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| Meeting: Cabinet | | Agenda Item: 4 |
| Meeting Date | 11 th March 2015 | |
| Report Title | The Mill Project | |
| Portfolio Holder | Councillor Mike Whiting | |
| SMT Lead | Pete Raine | |
| Head of Service | Emma Wiggins | |
| Lead Officer | Peter Binnie | |
| Key Decision | Yes | |
| Classification | Open | |
| Forward Plan | Reference number: | |
| Recommendations | 1. That Cabinet approves the provision of up to £200k of capital funding to help deliver a Skate Park on the Mill site in Sittingbourne subject to the conditions detailed in 2 below. | |
| | 2. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Director for Regeneration and Head of Finance in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Localism, Sport, Culture and Heritage and the Cabinet Member for Finance to release the allocation of up to £200k subject to the following conditions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The balance of funding is secured to meet the full cost of the facility ii. That a trust is established that will operate and manage the facility to ensure sustainability of the project iii. A business plan is provided | |
| | 3. | |
| | 4. | |

1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Members with information for them to consider a proposal that the Council provides up to £200k of capital funding to help deliver a skate park on the Mill site in Sittingbourne subject to the conditions detailed in 1.2 below.
- 1.2 Specifically, this report asks Members to delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Head of Finance in consultation with the Cabinet member for

Localism, Sport, Culture and Heritage and the Cabinet Member for Finance to release the allocation of up to £200k subject to the following conditions:

- i. The balance of funding is secured to meet the full cost of the facility
- ii. That a trust is established that will operate and manage the facility to ensure sustainability of the project
- iii. A business plan is provided

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council undertook a review of its Sports Development provision in 2011 and the subsequent Sport and Physical Activity Framework (SPAF) 2012-17 highlighted a need to get more people active and particularly to encourage young persons to engage in at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day.
- 2.2 The Council and local stakeholders have for some time held an aspiration to build a skate park in the Sittingbourne area as a way of increasing participation in sport and physical activities and encouraging young people in sporting achievements. A working group was established that has been working for over three years to make it a reality. The group meet on a regular basis and to date there has been a number of successful funding bids that have been used to secure an outline planning permission and an option agreement for land on the Mill Site.
- 2.3 The project is led by the Sittingbourne Skate Park Group that includes local residents, members and officers of the Council. The group has procured support from Groundwork for feasibility work, consultancy and design, and for fund raising. The park would support four of the five key elements in the Council's play strategy and research has demonstrated that two existing sites in Swale attract 20 to 50 users at peak times after school and at weekend and it is expected that the Mill site would attract between 45 and 60 regular users.
- 2.4 The project also contributes to the Councils priority of regenerating the borough by bringing a derelict site back into use.
- 2.5 While funding is being sourced the Council is drawing up proposals for the future maintenance and operation of the site with the intention that it will be managed by a trust. The trust will have strong links to existing organisations such as Kent County Council Youth Services, the Swale Community Leisure Trust, private sector partner Amicus Horizon and the Young Kent assured quality for youth project who have all pledged to support the project. Amicus Horizon has already made a financial commitment to the project and will continue to provide support as the project is developed.

- 2.6 The current design and outline planning permission for a wheeled activity park will be large enough to become a regional facility. Indicative construction costs for this size of facility have been assessed to be in the order of £300k to £350k from an estimate by a reputable contractor. As this is now out of date an allowance should be made for inflation that would add approximately £20-30k to the estimate assuming that the project is completed during 2015.
- 2.7 At the present time there is insufficient funding to take the project forward into the construction procurement phase and a recent Sport England bid for £150k was unsuccessful. Sport England has also indicated that if partnership funding from the Council was secured the chances of leveraging £150k would increase. The bid has been strengthened following consultation with Sport England and a number of partners were brought on board to support its resubmission. The new partners include KCC youth services, Amicus Horizon and Swale Leisure Limited, all of whom see social and financial benefits arising from the project. Groundwork has also submitted a number of other bids to private sector organisations and charitable trusts and is awaiting a response from them. The requested funding amount of up to £200k from the Council would provide significant support towards the Sport England and other funding bids with match funding that would increase the likelihood of success. It would also ensure that a viable scheme can be delivered if only part of the funding is realised.
- 2.8 If sufficient funding is achieved and the project is able to proceed then there will be a significant new leisure facility in Sittingbourne that the stakeholders and public will be able to enjoy. It will bring a brownfield site back into use and make a significant difference to the lives of young people in the area and this would be the ideal outcome for both the project and the community. The project would also be an excellent starting point for the regeneration of this part of the town and would provide a worthwhile use for a site that is currently derelict.
- 2.9 The site identified for the Skate Park is on the Mill Site next to the Wharf and it currently has an outline planning consent. The land is under an option agreement with the owners Essential Land that allows the Council to draw down the land when sufficient funding has been realised for the Skate Park to be built. The land option protects the Council's position and reduces the risk of it having to secure and maintain the site in a safe condition should the Skate Park not go ahead and the current agreement will expire at the end of 2015 so any significant delay could result in the land being lost to other developments.
- 2.10 It is noted that there are other potential uses for the overall site including an area for a Heritage building and a possible new Leisure facility. While it is envisaged that all of the uses currently proposed can be accommodated on the site, it may be necessary to be flexible in the final positioning of each of the proposed uses to ensure that all can be accommodated.

3. Proposals

- 3.1 That Cabinet approves the provision of up to £200k of capital funding to help deliver a Skate Park on the Mill site in Sittingbourne.
- 3.2. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Director for Regeneration and Head of Finance in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Localism, Sport, Culture and Heritage and the Cabinet Member for Finance to release the allocation of up to £200k subject to the following conditions:
 - i. The balance of funding is secured to meet the full cost of the facility
 - ii. That a trust is established that will operate and manage the facility to ensure sustainability of the project
 - iii. A business plan is provided

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 A reduced scheme has been considered by the Skate Park Group and discounted because it would not meet their aspirations for a regional facility in Sittingbourne.
- 4.2 A phased approach to the project has been considered by the Skate Park Group and discounted because it was felt by the group that subsequent phases would not be supported and their aspiration for a regional facility would not be met.
- 4.3 Alternative locations for the Skate Park within the Wharf site have been considered. These have been discounted because the rest of the land is not in the ownership of the council.

5. Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 The project working group is made up of a number of stakeholders and significant public engagement has been carried out through press releases and advertisements. A number of banners have been manufactured and fitted around the town centre and a Facebook page is well represented and used by supporters and the general public. Public consultation is not considered to be necessary at this time, and proposals will be in the public domain through this report and the Council report.
- 5.2 The outline planning permission that has been obtained included for statutory consultation with the public and other groups and interested parties.

6. Implications

| Issue | Implications |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Corporate Plan | Addresses the Open for Business Priority |
| Financial, Resource and Property | The financial impact on the Council will be reflected in the coming year's Medium Term Financial Plan and annual budget setting for the 2015/16 financial year. £200k capital is requested. In addition, officer resource to manage the project and project management time to take this through the design and build phase will be required.. |
| Legal and Statutory | Legal Services has been consulted and engaged to obtain the option agreement for the site and will be engaged in the placing of any construction contracts. |
| Crime and Disorder | No specific implications have been identified at this stage. Proposals will require more detailed discussion at the detailed planning stage with the Police and the Crime and Disorder Team to put in place measures to ensure that the proposals have a negligible impact. |
| Sustainability | The proposals will help to ensure play provision in the future of the Town Centre and will contribute significantly to its sustainability. |
| Health and Wellbeing | No specific implications have been identified at this stage although the project is aimed at improving health and wellbeing. Health impacts will be considered as part of any community impact assessment that will be carried out at the appropriate time. |
| Risk Management and Health and Safety | No specific implications have been identified at this stage, but detailed work will be required with the Skate Park group to ensure that there will be no specific negative Health and Safety implications arising from the schemes. |
| Equality and Diversity | No specific implications have been identified at this stage, and a full impact assessment will be carried out at the appropriate time. |

7. Appendices

7.1 The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix I:Funding Schedule

8. Background Papers

- None

Appendix 1

The Mill Project - Skate Park Funding

Current funding achieved for the project

| | | Amount |
|---|---|----------------------|
| 1 | SBC Regeneration Funds | £30,000 |
| 2 | Section 106 from East Hall Farm (conditional) | £25,000 |
| 3 | Members grants to date | £6,340 |
| 4 | Amicus Horizon | £10,000 |
| 5 | Bernard Sunley Foundation (conditional) | £10,000 |
| 6 | Donations directly to Skate Park Group | Less than £1,000 |
| | | <hr/> <u>£82,340</u> |

Approximately £35k has been expended to date