

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

CABINET – 15th SEPTEMBER 2009

**DEVELOPING FOOTBALL WITHIN THE COMMUNITY:
JOINT DEVELOPMENTS WITH AFC TELFORD UNITED - Part 1**

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMISSIONING FOR LEISURE AND CULTURE

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To notify Members of the current position with regards to joint proposals with AFC Telford United and seek approval from Cabinet for delegated authority to proceed.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 **Grant delegated authority to the Head of Commissioning for Leisure, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Culture, to develop proposals in conjunction with AFC Telford United for those sites identified within this report, with the aim of maximising wider benefits for the community of Telford & Wrekin as a whole as well as securing the future of national league football in Telford;**
- 2.2 **Grant delegated authority to the Head of Commissioning for Leisure, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Leisure & Culture, to enter into negotiations with relevant owners and occupiers of the sites affected;**
- 2.3 **Note that further reports will be submitted to Cabinet for approval once proposals for these sites have been fully developed;**
- 2.4 **Note that any proposed development will be considered as part of the Sports & Learning Community Programme (SLC), part of the Borough Towns Initiative (BTI).**

3. SUMMARY

- 3.1 As part of the Borough Towns Initiative - Sports & Learning Community Programme (BTISLC), an opportunity has arisen to continue dialogue with one of the key partners, AFC Telford United. The report looks to seek authority to progress proposals which look at increasing benefits to the local community by maximising the use of a number of sites located in and around AFC Telford United, including looking at securing the future of the stadium for generations to come.

4. PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 4.1 Full Council Minutes - 28th April 2004

5. INFORMATION

- 5.1 The Council recognises the fact that football has the ability to play a fundamental role in building a sustainable and vibrant community. This is evident in the motion that was agreed at full Council in April 2004, which stated that the Council will do all it practically can to support the local football club 'to keep football alive and promote a united Telford.'
- 5.2 There are many examples of existing community based initiatives and partnership working between the Council and AFC Telford United which has resulted in positive community benefits for Telford & Wrekin as a whole. The club is now wholly owned by the supporters and has become a fundamental part of the community and functions as the glue which unites people and partnerships together.
- 5.3 As part of the Borough Towns Initiative - Sports & Learning Community Programme, initial discussions between the Council and the club have taken place. These discussions have focused on maximising the utilisation of sites in and around the stadium and the long-term aspirations of the Club for sustainable growth and development of existing and future community projects (such as the successful Telford Football Education & Excellence Centre, the football inclusion project and Playing for Success).
- 5.4 Council owned facilities under consideration include the stadium itself, adjacent learning centre, Bucks Head Pub and associated land, and the Haybridge Road garage site and associated house.
- 5.5 It is proposed to further investigate these issues with AFC Telford United alongside discussions as to how the Council can best engage with the Club for the greater benefit of the community and the delivery of community projects which will achieve outcomes across a diverse range of policy areas including health, regeneration and economic development, crime reduction, social cohesion and tourism.
- 5.6 It is acknowledged that there is considerable financial and legal work that needs to be conducted before any proposals can be finalised. It is at this stage that a further report will be submitted to Cabinet for approval of these proposals and the way forward.

6.0 Equality and Diversity

- 6.1 Proposals will aim to achieve greater community cohesion by opening up access and increasing usage of sports and community facilities in this locality. They will also look to tackle social exclusion, inequality, discrimination and disadvantage.

6.2 Any new services or projects resulting from these proposals will be consulted with all groups and fully comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) legislation.

7.0 Environmental Impact

7.1 There are no environmental implications at this stage.

8.0 Legal Comment

8.1 The discussions with AFC Telford United will need to have due regard to the Council's duties as trustee of public funds, Best Value duties, the requirements on disposal of properties relating to best consideration and Government policies on underutilised assets.

8.2 The further report will address the legal powers for, and issues in connection with, any recommendations contained in that report.

9.0 Links with Corporate Priorities

9.1 These proposals will support several Council priorities to enable the delivery of its vision for a successful, prosperous and healthy community which offers a good quality of life for all the people of Telford & Wrekin.

10.0 Opportunities and Risks

10.1 The opportunities and risks associated with this proposal have been identified and assessed. Arrangements will be put in place to manage the risks and maximise the opportunities that have been identified.

11.0 Financial Implications

11.1 Once proposals for the sites identified in the report have been developed the financial implications of the various options will need to be worked-up including identified funding sources. Approval by Full Council will be necessary prior to any financial commitments being entered in to by the Authority.

12.0 WARD IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The football club and neighbouring sites referred to in this report are located within Wellington's College ward, however the benefits with having a national league football club are borough wide.

13.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 Full Council Minutes – 23 April 2004

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