

Capital Programme Update – addition of Andover BMX track floodlighting project

Report of the Community, Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder

Recommended:

The project described at paragraph 6.1 of this report is added to the Council's capital programme.

Recommendation to Council

SUMMARY:

- Andover BMX track is located at Charlton Sports Centre. The track is a well-used community asset and is home to Andover BMX Club.
- Formal track use is limited to British summer time with casual use and club coaching and racing between October and April limited to weekends only.
- With support from the Council, Andover BMX club have raised £75,000 to floodlight the track. This would allow an expanded programme of use throughout the winter period and help increase physical activity.
- Community and Leisure will lead on the delivery of the project (subject to planning consent being granted). In order to proceed Council authority is required to allocate the funding and for the project to be added to the capital programme.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Andover BMX track is located at Charlton Sports Centre in the ward of Charlton and the Pentons. The track is open to the community and is home to Andover BMX Club. The club have grown considerably over the last 5 years with riders ranging in ages from 2 to 60+ years, active and using the track.
- 1.2 This report outlines the club and council's ambition to floodlight the track to increase the number of hours of use for training and racing. The Club with support from the Council have been successful in raising £75,000 of external funding to deliver the scheme. Council authority is required for the project to be added to the capital programme and is recommended before progressing with a planning application.

2 Background

- 2.1 BMX is a sport growing in popularity which has been helped with the Great Britain team success in the 2020 Olympics with gold and silver medals. The development of BMX as a sport is included in the Council's Sports Facilities Strategy which specifically references supporting the development of both council BMX tracks at the Charlton Leisure centre site and Knightwood Leisure Centre.

- 2.2 The Andover BMX track is a well-used community sporting asset, is popular for informal use and is home to the Andover BMX Club. The club welcomes people from age 2 to 60+ years and provides activities suitable for all generations to ride and race bikes together in a safe environment. The club provides the necessary equipment to get started or “have a go” and promote being “fit for life” through weekly training and fun welcoming activities for all ages and abilities. This includes grass roots participation to elite competitive racing in preparation for world championship events, community outreach, balance bike, women only, and learn to ride sessions.
- 2.3 The current seasonal limitation of the track mean that mid-week coaching and training sessions are restricted to British summer time. With support from the Council, the club have been successful in obtaining £75,000 external funding to floodlight the track with grants from British Cycling, a grant to the club from Persimmon Homes, the council’s Community Asset Fund and club fund raising.
- 2.4 The project has been tendered with the preferred supplier (subject to planning permission) being the company, Midstream. The project would see 6, 12 metre columns with highly efficient LED lights surrounding the track. Specific attention has been made to avoid light spill and is consistent with how the wider Charlton Sports Centre is used with floodlighting on the neighbouring Andover Football Club, all weather pitch and athletic track.
- 2.5 The floodlighting of the track will increase the hours of use and the clubs ability to host midweek events and races with the potential to develop a BMX coaching hub for the southern region. Andover would be the only track outside of London and the midlands with floodlights.
- 2.6 The project will require planning permission which will be sought in the usual way. We would expect that the lights would not be used beyond 10pm but this will be determined as part of the consenting process. The delivery of the project would be managed by Community and Leisure as the track is a TVBC asset.
- 2.7 Subject to Council approval and planning consent, it is anticipated that the works would commence March/April 2022. The project will be coordinated with the resurfacing improvements at the Charlton Sports Centre overflow car park which is located adjacent to the track.

3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

- 3.1 The Councils Corporate 2019 - 2023 Plan Growing Our Potential sets four priorities action, Town Centres development, Empowering Communities. People, and the Local Environment. The floodlighting project would deliver against the People priority by supporting the community with infrastructure and accessibility to meet the needs of a changing population.

4 Consultations/Communications

- 4.1 Colleagues in the Council's Environmental Services and Planning and Building team have been informally consulted about the project to date. Andover BMX club have undertaken extensive community consultation as part of the Community Asset Fund grant application.
- 4.2 The future planning application will be subject to community consultation and scrutiny.

5 Options

- 5.1 **Option 1** – Make provision for the works to the Council's Capital Programme utilising the external funding referenced above and commence with the planning application/project delivery to floodlight the track.
- 5.2 **Option 2** – Do not commence with the project. This would maintain the status quo and track usage would remain low during the winter.

6 Option Appraisal

- 6.1 **Option 1 – Add the project to the Council's Capital programme utilising the £75,000 external funding and commence with the planning application/project delivery to floodlight the track.** This project is externally funded through funds raised by the Andover BMX Club which demonstrates a commitment to the local cycling community. The use of the track will be increased along with the ability for the community to become physically engaged. This project is listed in the Sports Facilities Strategy which was approved by Cabinet in July 2020.
- 6.2 **Option 2 – Do not add the project to the Capital Programme.** This would mean the status quo and track usage would remain low during the winter. The external funding from British Cycling and the Community Asset Fund is tied to the floodlighting project and cannot be repurposed therefore it will be lost if the project does not proceed. There is potential for poor public perception if we do not proceed to the planning application stage that the Council is not committed to sport and club development.
- 6.3 Based on the option appraisal Option 1 is considered low risk and therefore is recommended.

7 Risk Management

- 7.1 An evaluation of the risks indicate that the existing controls in place mean that no significant risks have been identified at this time.

8 Resources

- 8.1 The project has been tendered with the company Midstream being the preferred supplier. The contract award is subject to planning consent.

8.2 Andover BMX club have been successful in achieving £75,000 of external funding with £30,000 from British Cycling Places to Ride scheme, £20,000 from Andover BMX club fund raising and £25,000 from the Community Asset Fund.

8.3 Project management and delivery will be managed by the Community and Leisure Service. The budget does allow for contingency.

9 Legal Implications

9.1 The project has been tendered following the Council procurement procedure as set out in the Council's Contract Standing Orders. Implementation of the project is subject to obtaining planning permission.

10 Equality Issues

10.1 An EQIA screening has been completed in accordance with the Council's EQIA methodology and no potential for unlawful discrimination and/or low level or minor negative impact have been identified, therefore a full EQIA has not been carried out.

11 Other Issues

11.1 **Community Safety.** Low level anti-social behaviour has occurred over the last 12 months at the track. Increasing public use will help to deter this activity.

11.2 **Environmental Health Issues.** The operation of the lights will be subject to scrutiny with respect of positioning and timing of use as part of any future planning application.

11.3 **Property Issues.** The BMX track is a TVBC asset.

11.4 **Wards/Communities Affected.** The track is located in the Charlton and the Pentons ward.

12 Conclusion and reasons for recommendation

12.1 The report outlines the project to floodlight the Andover BMX track which is located at Charlton Sports Centre. The project is externally funded with money raised by Andover BMX club. The proposed works will make changes to a TVBC owned asset therefore the project will be managed by the council's Community and Leisure service. Council authority is required to add the project to the capital programme.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
None			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	0	File Ref:	N/A
(Portfolio: Community, Leisure and Tourism) Councillor D Drew			
Officer:	Kevin Harrington	Ext:	8815
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