

Meeting date: 13 August 2020

Report to: Cabinet



Subject/report title: Acquisition of land for new sports hubs in Solihull

Report from: Director of Resources and Deputy Chief Executive

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Wards affected:

- All Wards | Bickenhill | Blythe | Castle Bromwich | Chelmsley Wood |
 Dorridge/Hockley Heath | Elmdon | Kingshurst/Fordbridge | Knowle |
 Lyndon | Meriden | Olton | Shirley East | Shirley South |
 Shirley West | Silhill | Smith's Wood | St Alphege

Public/private report: Public

Exempt by virtue of paragraph: N/A

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To approve in principle the acquisition of land to support the delivery of new sports hubs in Solihull.

2. Decision(s) recommended

- 2.1 Approve in principle the acquisition of land by the Council by negotiation to support the delivery of new sports hubs in Solihull, as recommended by the Property Investment Board; and
- 2.2 In the event that the required land cannot be acquired by negotiation, agree in principle that the Council is prepared to use its compulsory purchase powers to support the delivery of new sports hubs in Solihull.
- 2.3 Approve the receipt of a further report on the detailed terms for each proposed acquisition of land at the appropriate time.

3. Matters for Consideration

- 3.1 The draft Solihull Local Plan Review envisages the delivery of over 15,000 new homes in Solihull up to 2036, at an average growth rate of around 885 dwellings per

annum. As a result, it is estimated that the population of the Borough will grow by over 23,000 people, an increase of 10.8%.

- 3.2 Council and Sport England policy encourages the provision of additional sports pitch capacity to support the needs of the growing population, to enable increased participation in sport, meet the demands of current and future residents, and help to create vibrant, sustainable, healthy communities.
- 3.3 Sport England policy also supports the delivery of new sports facilities in the form of sports hub sites, as these are more cost effective and allow for larger, good quality sites to be established, rather than numerous smaller sites that will be less sustainable, uncomplimentary to each other and potentially inadequate to service required needs. They also allow for the provision of good quality supporting infrastructure such as car parking and changing rooms or pavilions. The creation of new sports provision through the hub model will therefore enhance the sporting landscape of the Borough and help to deliver the Council's key sport and recreation policy objectives in a comprehensive and strategic manner, rather than on a piecemeal basis.
- 3.4 The Council has therefore commissioned a draft Playing Pitch Mitigation Strategy (PPMS) to quantify the future needs of the Borough to meet this estimated level of growth, and to identify ways of mitigating the impact upon or loss of existing playing pitch capacity as a result of a number of draft housing allocations in the Local Plan Review and other strategic developments being brought forward through the planning process.
- 3.5 As a result, the emerging recommendations of the PPMS have identified a potential requirement for the provision of approximately 34 hectares of additional playing field land, to be delivered by way of up to five new sports hubs in five key areas of the Borough. These indicative areas of search are shown on the plan attached at Appendix 1 and coloured as follows:
 - Blythe – Blue;
 - East of Solihull – Green;
 - Knowle/Dorridge – Yellow;
 - Meriden – Red; and
 - Balsall Common – Purple.
- 3.6 To support the provision of the areas of land required for the delivery of these hub sites, the Council has carried out a review of its existing land assets within these areas to identify whether any available Council-owned land would be suitable for the provision of the sports hubs. This review has, however, identified that unfortunately there is not considered to be sufficient land currently available and in the Council's ownership to meet the estimated requirements. In order to facilitate the delivery of the key policy objectives set out in paragraphs 3.2-3.3 above, it is therefore recommended that the Council should take a lead on the acquisition of the land required for the development of the new sports hubs.

- 3.7 The Council has therefore commissioned a rural practice land agent to carry out an initial site search process and prepare a report identifying and evaluating other land within the indicative areas of search that could, potentially, be acquired for sports hub development, either by negotiation or, if necessary, by way of Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), subject to further Cabinet approvals. To comply with Council and Sport England policy on sustainable locations for sports hubs, sites should be easily accessible by a variety of transport modes including public transport, cycling and walking, and should take into account their proximity to homes, sports teams or schools and other organisations where users' headquarters are nearby. The report will also take into account relevant planning policy and other constraints, such as the size, shape, topography and means of access to the site; any ecological, arboricultural or heritage designations, flood risk or adverse neighbouring uses; and the availability and tenure of the site, including the anticipated willingness of the current landowner to sell and their value aspirations.
- 3.8 As a result, it is anticipated that there are a range of potential options for the acquisition of land which could support the delivery of the proposed sports hubs. The next stages of the process will be to evaluate the options in more detail with a view to identifying a number of preferred options, and to enter into negotiations with the landowners of the preferred options with a view to negotiating provisional heads of terms for acquisition. These terms will be reported to Cabinet for further consideration prior to any such acquisition being completed, along with details of the proposed approach to funding and delivery.

4. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

- 4.1 The Council could decide not to acquire land for the delivery of the proposed sports hubs, whether by negotiation or compulsorily. In this case, the Council would be reliant on private developers bringing forward new sports provision to meet the growth aspirations of the Borough. Whilst such provision could potentially be delivered through the enforcement of appropriate planning policies, it is likely that a less strategic approach would be adopted by individual developers, with sports pitch provision delivered on more of a piecemeal basis and numerous smaller, less sustainable individual proposals being brought forward. This would fail to deliver the Council and Sport England's wider strategic objectives for enhancing the sporting landscape of the Borough and meeting the needs of current and future communities.

5. Reasons for recommending preferred option

- 5.1 The recommendations in this report have been considered and endorsed by the Property Investment Board, and will enable the Council to take a lead on the acquisition of land for the delivery of new sports hubs to meet the needs of the growing population, enable increased participation in sport, and help to create vibrant, sustainable, healthy communities.
- 5.2 They will facilitate the adoption of a strategic, comprehensive approach to the delivery of larger, good quality sports hub sites with the required supporting infrastructure such as car parking and changing rooms or pavilions. The creation of new sports provision through the hub model will therefore enhance the sporting landscape of the Borough and help to deliver the Council's key sport and recreation policy objectives.

5.3 In the event that all the required land cannot be acquired by negotiation and agreement, it is considered prudent to seek the Council's in principle decision that it would be prepared to promote a CPO to support the delivery of the new sports hubs.

6. Implications and Considerations

6.1 How the proposals in this report contribute to the delivery of Council Plan priorities:

Priority:	Contribution:
Securing inclusive economic growth.	The development of high quality sports hubs will help to meet the needs of the growing population, enable increased participation in sport, and enable communities to thrive.
Planning & delivery for Solihull's low carbon future (to include biodiversity implications).	The adoption of a strategic, comprehensive approach to the delivery of sports hubs will facilitate the delivery of a number of draft Solihull Local Plan Review housing site allocations, which will help to increase the supply of housing, especially affordable and environmentally sustainable housing.
Managing demand and expectation for public services.	N/A
Developing our approach to services for adults and children with complex needs.	N/A
Making the best use of our people and physical assets.	N/A

6.2 Consultation and Scrutiny:

6.2.1 The recommendations set out in this report have been considered and endorsed by the Council's Property Investment Board.

6.2.2 Public consultation will be carried out as part of any future planning applications for the delivery of the sports hub proposals.

6.2.3 This report has not been presented to any Scrutiny Board.

6.3 Financial implications:

6.3.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report at this stage. The cost of acquiring the land for each sports hub (including costs associated with any potential CPO), and the cost of laying out and developing each sports hub, will be considered in detail in future Cabinet reports at the appropriate time. However, at this stage, it is envisaged that the sports hubs, and the required land, will be funded primarily through section 106 planning obligations and/or Community Infrastructure

Levy associated with the delivery of the proposed housing developments. It is also proposed that the Council will explore any external funding opportunities that could potentially be opened up as a result of this proactive and strategic approach.

6.4 Legal implications:

6.4.1 It will be necessary for the Council to enter into legal agreements for the acquisition and transfer of the land required for the delivery of each sports hub on the agreed final terms. These terms will be considered in detail in future Cabinet reports.

6.4.2 The making and advertising of a CPO would need to be carried out in compliance with all the relevant legislation which, again, would be considered as part of a future Cabinet report if necessary.

6.5 Risk implications:

6.5.1 None as a direct result of this report. Any risk implications arising from the proposed acquisition of land (including by way of CPO) and the development of the sports hubs will be considered and evaluated in detail in future Cabinet reports.

6.6 Equality implications:

6.6.1 None as a direct result of this report. However, it is envisaged that the delivery of new, modern, purpose built sports hubs will have a beneficial impact for a range of equality groups who wish to participate in sport. Any equality issues identified during the consultation and engagement process for the design and delivery of the proposed sports hubs will be taken into account as the schemes evolve.

7. List of appendices referred to

7.1 Appendix 1 – Indicative areas of search for potential sports hub sites.

8. Background papers used to compile this report

8.1 None

9. List of other relevant documents

9.1 None