

## Report to Cabinet

11 January 2017

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Parklife Football Hubs Expression of Interest (Key Decision Ref. No. SMBC1654)</b>
<b>Presenting Cabinet Member:</b>	<b>Leisure</b>

### 1. Summary Statement

- 1.1 Sport & Leisure Strategy and Development are seeking approval, in principle, to submit a bid for a new Sport England, Football Association, Premier League and Department for Culture Media and Sport initiative called the Parklife Football Hubs Programme.
- 1.2 The development of this initiative demonstrates the recognition from these organisations that funding for the provision of grassroots football is reducing due to ongoing reductions in Local Authority budgets.
- 1.3 The principles of the Parklife Football Hubs Programme are as follows:
- The development of at least two football hubs in a Local Authority area. These hubs will comprise as a minimum of two artificial grass pitches and changing facilities;
  - That these hubs are overseen by a Special Purpose Vehicle that is set up by the Local Authority to take the lead on the development of grassroots football the defined area. This Special Purpose Vehicle is made up of the Local Authority, who can have a maximum of 20% representation on the board, the Football Association, the County Football Association (in the case of Sandwell the Birmingham County Football Association), and the local pro-club(s) community foundation (in the case of Sandwell The Albion Foundation);
  - That the provision of these hubs provides improved access to artificial grass pitches in the area thereby mitigating grass pitches being overplayed and falling into a poor condition and, the revenue generated by these facilities once mature will fund the provision of all grass roots football in the Local Authority area, including the maintenance and running costs of grass pitches and associated changing provision;

- That the programme is delivered in line with the 12 key principles as outlined in Parklife Football Hub National Programme – Prospectus.

- 1.4 The Council would be able to bid for a maximum of £3m per hub and would have to provide a minimum of 40% match funding. The injection of this capital contribution would have a positive long-term impact on the revenue required to provide grassroots football in Sandwell.
- 1.5 Whilst the actual sites for the location of these hubs have not yet been decided upon, should the expression of interest be successful, it would be the intention of the Council to deliver at least one hub in the north of the borough and one hub in the south.
- 1.6 The Parklife Football Hub Programme has a three stage funding process as follows:
- Stage One – Expression of Interest – this signs the Local Authority up to the scheme in principle – it does not commit the Council to continue with the bidding process;
  - Stage Two – Submission of Local Plan for Football – develop a plan for football with partners in the borough (funding for project development costs available);
  - Stage Three – Submission of Individual Hub Applications – the development of the actual hub sites prior to potential grant award.
- 1.7 As this programme could deliver the long-term sustainability of football in Sandwell, it is requested that approval is given to submit an expression of interest.
- 1.8 The expression of interest must be submitted to Sport England by 4pm on 27 January 2017.

Further details are attached for your information

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Interim Director – Neighbourhood Services be authorised to submit an expression of interest in line with Stage One of the Parklife Football Hubs Programme.
- 2.2 That should the Council's submission at Stage One of the Parklife Football Hubs Programme be successful, a further report be presented to Cabinet to agree Stage Two – Submission of Local Plan for Football.

**Ajman Ali**  
**Interim Director – Neighbourhood Services**

Contact Officer:  
Chris Jones  
Manager – Sport & Leisure Strategy and Development

**3. Strategic Resource Implications**

- 3.1 The council will be required to match fund 40% of the agreed capital costs. At the maximum grant-supported cost of £6m for two hubs, this would mean an estimated cost of £2.4m for the council. Future savings are likely from this investment since it would be expected that the hubs will operate to at least a break-even position.
- 3.2 It is possible that the required council match funding is funded from balances earmarked for capital investment because future savings will be generated from reduced park pitch and changing room maintenance costs. A full business case assessment and options for council funding will be developed and a full project appraisal by SIU will be detailed to Cabinet prior to any final bid being submitted.
- 3.3 The Corporate Risk Management Strategy (CRMS) has been complied with to identify and assess the significant risks associated with this decision. This includes (but is not limited to) political, legislation, financial, environmental and reputation risks. Based on the information provided, it is the officers' opinion that for the significant risks that have been identified, arrangements are in place to manage and mitigate these effectively. This assessment has identified there are no current "red" risks that need to be reported.

**4. Legal and Statutory Implications**

- 4.1 As the Council are only making an expression of interest at this stage and not committing to anything legally, there are no legal risks.
- 4.2 The powers that the Council will use to continue with this submission is Section 2 of the Localism Act 2011.
- 4.3 Any further legal implications should the Council be successful in the Stage One bid will be reported back to Cabinet at a future meeting.

## 5. **Implications for the Council's Scorecard Priorities**

Great People – In your neighbourhood:

Young people are at the heart of neighbourhoods. We will involve them in opportunities to be healthy and productive by giving them access to training, jobs and education as well as a range of social and leisure facilities

Great Prospects - Something for Everyone:

We will make sure that high-quality leisure centres give you a wide range of sports and fitness opportunities;

and

We will use local parks, community and leisure facilities to provide a choice of activities for young people to join in after school and during the evening.

## 6 **Background Details**

No further information.

### Source Documents

Parklife Football Hubs Programme – Prospectus

Parklife Football Hubs Programme – Expression of Interest