

Mark Coulson
Director of Programmes
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Our Ref: SSS/ GR
Your Ref:
Please ask for: Gemma Ryan
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Date: 27th January 2022

Dear Mark

Re: Invitation to submit an Expression of Interest – Small Sided Spaces in Sandwell (Commonwealth Games Legacy)

Thankyou for your letter dated 14th October 2021 regarding the above. We would be grateful if you would accept this letter as our Expression of Interest.

We have briefed Senior Management, Director for Borough Economy and our portfolio holder the Cabinet Member for Culture and Tourism, who are excited about the potential positive impact of this programme within our communities. And in supporting us in leaving a lasting legacy from the Commonwealth Games.

In response to the points raised within your letter I am pleased to set out the following:

1. Sandwell Council is fully committed to working in Partnership with the Football Foundation, Sport England and other local stakeholders to develop a portfolio of small-sided spaces within the Borough of Sandwell.
2. We intend to conduct specific community consultation to inform the effective delivery of this programme and to ensure we have identified the priority target audiences for this programme. Recent consultation exercises relating to our Active Through Football (ATF) funding application have identified a strong demand for further football and sporting opportunities within the town of Smethwick. We are also aware of high levels of demand for small sided facilities and activities within other parts of the Borough.

We are aware of high levels of demand amongst Adults (Aged 16+), People with disabilities and those from BAME communities. We have also identified that many people within Sandwell have been adversely affected by the impact of Covid-19 Pandemic and have become inactive. We have identified opportunities to engage people through faith and community settings. We are confident that further engagement about this specific project will enable us to understand our priority audiences fully and ensure that facilities are tailored to meet specific needs.

3. Undoubtedly, small sided spaces will be used to provide new sporting opportunities and increase activity levels within the areas served. We understand the ethos of the scheme and by engaging the community to understand their needs this will lead to empowerment and 'buy in' from the outset. This will ensure that new or upgraded facilities will be 'owned' by communities and result in higher levels of take up in

sessions. We understand the need for 'bookable' sessions which again will focus groups and individuals' attention to being present for sporting sessions. All of the above will assist our efforts to reduce inactivity amongst residents within our Borough.

4. As previously mentioned within point 3 above. We have recently completed a significant community engagement exercise around football in Sandwell as part of our ATF funding application. We were encouraged by the genuine enthusiasm and 'buy in' from a broad spectrum of community groups and local organisations. We are certain that the Small Sided Spaces opportunity will be met with equal excitement. In addition, we have dedicated officers working with each of Sandwell's six towns via our Public Health team, who have a clear understanding of local needs. These officers will be pleased to support the development of this programme moving forwards.

In addition to the above, we are currently in the process of securing a new Playing Pitch / Outdoor Sports Strategy (PPOSS). Site Assessments of Summer sports have been completed along with supply and demand. Winter sports are currently being completed. We expect to have our new PPOSS completed in Spring 2022.

Our PPS Delivery Group is well established with meetings twice yearly to update our Action Plan and discuss opportunities within the Borough. This regular dialogue with NGB's and other agencies helps to ensure close and effective partnership working and will undoubtedly assist in community engagement relating to the development of Small Sided Spaces.

In terms of our LFFP, we regularly meet with colleagues within the Football Foundation to discuss opportunities. We are currently hoping to develop a scheme within Britannia Park which has received great support and involvement from Foundation staff.

The above, along with further community engagement will allow us to understand what sports / activities and locations will be needed. It will also allow us to understand what barriers may be in place and how these can be overcome.

5. In terms of additional funding to support our community engagement, we are keen to take up this offer (up to the value of £25,000) for costs that will be agreed and signed off by the Football Foundation throughout the project development process. We have established a 'Consortium' of local partners. many of whom have knowledge of the communities they serve. We feel that some additional external support will be beneficial to the process in bringing together data / ideas, mapping demand, identifying locations and carrying out some further consultations. Furthermore, at the advice of Jack Matthews, we would like to make a request to the Football Foundation for an upfront grant to support with technical and design work required to progress two possible front runner projects at West Smethwick Park & Lewisham Park.

6. Sandwell Council is committed to securing some Capital 'partnership' funding towards supporting this project. High level discussions will be needed before we can provide firm figures. We trust this is sufficient at this stage but would of course be happy to discuss this further with you in due course.

Finally, I would like to thank you again for approaching Sandwell Council relating to this opportunity. We are all extremely excited about the prospect of hosting part of the Commonwealth Games and are keen to ensure a lasting legacy for generations to come. We very much envisage the Small Sided Spaces initiative as a key element of our efforts moving forward.

I trust the above is sufficient for you at this stage, however if there is anything else you require, please do not hesitate to get in touch

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Ryan', enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Gemma Ryan

Business Manager - Sport and Leisure

cc Jack Matthews

Rob Marlow