

Committee: Cabinet

Agenda Item

Date: 10 July 2017

14

Title: Carver Barracks Running Track

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Ranger

Key decision: Yes

Summary

1. This report invites the Cabinet to consider providing the sum of £500,000 by way of a grant to Carver Barracks to enable match funding for the provision of an eight lane running track. The money would be funded from the Strategic Initiatives Fund.

Recommendation

2. If Cabinet concludes that the funding should be made available, it is recommended that
 - i. Cabinet resolves to make the payment subject to endorsement by Full Council
 - ii. that the sum of £500,000 is given as a grant, with terms as set out in this report.
 - iii. That delegation is given to the Director of Finance and Corporate Services and the Head of Legal, in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Partnership to agree the terms of the grant.

Financial Implications

3. The funding requested will, if approved, be drawn from the Strategic Initiatives Fund. There are no other financial implications arising from this report.

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

Sports Facilities Development Strategy: January 2016

Impact

Communication/Consultation	None
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None

Ward-specific impacts	Debden and Wimbish
Workforce/Workplace	None

Situation

Negotiations with the Army

5. There has been ongoing discussion for a number of years about the provision of a running track at Carver Barracks. The facility would be open to both the Army and the public with the administration and maintenance being undertaken by the Army. To demonstrate the commitment by councillors to the scheme the Council paid for the planning application.
6. The contribution sought by the Council would make matched funding available from the LIBOR fund for the project. It would also release further grants for the project of £196,000.
7. An agreement was close to being reached when the Ministry of Defence announced the future closure of Carver Barracks. The date of closure is currently scheduled to be 2031.
8. Lengthy discussions have been held with the Army Estates – Land Management Services as to a way forward to give an element of protection for the Council investment should the facility close early.
9. The only option offered is for a refund of approximately £35,000 for each year that the facility closes using 2031 as the baseline. For example if it closed in 2029 the Council would receive back £70,000 and if it closed in 2025 the refund would be £210,000. Both of these examples assume whole years.
10. The Army is ready to proceed with the project and say that the facility could be in place within 22 weeks, possibly quicker.
11. In addition to providing a running track, a full size football pitch would be provided in the space within the track.

Sports Facilities Development Strategy

12. Evidence for the need of a running track is contained within the Uttlesford District Council Sports Facilities Development Strategy which was adopted by Cabinet on 16 February 2016. The identified current assessed deficiency is stated as “Emerging demand for a specialist athletics facility in the north of the district”. The action to the plan is to “confirm the arrangements for secured community access to the proposed 400m track at Carver Barracks”.
13. The report makes the following audit findings regarding running facilities:
 - **Demand** - There are four local running clubs, although there is no club in the Stansted sub-area. According to the most recent ‘Active People’ survey, 8.2% of the adult population of Uttlesford runs at least once a week, compared with the national average of 6.5%.
 - **Supply** - There is no synthetic athletics track in Uttlesford, but some needs are served by two facilities in neighbouring areas.
 - **Accessibility** - Tracks in neighbouring areas are available for hire by clubs and individuals at rates that are unlikely to preclude access.
 - **Used capacity** - There is some spare capacity at both neighbouring tracks.

- **Access** - A large area in the north of the district is beyond the catchment of the nearest track.

14. The report summarises consultation findings as follows:

- **UK Athletics and England Athletics** stated that:
 - A marked-out, hard-standing and lit running route for the Saffron Striders club may provide an appropriate alternative to a track.
 - In the absence of a track and field club in Saffron Walden at present and with plans for a satellite/after school club for juniors taking time to develop, it is difficult to make a clear case for specialist track and field facilities at present.
 - Should the Carver Barracks project proceed, then UK Athletics and England Athletics would be supportive of the existing clubs using the site, although at this stage they see no need for field event facilities, since they believe that only endurance athletes would use the track.
 - Some consideration should be given to exploring demand for a Compact Athletics Facility, but given the lack of a track and field club in the area it is difficult to ascertain current demand in the area.
- **Saffron Striders Running Club** confirmed that they have 146 members at present, but 'no lit, open areas for running in the dark. Hence a lot of running takes place on roads which is not ideal for safety and has acted as a barrier to setting up junior running activities'. Specialist track and field facilities of some sort would help to rectify this.
- The Army base at Carver Barracks near Debden is the base for two Engineer Regiments who want to develop sports facilities on the base, primarily for use by the armed forces but also with community access. The Army has developed proposals that include an 8-lane 400m track as part of the package of provision.
- 100% of respondents to the sports clubs survey believe that there are too few athletics facilities in the district at present.

15. The strategy assesses current provision and need as follows:

There is some emerging demand for a facility in the north of the district. The UK Athletics 'Facilities Strategy 2014 - 2019' (2014) defines a hierarchy of athletics facilities provision, which includes the following elements at a district level:

- **Club Training Venues** - Track and field facilities (indoor and outdoor) that have a strong anchor club(s) with 100+ track and field members and a focus on athletes at the Event Group stage of the Athlete Development Model, promoting appropriate training and competition opportunities. To support site sustainability, Club Venues should have excellent social and ancillary provision and facilities that actively encourage multi-sport usage. Club venues are suitable for low level competitions only.
- **Compact Athletics Facilities** - A new generation of affordable and sustainable indoor and outdoor athletics satellite facilities that provide a stepping stone into Club Venues. Compact Athletics Facilities are designed to fit available spaces and budgets, and provide functional, inspiring, facilities at which people of all ages and abilities can improve their fitness and confidence and develop the fundamental athletics movement skills of run, jump and throw.

The provision of a Compact Athletics Facility in Saffron Walden, in conjunction with other multi-sport facility developments in the town, would be the most appropriate scale

of facility to meet the needs arising from current local development initiatives. However, the proposed provision of a 400m track at Carver Barracks, it would comprise an additional means of meeting local needs.

Conclusion

16. In order to secure the matched funding a council decision needs to be made by the end of July. The funding will come from the Strategic Initiatives Fund and is a Cabinet decision. However an undertaking was given that all councillors would be able to vote on the proposal, hence the recommendation to Full Council.
17. If Full Council endorses the allocation of funds Officers would work to agree amongst others, right and times of access to the track which would mirror those in place for the other facilities on site.
18. The current “heads of terms” for the proposed grant, submitted by the Army, are appended to this report. Further work would be needed to develop these and the recommendation proposes that officers are given delegated authority to settle these, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Partnerships. terms of the proposed grant. T
19. The project would take approximately 22 weeks to complete and therefore the work would be complete by early 2018

Risk Analysis

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Issues would arise as this would be a non-commercial arrangement and would therefore be based to a large extent on trust.	1 The council has an excellent working relationship with the Army and meets regularly to ensure this continues.	3 The Council investment could be at risk	The council has an excellent working relationship with the Army and meets regularly to ensure this continues. We will document the arrangement with the Army, establish regular liaison regarding community use and seek to include a dispute resolution procedure.
Access to the running track is removed earlier than 2031.			Pro-rata refund of monies paid. Potential to add running of the site to the PFI contract
The Barracks start to wind down in anticipation of closure and the Army is unable to manage the facility.	2 As the 2031 date approaches there is a risk the service personnel responsible for the administration of the site will disappear	3 The loss to the community of the facility	The running of the asset could/would transfer to 1Life as part of the PFI contract. This would include any maintenance requirements.
Adequate community access is not provided.	1 this would be set out as part of the initial grant agreement	3 the inability of local groups to access the facility	Assurances are being sought from the Army about the level of community access to be provided. This would form the basis of a more

			detailed memorandum of understanding about operation of community access. We would seek to protect the Council's position by the inclusion of a dispute resolution mechanism and provision for the Council to end the agreement and secure pro rata return of the grant if adequate community provision was not made.
Maintenance, repair and renewal. The understanding is that maintenance costs will be met by the Army. It is not clear what the position would be if major works were needed and the Army would probably be reluctant to pay for significant work as the date of expiry of the facility approaches.	2 the likelihood increases, as does the amount of work needed, as the closure date approaches	3 the potential loss of the site to users due to poor maintenance, or the requirement for the Council to take on the responsibility	Seek to include a right for the Council to terminate the agreement and secure a pro rata refund if the track is not adequately maintained.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.



HEADS OF TERMS

**8 LANE ATHLETIC TRACK AND MULTI-USE GAMES AREA WITH FLOOD LIGHTING AT
 CARVER BARRACKS, WIMBISH, SAFFRON WALDEN**

SUBJECT TO CONTRACT

Property:	An athletics track, MUGA, associated floodlights and sufficient parking spaces (to be constructed); and an existing pavilion. Access to the Property via the public highway
1: Telephone: Contact: Solicitors:	The Secretary of State for Defence c/o Defence Infrastructure Organisation, Bazalgette Pavilion, RAF Wyton, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 2EA TBC
2: Telephone: Contact: Solicitors:	Uttlesford District Council, Council Offices, London Road, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB11 4ER Adrian Webb awebb@uttlesford.gov.uk TBC
Use:	Community and Health uses to be defined but likely to include: Community groups, meetings and activities Skills training/educational classes Cultural sport and leisure activities Other uses and activities agreed between MOD and UDC.
Permitted Users:	Clubs, schools and other associations approved by UDC and MOD.
Permitted hours of use:	At times and dates to be arranged in advance at the discretion of MOD.
Fees:	£500,000 contribution towards the development of the Property.
Term/Duration:	From the date the Property is ready for use until such time as the land known as Carver Barracks is sold by MOD, estimated 2031.
Break Option:	1: MOD to be able to terminate the agreement given 1 months' written notice for reasons of national security 2: MOD to be able to terminate given 12 months' written notice for any reason and at any time. 3. In the event of MOD terminating the agreement, a partial refund of

	the contribution (on the basis of straight line depreciation), is to be made to UDC.
Conditions:	Subject to military & board approvals. Subject to Contract.
Legal Fees:	Each party to pay own fees.
Dated:	14 th June 2017