

# **CULTURE & LEISURE REVIEW COMMITTEE**

**21<sup>st</sup> April 2009**

## **PAVILION SITE VISITS**

### **REPORT OF THE CITY SOLICITOR**

**STRATEGIC PRIORITIES: SP1: Creating a prosperous city, SP2: Extending cultural opportunities, SP7: Developing an attractive and accessible city**

**CORPORATE PRIORITIES: CIO4: Improving partnership working to deliver 'One City.'**

#### **1. Why has this report come to committee?**

- 1.1 The report provides Members of the committee with information relating to the recent site visit to football pavilions across the city.

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1 At its meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 2008 following discussions regarding Sunderland's Playing Pitch Plan and the potential for new developments it was agreed that a visit be undertaken by the committee to look at changing facilities across the city. On Monday 23 March 2009 the Culture and Leisure Review Committee visited a number of football pavilions across the city with officers from Community and Cultural Services providing information and background details.

#### **3. Current Position**

- 3.1 The Football Association has developed a new national strategy along with a strategic approach to investment to work alongside the Football Foundation with a purpose of producing a strategic framework that sets out the key priorities and targets for investment over the next 5 years.
- 3.2 The new National Strategy has clear targets and milestones up to and beyond 2012 and it is expected that these will be reflected in resultant Local Area Football Plans.
- 3.3 The key priority for the city remains to target a 1% increase in sport and physical activity participation year on year. The city's traditional outdoor sports support this agenda, both in private clubs and public offered sites and venues. The quality of the Council's accessible pavilions and pitches can inform this measure. Well-designed and maintained pavilions enable a variety of teams to play at one time on a range of pitches and also ensure a welcoming environment for travelling teams to the city.

- 3.4 The annual MORI survey results also reflect dissatisfaction with parks and grass roots facilities which include pavilions and pitches.
- 3.5 The Council is currently working to improve the quality of pitches and facilities across the city and have commissioned work to develop a Football Investment Strategy to guide future resource. The strategy will also support funding applications to the Football Foundation. The scope of the strategy will extend to include outdoor team sport facilities, artificial turf pitches and formal and informal kick about areas as part of the work.
- 3.6 In moving forward the improvement process, £200k has been allocated from the Strategic Investment Programme (SIP) and an additional £900k has been set aside to support match funding for a portfolio of funding applications which will be identified in the Football Investment Strategy.

#### **4. The Visit**

- 4.1 Members of the Review Committee visited a number of pavilions on the visit as follows;

Ryhope Colliery Welfare  
Silksworth Park  
Ford Quarry  
Billy Hardy Sports Complex  
Southern Area Playing Fields  
Herrington Colliery Welfare.

- 4.2 The initial £200k investment from SIP was targeted at pavilions where a small investment could have a large impact. Ryhope CW was one such pavilion which benefited from new benches in the changing rooms. Match officials at Ryhope CW currently used portable changing facilities and this issue, along with issues around female changing and young people (under 16) were being investigated with a variety of possible solutions.
- 4.3 The Ford Quarry development is a £1.3million project, with a £580k pavilion that was opened in 2007 and is currently very well used. The investment for this project was from wide variety of funding partners including the Football Foundation
- 4.4 The Billy Hardy pavilions have historically experienced difficulties at the crossover period between the football and cricket seasons when facilities are stretched to meet the demands. The pitches here are of a good standard but the changing facilities are an issue.
- 4.5 The Southern Area pavilion again has benefited from a number of works including the installation of a shower block, roof and flashing repairs, all of which will help to maintain the integrity of the building.

#### **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 Members saw a variety of changing facilities during their tour of the city from high specification pavilions to older more traditional facilities. The small investment

already made has helped to improve a number of facilities and maintain the integrity of existing buildings which is important and provides a number of 'quick wins' within the city. Moving forward the Football Investment Strategy will help to provide detailed information on pavilions and playing pitches which in turn will assist in the identification and prioritisation of resources to support a portfolio of funding bids to improve facilities across the city.

## **6. Recommendation**

- 6.1 That Members comment and note the content of the report.
- 6.2 That Members are kept informed on the progress and development of the Football Investment Strategy.

R C Rayner,  
City Solicitor

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