

Our Ref: 30/CAP

11 March 2014

Dear Councillor

You are summoned to an extra-ordinary meeting of the **Council** to be held at the **Town Hall, Felixstowe** on **Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at 7.00 pm** for the transaction of the following business:

**1. Apologies.**

To receive apologies and consider requests for approved absence.

**2. Declarations of Interest.**

*Members and officers are invited to make any declarations of interests that they may have in relation to items on the agenda and are reminded to make any declarations at any stage during the meeting if it then becomes apparent that this may be required when a particular item or issue is considered.*

**3. To consider requests for dispensations from Councillors with a Pecuniary Interest.**

*Any Councillor with a pecuniary interest in a matter who wishes to be granted a dispensation to remain and speak during, or vote on, that matter, may apply for a dispensation in writing to the proper officer of the Town Council as soon as possible before the meeting which the dispensation is required. Applications may also be made at the Parish/Town Council meeting itself (if Parish/Town Councils have a standing item on the agenda to deal with dispensation requests and the nature of the interest has only become apparent to a Councillor at the meeting itself).*

**4. To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2014**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of Full Council held 26<sup>th</sup> February 2014 as a true record. - *copy attached.*

**5. To Consider and Comment on the Felixstowe Sports Hubs Proposals - attached**

To consider and comment on the Felixstowe Sports Hubs proposals

**6. To Consider and Comment on the East Suffolk Growth Plan - attached**

To consider and comment on the East Suffolk Growth Plan

**7. Closure**

## **To Consider and Comment on the Felixstowe Sports Hubs Proposals**

The Council has received the following summary report from Suffolk Coastal District Council and has been asked to consider and comment on it in advance of that Council's Cabinet meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014.



### **FELIXSTOWE HUB PROPOSALS**

#### **SUMMARY**

The Council's Active Communities team, in response to the community request for support, are working with internal and external partners to develop a 'Sports Hub' concept in Felixstowe, to ensure the long-term sustainability, development, success and future of football, cricket, hockey and rugby provision within the town, through increased participation and capacity.

#### **1. FELIXSTOWE HUB PROPOSAL BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Felixstowe has a considerable sporting history and many of the sporting community and youth teams are long standing. Historically schedule disputes between sports clubs have occurred and relationships between the clubs sharing pitch space can become fraught. To resolve this, create an area of sporting excellence and assist the community clubs in their growth, in turn increasing active participation levels of local residents, it was decided to analyse the current pitch space, consult the clubs about their current and future aspirations and review pitch allocation to create four sports HUB's - cricket, football, hockey and rugby.
- 1.2 Many of the sports clubs in Felixstowe are at capacity, due to the size of their pitch space provided by SCDC. By increasing the space available for each hub, the clubs are aiming to increase community participation including further female and youth engagement enabled through the provision of long-term leases and therefore long-term planning by the clubs, which will enable them to draw down significant funding from their respective governing bodies to improve site facilities e.g. toilets and changing rooms. The clubs also want to be more sustainable and self proficient including the increased management of their own sites and pitches.
- 1.3 This project was initially implemented six years ago, expectations were raised, but progress has been very limited. Understandably the clubs have become a little sceptical, but are encouraged by the Council's renewed support provided by the Active Communities team.
- 1.4 Closely supporting the enabling ethos to empower communities to do more for themselves and linking closely to other current agendas including Suffolk's

Health and Wellbeing board and the Most Active County priorities this work will help inform Suffolk Coastal's leisure strategy.

## 2. CURRENT PROGRESS AND POSITION

- 2.1 To identify and scope the aspirations of the clubs and communities, a number of conversations have been held with all of the key clubs in Felixstowe to identify their current position, future aspirations and any barriers to growth. This highlighted some common threads such as 'lease terms' and future aspirations to develop women and youth teams.

### Summary of key findings ascertained through conversations with the sports clubs:

- **Rugby:** Felixstowe Rugby Club – wish to remain at the current site and develop their on site, however their current lease has expired. As the 2015 Rugby World Cup is quickly approaching, the club will be able to draw down substantial funding from the Rugby Football Union (RFU) to assist them with the realisation of their aspirations to increase participation levels and to further develop youth and women's teams. However, funders require a minimum 30 year lease to be in place, for the club to qualify for funding.
- **Football:** Felixstowe & Walton United Football Club – wish to remain at their current site, develop their on site facilities and increase community participation. The club are currently able to draw down funding from the FA to improve their on site facilities, subject to the relevant planning application process being undertaken and that a minimum 30 year lease is in place.
- **Cricket:** Corinthians Cricket Club, Felixstowe Cricket Club and Felixstowe & Corinthians Youth Cricket Club – all recognise the benefits of joining forces and decanting to Eastwood Ho as they are currently in a position to draw down substantial funding from the ECB to create a central cricket hub in Felixstowe. This would help the cricket teams to increase their participation rates, develop women and youth teams and improve on site facilities. This would require a minimum 50 year lease and relevant plans to be agreed with the planning authority.
- **Hockey:** Felixstowe Hockey Club – wish to remain at their current site, Felixstowe Academy, and they enjoy relatively new premises. However, should the opportunity arise for them to use another 3G pitch this would promote their long term growth plans. Unfortunately the hockey club are not in a position to draw down on any funding from their national governing body at this time.
- **Other Football:** junior football teams were recently surveyed and consulted which in summary indicated that the teams had no future growth plans and would not be opposed to using other available sites

so long as there was no reduction in the pitch space currently available to them. Due to this the two green spaces, Walton recreational ground and Seaton Road recreation ground, will be excluded from further discussions as no changes will be made to the current pitch provision.

- 2.2 The Cricket teams concluded that they wish to join forces and move to Eastwood Ho if this were to prove feasible. SCDC Legal and Estates teams advised there were no restrictions on the ground that would conflict with a proposed move and that the site area would be sufficient for the provision of two required cricket squares and three to four football pitches. Floodlights would not be required on the site, mitigating any potential concerns of residents.
- 2.3 Currently there are six football pitches at Eastwood Ho. There would be no reduction in total pitch provision should Cabinet approve the plans to move Cricket to Eastwood Ho, as three to four pitches would remain on the site and Suffolk County Council recently granted a one hundred and twenty five year lease to Felixstowe Academy for the Langley Avenue site, which will host three further football pitches.
- 2.4 Felixstowe Academy also expressed their intent to develop additional high quality pitches and to continue their high standard of coaching and for the Academy to serve as a 'feeder school' to each of the four proposed sports hubs, also to include athletics and other sports.
- 2.5 Following conversations with the clubs it was agreed that SCDC Active Communities Team would facilitate a workshop with all stakeholders in one place, to communicate and test officer's findings and summaries with the clubs. Also in attendance were Felixstowe Sports Council, National Governing Bodies and Suffolk Sport. No decisions or commitments were made by the officers other than to continue with the current momentum and progress to scope the Hub proposals and concept. The club representatives reached consensus as to who would wish to reside and develop where. The workshop also identified that both the rugby and football clubs would be in agreement to host the two cricket teams under a new lease and with relevant covenants in place, allowing sufficient time for Eastwood Ho to establish as a cricket hub and to develop the two new cricket squares (approximately two to three years). Short, medium and long term outcomes were identified at the workshop, which form the recommendations that Cabinet Members are asked to consider within this report.

### **3. OPPORTUNITIES FOR SCDC**

- 3.1 The Felixstowe Hub project directly links to Suffolk Coastal's developing Leisure Strategy, key driving principles set out by the Suffolk Health and Wellbeing board, Suffolk Coastal's enabling communities ethos and aligns itself to the Most Active County's action plan of increasing adult and youth participation in sporting or physical activity.

- 3.2 Currently SCDC contracts the grounds maintenance of the three sites to Suffolk Coastal Services (SCS) costing the Council circa £1k at Dellwood, £30k at Eastwood Ho and £26k at Coronation Grove, as summarised in the table below. All clubs have agreed in principle to take over the grounds maintenance of their sites, over an agreed period if longer leases were granted and rates negotiated. It is suggested by the clubs that they may wish to negotiate taking over the grounds maintenance responsibility and the corresponding costs on a phased basis over say a three year period.

	<b>SCDC Annual Expenditure</b>	<b>SCDC Current Annual Income</b>	<b>Indicative Annual Savings</b>
<b>Dellwood Avenue</b>	£8776.1	£7,600.00	£1,176.10
<b>Coronation Grove</b>	£26,339.49	£0.00 – expired leases	£26,339.49
<b>Eastwood Ho</b>	£29,929.21	£0.00	£29,929.21

*It is assumed that leases to the clubs will be negotiated at a peppercorn rate to ensure that the above maintenance savings are achieved.*

- 3.3 Currently Felixstowe Rugby Club's lease has expired. This is a risk and loss to the Council as the club reside on the site rent free, whilst the Council retains the cost of the grounds maintenance. To enable the rugby club to draw down on substantial RFU funding in 2015 and to secure the site by agreeing lease terms, a considered decision is required to grant the rugby club a long-term lease, which will resolve immediate issues at Coronation Grove and start the hub project implementation.
- 3.4 Any future leases with clubs would be designed and detailed in the usual way and are subject to planning and consultation to protect SCDC's interest in any eventuality and separately presented to Cabinet for consideration and approval in the usual way.

#### **4. CONSULTATION**

- 4.1 The broad communications with the Felixstowe sports clubs has been pivotal in instilling confidence that SCDC are committed to moving this project forward.
- 4.2 Sporting National Governing Bodies, Felixstowe Sports Council, Suffolk Sport and the Most Active County are aware of the project, most attending the recent workshop. All have expressed positive support towards the outcomes and benefits that this project would release to the community.

#### **5. REASON FOR ENDORSEMENT**

- 5.1 We hope that Felixstowe Town Council will support this project and we would invite any comments from the Town Council or its Councillors prior to the cabinet meeting in April. This initiative is proposed to attract and increase the sports and leisure participation in Felixstowe, contribute to the SCDC leisure

strategy aspirations, and support the sports clubs across Felixstowe to become more self sustainable.

## **6. NEXT STEPS**

- 6.1 The proposals will be considered by SCDC Cabinet on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April, subject to their approval further detailed and more specific works can begin to scope out the more local elements of the project that need to be given further consideration. These details are subject to the results of public consultation at Eastwood Ho which will commence following SCDC Cabinet endorsement of the Felixstowe Sports Hub concept.

### **Members are invited to comment on the proposals**

In making their comments Members may wish to consider the following issues which may not be adequately addressed in this summary report:-

- a) The continued right of public access to the areas in question for legitimate leisure purposes other than participating or watching those specific sports
- b) The potential impact of a large number of participants and spectators on surrounding neighbourhoods in terms of car parking, traffic, and noise
- c) The potential for damage to pitches through over-intensification of use

### **To Consider and Comment on the East Suffolk Growth Plan**

This has been distributed as a separate pdf file.

Members may wish to consider the following:-

- a) Para 2.4 – no mention of Felixstowe
- b) Para 4.7 – proximity to City of London is dependent upon good rail/road links
- c) Para 4.8 – mentions inadequate road connectivity, but not rail inadequacies
- d) Para 5.7 – Ipswich northern bypass needs to be more than an aspiration
- e) Para 5.10 – should the Felixstowe branch problems be separate from the East Suffolk branch
- f) Para 6.2 – should we be encouraging development along the A14 corridor rather than in Felixstowe itself
- g) Para 6.11 – can the A14 (particularly the Orwell bridge) be accepted as a good transport link in its current form
- h) Para 6.19 – Do Felixstowe and Lowestoft share the same characteristics
- i) Para 6.40 – should there be a DMO for the Felixstowe peninsular
- j) Para 7.3 – Do we need indicators around tourism, visitor spend, etc