07 season.
- 3.5 The Football Association has introduced a quality scheme called 'Charter Standard'. Both junior and adult clubs can gain this award and this is the benchmark that TDBC has adopted for Clubs to receive the largest discounts'.

For junior clubs the standard includes issues such as ensuring that any adults coaching and managing young people have both CRB checks and have gained

a basic coaching award. The adult standard is awarded to clubs that adopt FA codes of conduct (particularly about behaviour of players and staff), have First Aid Qualifications and who have coaches with a recognised qualification.

At both levels Clubs applying for the awards must be constituted, be affiliated to their Governing Body (often through the local league structure) and offer meaningful discounts for those on 'means-tested benefits'. All clubs must adopt positive attitudes to ensuring equality of opportunity.

4. The Link Between Pricing and Pavilions!

4.1 The Football Foundation manages substantial funds in partnership with the FA. Historically it has been difficult for a Council to access these funds, as the users of the facilities in question are required to prepare football 'development plans' and to date clubs have had no incentive to do so.

4.2 The Sports Services Manager and the Somerset Football Development Manager have met with the Clubs that use the sites and have outlined the Charter Standard proposal. Clubs are eager to improve and to develop and will receive support during the next 6 months to apply for Charter Standard.

Because of this the Football Foundation have suggested that they will consider an application for up to 75% of the cost of providing new pavilions at Hamilton Gault & Galmington Playing Fields.

4.3 The English Football Association view this initiative with much interest and see it as a model of Good Practice. The link between pricing, Charter Standard and improved facilities is clear. The FA are encouraged that those Clubs who are willing to commit to developing for the benefit of the game stand to be rewarded through improved facilities and 'reduced' prices.

5. The Proposals, Timescale and Financial Aspects

5.1 The proposed pavilions have been designed and a Planning Application has been submitted. It is hoped that permission might be granted early in 2007 at the same time that an application is made to the Football Foundation for support.

The Football Foundation will reply after 30 weeks and if successful it is expected that work on-site will start in the autumn of 2007.

5.2 We estimate the cost of providing each of the 2 pavilions will be about £400,000. It is hoped and expected to secure up to £300,000 through the Football Foundation for each facility.

TDBC does not have enough capital resources to continue with these schemes without external help. It is reliant on funding from the Football Foundation.

The balance needed will be taken from S106 agreements relating to sport in the Taunton area.

- 5.3 The inclusion of a new scheme within the capital programme is in effect a supplementary estimate and as such requires Executive and Full Council approval. This is understood to be the case even though the project will be entirely funded through external sources.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The incentive to clubs to earn the FA Charter Standard is great. It is expected that most clubs playing in the local leagues will achieve the standard by September 2007.

The benefits are that parents of young footballers can make an informed choice about where their child plays. Those clubs with the award will be able to show that they provide a safe, well-organised environment that is open to all. The clubs benefit from the new pavilions provided by TDBC and can apply for further grants from the Football Foundation.

Clubs will pay less to play if they are Charter Standard Clubs.

- 6.2 The FA is supportive as the Charter Standard Award is a sign that football clubs are committing to improvements and are taking a stand against some of the poor behaviour that is becoming prevalent in the game (through the Clubs adopting FA Codes Of Conduct).

The FA views the scheme as 'best practice' and are keen to see the outcomes.

- 6.3 The benefits to TDBC are that 'discounts' are only awarded to clubs delivering quality services to people in a safe environment. Access for all is assured, as Charter Standard Clubs must have policies in place to enable those on low incomes to join in.

TDBC also benefits because it may attract substantial funding to replace ageing facilities. TDBC cannot attract this funding without the partnership with the Clubs and the FA.

- 6.4 Finally the local leagues are supportive because more of 'their' clubs earn the award and commit to improved standards of organisation and behaviour. League Secretaries have pointed out that in future their leagues may only be open to clubs that hold the FA Charter Standard.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to: -

- 7.1 Note the work to date and the future proposals to progress the project. Members are asked to seek clarification on any of the issues in the paper.
- 7.2 Approve the use of S106 sums for playing fields and sport to 'match fund' the application.

- 7.3 Request that, subject to a successful bid to the Football Foundation, Full Council adds this project to the approved capital programme (project costs of £800,000) and notes that this is funded entirely from external sources, including S106 monies already held.

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Background Papers

HLRP Minutes 28/07/05 Charges Review For Sports Pitches