

Cabinet



Date of meeting:	09 March 2023
Title of Report:	Brickfields
Lead Member:	Councillor Pat Patel (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Culture, Leisure & Sport)
Lead Strategic Director:	Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health)
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Your Reference:	
Key Decision:	Yes
Confidentiality:	Part I - Official

Purpose of Report

This report sets out proposals for an exciting and transformational £21m investment in Brickfields, encompassing the redevelopment of the outdoor sports facilities to increase the number and scope of playing pitches, as well as the reconfiguration of the existing sports centre to create a new community wellbeing and sports hub. The entire complex will be reconfigured and upgraded with;

- Facilities for Plymouth Argyle Football Club's academy, including a new building with class rooms, changing rooms and office space, as well as training pitches.
- An improved suite of playing pitches, providing three grass playing pitches for football.
- Replacement of an existing grass rugby training pitch with a new 3G pitch.
- A new floodlit 3G football pitch to replace a poor condition (currently closed) hockey pitch
- A new, covered 3G football pitch.
- Investment in the existing 60m x 40m rubber crumb pitch to provide new PlayZones.
- Reconfiguration of the existing sports centre to create a new community wellbeing and sports hub.
- Better site access, public realm and parking.

The proposals are a once in a generation opportunity to regenerate the community and elite sports provision for the west of the city.

The investment would be provided by Plymouth Argyle Football Club (PAFC), Plymouth Argyle Community Trust (PACT) (including external grants) as well as a contribution from Plymouth City Council. The proposals would also provide Plymouth Albion Rugby Football Club (Albion) with greater land security, which would allow them to invest in improvements to their facilities.

The Council is also working closely with Devonport Community Leisure Ltd (DCLL) who are a key partner in the proposals and provide a connection to the local community. DCLL have been consulted on the proposals and it is proposed that they will continue to play an important role in the governance of the site.

The report seeks approval for the Council to enter into three new leases with PAFC, PACT and Albion (as well as completing a number of other related property transactions), to make a capital investment, including the provision of financial support for the proposals and to amend the existing arrangements for the operation and management of Brickfields Sports Centre.

The proposals place Brickfields as the central physical activity hub within a wider vision for sport, health and wellbeing in Plymouth, encompassing greater connection with neighbouring activity spaces, including Devonport Park, Stonehouse Creek, and Victoria Park.

Recommendations and Reasons

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- i) Approves the grant of leases for land at Brickfields to each of the following parties on the terms set out in Part II of this report:
 - Plymouth Argyle Football Club;
 - Plymouth Argyle Community Trust; and
 - Plymouth Albion Rugby Football Club.
- ii) Notes the proposed termination of the tenancy between Plymouth Active Leisure Limited and Devonport Community Leisure Limited and delegates authority to the Director of Public Health to agree any resulting changes to the agreement between Plymouth Active Leisure Ltd and the Council.
- iii) Approves the termination of the services currently provided at Brickfields by Plymouth Active Leisure Ltd and delegates authority to the Director of Public Health to agree any resulting changes to the agreement between Plymouth Active Leisure Ltd and the Council.
- iv) Notes the possible need for a transfer of relevant staff from Plymouth Active Leisure Ltd to Plymouth Argyle Community Trust.
- v) Approves the termination of the existing leases with Devonport Community Leisure Ltd and City of Plymouth Athletics Club.
- vi) Notes the reprovision of facilities for pétanque on land at Stonehouse Creek.
- vii) Approves a commitment from the Council to support the provision of facilities for hockey, to mitigate the loss of the sand based artificial grass pitch.
- viii) Approves and makes an allocation for the provision of up to £2,752,903 of capital funding for the project and delegates authority to the Director of Public Health to agree the terms for the grant, subject to legal advice being obtained that no issues arise under the Subsidy regime.
- ix) Notes the relocation of the health and wellbeing hub from the Cumberland Centre to the new community wellbeing and sports hub.
- x) Delegates authority to the Director of Public Health and the Strategic Director for Place to agree the terms of the leases, transfer of staff and all other documents associated with this transaction and subsequent redevelopment of the site, including (but not limited to) any easement, wayleave, grant funding agreement, or any other third party agreements, including any agreements intended to protect community uses.
- xi) Delegates authority to the Director of Public Health and the Strategic Director for Place to consider, at the relevant time, whether the conditions set out in section 5 of the Part I report have been met.
- xii) Delegates authority to the Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Leisure & Sport to waive any of the conditions set out in section 5 of the Part I report, if this is considered appropriate on advice from officers from Legal Services.

Reasons

- To improve the provision of sports and health and wellbeing activities in Devonport and across Plymouth.
- To ensure a sustainable long-term future for Brickfields sports centre and outdoor sports facilities.
- The proposals are a once in a generation opportunity to regenerate the community and elite sports provision for the west of the city. This plays into the three key themes of the Plan for Sport:
 - Participation – this will increase the community use around sport and physical activity, widening the different opportunities and ensuring that the offer is more engaging and more accessible.
 - Places – this proposal seeks to maximise the potential of Brickfields, a sporting facility in one of the most deprived areas of the city. Significant investment is needed even to maintain the facilities at their current level; and this proposal goes significantly beyond that
 - Pride – locating the Plymouth Argyle Youth Academy in Brickfields further strengthens the links between the city and PAFC – as well as making it more accessible to young people living locally and creating a sense of aspiration.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Do nothing: Some existing facilities on the site are in a poor state of repair, such as the sand-filled All Weather Pitch which has been closed since autumn 2022. This facility along with grass pitches require inward investment at a time when the Council is reducing its operating subsidy for Council-owned leisure facilities. Attendance and income levels have not returned to pre-covid levels and the community have said that they would like to see more opportunities to improve their health and wellbeing. If the Council does nothing, there will be no inward investment, more facilities will fall into disrepair and the facilities will not align to the needs of the community.

Capital Investment: The proposed inward investment is at a scale and level that the Council cannot achieve alone. PACT is able to assess funding through football that the Council is unable to lever.

Relevance to the Corporate Plan and/or the Plymouth Plan

One of the Council's key priorities in its Corporate Plan is "Caring for people and communities". This proposal supports this priority by:

- Helping to reduce health inequalities; and
- Improving the focus on prevention and early intervention.

Following consultation with local people and stakeholders, the proposals also reflect the Council's commitment in its Corporate Plan to engage and listen to residents and local communities.

Implications for the Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications:

The proposals will require capital investment from the Council. However, in the long term the Council will benefit financially from the proposals as the operation of the Brickfields site will no longer require annual revenue subsidy from the Council. Furthermore, the Council will no longer have responsibility for assets, such as the replacement of artificial pitch surfaces.

The Council's capital investment will be funded from service borrowing and this revenue provision will be available as a result of the savings achieved from no longer providing a subsidy for the provision of services at Brickfields.

Investment in the project is also expected to generate wider financial benefits for Plymouth and the local area by increasing the number of people visiting Devonport to use the facilities.

Financial Risks

The costs of delivering the project have been estimated by consultants acting on behalf of Plymouth Argyle Football Club and Plymouth Argyle Community Trust. There is a risk that the costs exceed these estimates. However, this risk sits predominantly with those two organisations, not with the Council. An increase in costs may require a review of the work proposed to be undertaken. The grant of the leases would be conditional upon funding being secured to deliver the redevelopment proposals. Of the investment being provided by the Council, some of this will be set aside for the relocation of the petanque facilities along with a commitment to secure and protect the future of hockey in the city, with investment set aside to mitigate the loss of the sand based artificial grass pitch. The Council will be responsible for delivering these two parts of the proposal and will manage budget and project risks in the usual manner.

Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:

As part of the planning application, proposals will be made to promote sustainable transport to and from the venue. The proposals will also include new routes around the site that will encourage walking and cycling and access to nature, with provision for cycle parking to encourage people to cycle to site.

Contractors will be required to produce waste management plans that set out how waste is reduced during construction.

Other Implications: e.g. Health and Safety, Risk Management, Child Poverty:

** When considering these proposals members have a responsibility to ensure they give due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act and those who do not.*

There are a number of risks associated with the proposals which are set out in more detail in the report.

The proposals seek to improve outcomes for children, young people and local residents generally by providing affordable access to facilities that promotes health, wellbeing and social inclusion.

Appendices

**Add rows as required to box below*

Ref.	Title of Appendix	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
		<i>If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.</i>						
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A	Part I Briefing Report							
B	Equalities Impact Assessment							
C	Existing site Plan							

D	Draft Lease Plan							
E	Part II Briefing Report			x				
F	Budget			x				

Background papers:

*Add rows as required to box below

Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are unpublished works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based.

Title of any background paper(s)	Exemption Paragraph Number (if applicable)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Sign off:

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Originating Senior Leadership Team member: Ruth Harrell (Director of Public Health)											
Please confirm the Strategic Director(s) has agreed the report? Yes											
Date agreed: 24/02/2023											
Cabinet Member approval: Councillor Pat Patel (Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Culture, Leisure & Sport)											
Date approved: 28/02/2023											