

PART A

Report to: Cabinet
Date of meeting: 4 June 2018
Report of: Head of Community & Environmental Services
Title: A new vision for Woodside Playing Fields

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 A new vision for the land and property assets at Woodside Playing Fields is under development to provide an enhanced sport and leisure offer at Woodside which would appeal to more of Watford's residents whilst also improving and securing some of the current uses, such as cricket, football, outdoor bowls and boxing.

The vision is for a new cricket pavilion and community room; improved compliant changing facilities, including for referees; a new community café; converting the indoor bowls club to an alternative use complimentary to the overall leisure offer at Woodside, such as a multi-use activity centre; adventure golf; and increased car parking.

- 1.2 This report seeks approval to further develop these outline proposals, undertaking consultation as appropriate, with a report back to a future Cabinet for confirmation of the proposals and costs.

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (Treat, tolerate, terminate, transfer)	Risk Rating (the combination of severity and likelihood)
A new vision cannot be agreed	The opportunity to widen the appeal and increase participation by more residents is lost	Wide consultation during the detailed proposals work	Treat	4

3.0 **Recommendations**

- 3.1 That Cabinet supports the emerging vision to provide an enhanced leisure offer at Woodside Playing Fields which would appeal to more of Watford's residents.
- 3.2 That Cabinet approves the further development of these outline proposals, undertaking consultation as appropriate, with a report back to a future Cabinet for confirmation of the proposals and costs.

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Report approved by: Manny Lewis, Managing Director

4.0 **Detailed proposal**

- 4.1 The site currently provides a wide range of sport and leisure facilities including:

- Woodside Leisure Centre and Athletics Stadium
- Indoor bowls centre and outdoor bowls green
- Artificial turf pitch
- Adult and junior grass football pitches
- Cricket pitches and cricket pavilion
- Boxing gym and football changing rooms located within a remaining stable block of the former Victorian manor house, Woodside Lodge.

It is home to Watford Harriers Athletics Club, Watford Town Cricket Club, Watford Boxing Club, Watford Youth Sports Football Club, Watford Indoor Bowls Club and Owls Bowls Club.

Despite the strong role that the site currently plays in providing sports facilities for a variety of local clubs, there are a number of weaknesses with the condition of the existing buildings, how they are used and how they relate to each other. The site is characterised by a collection of different facilities operating in isolation, it lacks co-ordination and has no clear identity.

- 4.2 A supply and demand analysis has demonstrated good market potential for

complementary outdoor facilities including adventure golf and a high ropes course. This supply and demand analysis has also shown good market potential for a range of alternative uses for the indoor bowls centre based on local demographics and supply of competing facilities. These include a multi-use indoor activity centre.

4.3 The proposed facility mix is designed to meet current and future demand for leisure and provide the Council with a sustainable long-term solution for Woodside Playing Fields. The proposed facility mix :

- Community Sports Hub – to provide core facilities for cricket, football and boxing clubs and space for community use throughout the week
- Park Café and Ranger's office
- Alternative use of Indoor Bowls Centre
- High ropes course
- Adventure golf
- Enhanced play area and sensory garden.

An outline Masterplan of the emerging vision is shown in the attached appendix.

4.4 A parking, traffic and access study has been undertaken to explore current and future car parking requirements. A baseline survey undertaken in February 2018 showed that the car parks currently operate within capacity with a peak parking accumulation of 73% (i.e. 73% of parking spaces are occupied during the busiest times). However, the survey reflects a winter baseline position and does not provide an indication of typical levels of use at other times of the year or show the impact of large events such as swimming galas or athletics meets.

The proposals for the site include an additional 242 car parking spaces. An indicative programme of use for the newly developed facilities has been overlaid onto the proposed additional car parking and baseline survey. The findings show that the maximum level of occupancy within this context is predicted to be 63%.

4.5 The work required to further develop these outline proposals, undertaking consultation as appropriate, will be done within existing budgets.

5.0 **Implications**

5.1 **Financial**

5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that the costs of the feasibility work will be contained within the existing budgets.

5.2 **Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)**

5.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that litigation is currently

ongoing with the indoor bowls club following the termination of their lease by the Council, with the club seeking a new lease from the court.

5.3 **Equalities/Human Rights**

5.3.1 Consultation with stakeholders and the wider community will be undertaken as part of the next phase and an equalities impact analysis undertaken.

5.4 **Staffing**

5.4.1 These will be considered as part of the next phase of work

5.5 **Accommodation**

5.5.1 These will be considered as part of the next phase of work

5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 The initial review suggests that by suitable design the opportunity for crime and disorder can be reduced.

5.7 **Sustainability**

5.7.1 Any construction at the site will look to mitigate its impact on the environment by use of energy efficiency / energy generation measures, such as the use of solar PV on roofs.

Appendices

Appendix A – Draft Woodside Masterplan