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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>PLAYZONES PROJECT – UPGRADING EXISTING MULTI-USE GAMES AREAS ACROSS THE DISTRICT</b>
<b>Meeting and Date:</b>	<b>Cabinet – 2 December 2024</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Christopher Townend – Head of Place and Growth David Parish – Head of Property Assets</b>
<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>Councillor Charlotte Zosseder, Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property</b>
<b>Decision Type:</b>	<b>Executive Key Decision</b>
<b>Classification:</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>

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**Purpose of the report:** To seek approval to upgrade existing multi-use games areas (MUGAs) across the district, working in partnership with the Football Foundation.

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**Recommendation:** Cabinet is asked:

- (1) To agree to proceed with the upgrade project proposals (including funding and costing clarifications, size adaptations, surface types and site management) for the four proposed multi-use sites, working with the Football Foundation (as partner and principal funder).
- (2) To authorise the Head of Place and Growth, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Corporate Property, to take all necessary decisions and actions to maintain related project momentum and deliver these multi-use games areas.
- (3) To agree the allocation of Section 106 funds to match-fund the project from developer contributions as listed in Appendix 1.

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## **1 Summary**

1.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the plans for four existing multi-use games areas (MUGAs) to be upgraded. This project will rely heavily on external funding from the Football Foundation (£705,249), as well as funding from the corporate assets revenue budgets (£58,750) and S106 developer contributions (Appendix 1 - £176,025). The MUGA sites being put forward to be redeveloped include Sheridan Road (Buckland), North Deal Playing Field, Aycliffe Recreational Ground and Elms Vale Recreational Ground.

## **2 Introduction and Background**

2.1 The playing pitch strategy for the district is due to be redeveloped in the upcoming financial year, this strategy in the past has shown the need for redeveloped facilities for recreational and organised playing spaces in the district. This opportunity takes away the need of large investment in these MUGA's in coming years from the core budget. In addition to this project the Football Foundation has recognised the district as a priority area, and we are currently working with them on potential full size 3G pitch projects.

- 2.2 The PlayZones project, launched by the Football Foundation, aims to establish safe, inclusive, and accessible outdoor facilities. These areas are intended to bring communities together through a wide range of sports and recreational activities.
- 2.3 Dover District Council has been successful in an expression of interest to the Football Foundation, to obtain funding (75%) to upgrade four of our multi-use games areas across the district. Facilities are designed in partnership with local communities to meet the specific needs and preferences of the area. The project focuses on engaging lower socio-economic groups and the zones are designed to be used day and night, all year round, with high-quality surfacing and floodlighting.
- 2.4 The Football Foundation process is ongoing, as we enter the technical phase, and the proposals are fully costed and go to planning (planning applications will be submitted and funded by the Football Foundation) with submission expected by January 2025. Once we complete this stage of the project and project certainty is achieved, we enter the award phase (planning permissions – subject to planning process – are a vital condition of funding). At that point, and to ensure robust governance, Cabinet will again be requested to make decisions regarding the acceptance and use of that funding and the terms of that acceptance. If successful and if planning is received, it is proposed that works begin from March 2025 with target project completion by June 2025. All aspects of delivery of the project will be managed by the Football Foundation.
- 2.5 To ensure communities utilise the facilities we have, we will continue to include them in these developments. These facilities will be bookable with elements of both activated activities and open access. We also know that a recreational sport offer is popular with the target audiences we are trying to engage. We want to create modern, safe, and engaging facilities that deliver football-led multisport opportunities and enable communities to participate in recreational sport, as well as supporting positive health outcomes.
- 2.6 Key target audiences, across the district, for this project will be:
- Young people
  - Ethnic minorities
  - Socio economic groups (Including low-income families, unemployed, those living in areas of deprivation)
  - Those with a long-term health condition
  - Socially isolated
  - Hard to reach groups
  - Disability groups
- 2.7 We have engaged and prioritised the above groups (section 2.6), as the Community Development Team have established and strong direct links with these communities and feel they are at the greatest need of support. It is also felt that each group will gain the most from using the upgraded facilities. Expected project outcomes/outputs include increased participation in physically activity in the district, and increased health outcomes to young people living in the district.
- 2.8 During May 2024, we held a consultation to those within the district to have a say in which MUGAs they would like to see upgraded, as well as the preferred sports to be played on them. Further information on the consultation can be found in the background paper Appendix 2 PlayZones Engagement Report (Phase 1).

2.9 Consultation (and collated results) recommended that the below four sites be put forward. This work also recommended, by majority, the chosen sport/sports for each MUGA, with the chosen sport/sports dictating the surface type required for each.

Site	Sport/Sports	Surface	Required Site Measurements*
Buckland, Sheridan Road	Football & Basketball	Macadam	32m x 16m
Elms Vale Recreational Ground	Football only	Macadam / 3G : TBC	30m x 25m
Aycliffe Recreational Ground	Football, Tennis & Basketball	Macadam	30m x 16m
North Deal Playing Field	Football, Tennis & Basketball	Macadam	30m x 16m

2.10 PlayZones standard sizes are 30m x 20m. All sites will need to be adapted to this size (or as close to). The table in section 2.9 presents the required site measurements.

2.11 Victoria Park MUGA was included in the original consultation, however due to potential funding from the Padel Tennis courts, it was concluded not to include this in the Playzones project. If additional funding is required outside of the Padel Tennis investment for the refurbishment of the MUGA, there will be a third phase of PlayZones of which we could apply for at a later date.

2.12 The Butts MUGA in Sandwich was included in the original consultation also however, due to low feedback and size restraints this location was not taken forward.

### 3 Site Operations, Management and Maintenance

3.1 To ensure the security of each site, in line with The Football Foundation's guidelines each site will be fitted with a lockable gate, to help reduce any anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

3.2 The local services that we envision (agreements to be finalised as the project progresses) will manage access to users are highlighted below.

- Buckland – Community Centre and Crosslinks Youth Group.
- Elms Vale – Dover District Council, contracted out.
- North Deal – Community Centre.
- Aycliffe – Dover District Council / Primary School / Youth Organisation.

3.3 It is proposed, as is currently the case for each existing site, that maintenance, insurance and upkeep of the new MUGAs – upon project completion - will be the responsibility of Dover District Council's Property Assets Team and Parks & Open Spaces Team. Additional maintenance costs to the Council are estimated to range between £1,922 (Year 1) & £4,519 (year 5) for the Macadam sites & between £2,837 (Year 1) & £6,499 (year 5) for the 3G site (TBC). These costs are in line with predictions for costs for the sites from the Football Foundation (Appendix 3). In addition to this for the 3G site (TBC), an annual sinking fund of £6,000 will be required to ensure that the carpet of the pitch can be re-laid. It is envisaged that booking costs,

which would be in line with DDC pitch rates, would cover the cost of the maintenance costs & sinking fund. If the 3G pitch was hired at the current DDC published junior pitch rate of £30, five times per week, this would cover the maintenance & sinking fund costs. It should be noted that if community groups were not used to run these facilities there would be an additional cost to the Parks & Open spaces budgets to manage the facilities.

- 3.4 We are in discussion with the football Foundation around the proposed surface for Elms Vale, we have agreement with them that if we cannot reach an agreement with a third party to run a 3G site at Elms Vale this can be changed to a Macadam surface.

#### **4. Project Risks**

- 4.1 The main risks to the project are:

- Lack of grant funding availability (Funding is not currently in place)
- Lack of match funding availability
- Council budgets, availability of additional resources required to maintain the upgraded facilities
- Planning permissions are not granted
- Council capacity and resources
- Uncertain economic environment
- Multi-partner approach to delivery
- Management Agreements not yet in place
- Uncertain take-up of the facilities

#### **5 Identification and Evaluation of Options**

- 5.1 Option 1 – Recommended. Adopt the below recommendations to upgrade the MUGAs.
- Approve the allocation of S106 developer contributions as referenced in Appendix 1.
  - Approve the locations for the sites as referenced in 2.9.
  - Approve the size adaptations to the sites as referenced in 2.10.
  - Approve the surface type for each site as referenced in 2.9.
  - Approve the site management for each site as referenced in 3.2.

By approving the redevelopment, targeted communities will have improved facilities, which will provide safer and more inclusive engagement.

- 5.2 Option 2 – Not Recommended. To not adopt the recommendations to upgrade the MUGAs. By not approving the redevelopment, targeted communities will be left with the current facilities.

#### **6 Resource Implications**

- 6.1 This project will rely heavily on proposed/indicative external funding from the Football Foundation (£705,249), as well as funding from the corporate assets revenue budget carried forward from previous years (currently held in the Periodic Operations Reserve) (£58,750). This report is also requesting the allocation of S106 developer contributions as per Appendix 1, the contributions are from developments in Deal & Whitfield. The allocations of S106 will be used against the Buckland & North Deal Playzones in line with S106 conditions geographically. Football Foundation have accepted this as a contribution for Buckland, North Deal and Elms Vale. The DDC Assets contribution will be the match funding towards the Aycliffe site.

- 6.2 The Football Foundation funding, if achieved, would represent 75% of all project costs, with DDC match funding covering 25%. S106 funding & the special revenue contingency budget accounts for the remaining 25%. DDC would not be responsible for any project overspend, any project delivery overspend would be covered by The Football Foundation. The full application stage will be complete with the Football Foundation by December 2024, allocation of funding will be announced in January 2025, we would look to come to cabinet in February 2025 to formally accept the allocation.
- 6.3 At this stage of the project, there are no financial risks to the Council, as the planning process and its associated costs are all at The Football Foundation's cost and risk. Upon grant of planning permission – if received – and receipt of funding, DDC would then – subject to approval – be financially involved in this project. Without Football Foundation funding these projects are unachievable.
- 6.4 It is proposed, as is currently the case for each existing site, that maintenance, insurance and upkeep of the new MUGAs – upon project completion - will be the responsibility of Dover District Council's Property Assets Team and Parks & Open Spaces Team. Additional maintenance costs to the Council are estimated to range between £1,922 (Year 1) & £4,519 (year 5) for the Macadam sites & between £2,837 (Year 1) & £6,499 (year 5) for the 3G site (TBC). These costs are in line with predictions for costs for the sites from the Football Foundation (Appendix 2). In addition to this for the 3G site (TBC), an annual sinking fund of £6,000 will be required to ensure that the carpet of the pitch can be re-laid. It is envisaged that booking costs, which would be in line with DDC pitch rates, would cover the cost of the maintenance costs & sinking fund. If the 3G pitch was hired at the current DDC published junior pitch rate of £30, five times per week, this would cover the maintenance & sinking fund costs. It should be noted that if community groups were not used to run these facilities there would be an additional cost to the Parks & Open spaces budgets to manage the facilities.
- 6.5 There will be additional officer time required to deliver the project. At this time, it is anticipated that this workload can be absorbed within existing team capacity and no additional resources will be added.

## **7 Climate Change and Environmental Implications**

- 7.1 PlayZones provide a safe and engaging environment for children to be physically active. Activities like basketball, football and netball motivate young people to exercise regularly, which is crucial for their physical health.
- 7.2 Distributing the upgrades across four different locations in the district will enhance accessibility for the entire community. As a result, more people will be able to walk or bike to these locations, reducing the reliance on private vehicles, public transport and gas emissions.

## **8 Corporate Implications**

- 8.1 Comment from the Section 151 Officer (linked to the MFTP): Members are reminded that the Council's revenue and capital resources are under pressure and so they will wish to assure themselves that all proposals progress the Council's priorities, are the best option available and will deliver value for money. (ZW).
- 8.2 Comment from the Solicitor to the Council: The Solicitor to the Council has been consulted in the preparation of this report and has no further comments to make.

- 8.3 Comment from the Equality Officer: As noted at paragraph 2.5, approval of the redevelopment could potentially have a positive impact upon groups with a protected characteristic. It is recommended that an Equality Impact Assessment be undertaken to explore the impacts in more detail. In discharging their duties Members are required to comply with the public sector equality duty as set out in Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/149>

## 9. Appendices

- Appendix 1 – S106 Developer contributions
- Appendix 2 - PlayZones Engagement Report (Phase 1)
- Appendix 3 – Football Foundation Proposed Maintenance Schedule
- Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment

Contact Officer

- Freya Donovan, Community Development Support Officer (Play & Youth)
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