

CANNOCK CHASE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

14 JUNE 2007

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO LEADER: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

BLAKE VALLEY TECHNOLOGY COLLEGE SPORT FACILITIES DEVELOPMENT

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To advise Members of a potential risk to the project to provide additional sport facilities at Blake Valley Technology College (BVTC) as a result of information recently received on the position of the County Council, and to seek further guidance.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Cabinet determine any action to be taken as a result of the information recently received on the position of the County Council.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The provision of joint-use sporting facilities at BVTC is a key part of this Council's leisure strategy. Information recently received from County Council officers has raised issues which could put the successful completion of this project at risk. In accordance with good project management practice, this report puts those issues to the Cabinet and seeks further guidance on the way forward.
- 3.2 County Council officers, the head teacher and the school governors have been fully involved throughout the project, including:
- Regular on-site meetings
 - 3 meetings with Governors
 - Head Teacher confirming support to Sport England on 27 February 2007
 - County Officers as Members of this Council's Project Action Team
 - Multi Agency Project Steering Group established by SCC Joint Property Services in February 2007
 - Site Investigations Survey taking place in November 2006
 - Outline specification, facility location and tender completed (SCC fully involved)
 - Off-site visits to operating athletic facilities in March 2007
- 3.3 Negotiations were proceeding successfully, with the main issues being:

- Traffic Impact, where a traffic impact assessment contract has been let, paid for by Cannock Chase District Council, and the results are still awaited, and
- Opening Hours where, since March 2007, Staffordshire County Council and the school are adamant that they require extended hours of use until 6.00 p.m. each evening, thus allowing only three hours per evening for access by the community. This requirement is viewed as totally unacceptable by this Council's officers, especially as we are currently operating another dual use agreement at Rugeley where the community has access from 3.00 p.m.

3.4 County officers have, however, raised a number of concerns with regard to the proposals at Blake. The items raised were:

- Lack of bespoke changing facilities.
- The proposed hours of use.
- The timeframe for completion.
- Traffic impact and parking.
- Management arrangements.
- Revenue costs.
- Ongoing maintenance costs.
- Utility upgrades.
- "Building Schools for the Future" resulting in a major restriction in the potential to develop the site.
- The magnitude of the proposals potentially being viewed as over development of the site.

3.5 While some of the above issues have been under discussion for some time as part of project negotiations, the last two in the list above, both of which are major issues, were raised by the County for the first time only a few weeks ago. If these issues cannot be successfully and speedily overcome, there would be a significant doubt about the continuing viability of the project.

3.6 It is particularly disappointing to have such major issues raised at this stage in the project, when tenders have already been received which would, subject to planning approval, have enabled this Council to have completed the replacement athletics track over the summer.

3.7 The timeframe for completion of this project has always been ambitious but this has been necessary to ensure continuity of service following disposal of the Cannock Sports Stadium site.

3.8 If this latest position being taken by County officers should make the project at Blake unviable, or even introduce a material delay, it would be necessary for members to consider an alternative site and/or a break in athletics provision.

3.9 Clarification of their position has been sought from the most senior officers and members at the County Council. An update will be provided at the Cabinet meeting.

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Section 1

Background

The Council has resolved that the provision of leisure facilities in the future should be based on high quality provision throughout the District providing new, not 'patch and mend', with the aim of providing better value for money, increased customer satisfaction and increased participation levels.

The sale of Cannock Sports Stadium is an essential element of the Council's leisure strategy, as the capital receipt generated would provide much of the funds required to implement the balance of the renewal programme.

Following potential site option appraisals conducted during 2006, the preferred location to provide a mix of leisure facilities as part of the renewal programme is at Blake Valley Technology College, Marston Road, Hednesford. This College is in close proximity to the current Cannock Sports Stadium operational site.

It was agreed that the following construction phasing of works should be adopted.

- Phase 1: An 8-lane track with 1 x 10 lane straight; 1 x senior grass football pitch in the centre of the track; 2 x junior grass football pitches; 1 x grandstand without undercroft; equipment store (cost of £1,060,000).
- Phase 2: A full-size Artificial Turf Pitch; 2 x Multi-Use Games Areas; resurfacing of remaining 3 courts; community entrance (cost of £777,000).
- Phase 3: Other facilities in accordance with identified priorities and funds available

Elements of the infrastructure (paths etc.) would need to be developed during Phases 1 & 2 above. Floodlighting of the track is proposed to be of the type for training purposes only, and not for evening meetings.

Section 2

Details of Matters to be Considered

That Members consider the risks to successful completion of the project outlined in the Key Issues of the report.

Section 3

Contributions to CHASE

New leisure facilities will further support the aim of the Council to develop a healthier and more active community. The proposed leisure facilities here will enable greater use by local residents, schools and colleges.

In particular, one of the Council's objectives is to increase participation in sports and recreation facilities by an additional one percent each year. This is also consistent with principles adopted by Sport England within their Regional Delivery Plan. It is felt that the investment in the new leisure facilities outlined here will further support the achievement of this target.

Section 4

Section 17 Implications

There are no identified implications in respect of Section 17 at this stage.

Section 5

Human Rights Act Implications

There are no identified implications arising from this report in respect of The Human Rights Act 1998.

Section 6

Data Protection Act Implications

There are no identified implications in respect of the Data Protection Act.

Section 7

Risk Management Implications

The County Council is an essential partner to the delivery of a successful project. The report deals with the significant risks to project viability of recent issues raised by the County.

Section 8

Legal Implications

At this time the Council has not entered into any binding legal obligations with regards the development of facilities at BVTC, save for necessary preliminary investigations to enable the consideration of the proposed project.

No binding agreement has been entered into with regards the provision of any of the options proposed. It is important that the consideration of any option is considered having regard to the caveat that the provision of all options are subject to satisfactory survey, test reports and financial limits not being exceeded.

Should it be decided that this project is to be progressed, then various legal issues and factors, such as ensuring the timely delivery of all aspects of the project through legal agreements, must be borne in mind and addressed so as to avoid any potential liability and/or undue delay in the project arising.

Section 9

Financial Implications

The General Fund Capital Programme and General Fund Capital Budget were approved by Council on 28 February 2007. The Programme contains monies for BVTC scheme for £2.1 million which at present is profiled as £1.4 million in 2007-08 and £0.7 million in 2008-09. These costs are expected to be resourced from anticipated capital receipts during the period. The revenue consequences of this profiling have been included within the leisure strategy costing.

The revenue budget also needed to consider if any running costs are to be borne by Cannock Chase District Council and although an amount has been included in the approved budget, detailed negotiations need to be carried out with BVTC to agree relevant liabilities.

The Leisure strategy is a high risk strategy as regards timing of the facilities planned for Blake and the sale of stadium land. Any delay in the completion of the former will have a knock-on effect on the latter and could have major repercussions regarding the delivery of the General Fund Revenue Budget for 2007-08 and 2008-09.

Section 10

Human Resource Implications

Until a resolution is found to the issues described in this report and an agreement reached concerning the mix of facilities for the Blake Valley Technology College development it will not be possible to determine staffing requirements and fully address the potential human resource implications for Cannock Chase Council. Clearly recent developments present a possibility of further delay and uncertainty for employees potentially affected by the sale of the Stadium and may pose issues regarding the longer-term deployment of those employees. It will, therefore, be necessary for a further report to be brought to Council once these issues have been determined in order that the human resource implications can be fully explored.

The small number of employees, currently formally employed at the Stadium, have been placed into interim roles pending the outcome of this project and it will be necessary to give careful consideration to any rights they might have, in terms of ownership, of any new posts being established at the new facility at Blake Valley Technology College (or any alternative site) which could be viewed as a direct replacement for the facilities at the Stadium. Should consideration be given to a facility being run by other than Cannock Chase District Council existing employees could have rights under TUPE.

Section 11

Conclusions

That Cabinet note the risks to successful completion of the project for BVTC sports provision, the need to clarify support for the scheme from Staffordshire County Council and the need to provide guidance to officers on the way forward.

Background Papers

None

Annexes

None.