

Jackey Bakers Recreation Ground

Extraordinary Overview and Scrutiny Panel 06 December 2023

Report Author	Tony Marmo, Head of Coastal and Public Realm
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Steve Albon, Cabinet Member for Cleansing and Coastal Services
Status	For Decision
Classification	Unrestricted
Key Decision	Yes
Reason for Decision	To approve the next steps to be undertaken by officers in response to the petition received by Thanet District Council about Jackey Bakers Recreation Ground. In taking the next steps the expenditure will be more than £250,000.
Ward	Northwood

Executive Summary:

The report outlines the actions taken in response to a petition that was received by the Council. The petition requests that the Council improves its management of Jackey Bakers Recreation Ground.

The report also proposes the adoption of a master plan for the future development of the Jackey Bakers site. Although the master plan proposals are not currently funded and therefore are not able to proceed at this stage, the adoption of a master plan represents a first step towards securing the necessary funding for the long-term future of Jackey Bakers.

Recommendation(s) to Overview and Scrutiny Panel:

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to consider the contents of this report and having done so consider making any appropriate and relevant recommendations for consideration by Cabinet.

Recommendation(s) to Cabinet:

That Cabinet:

- a) Approves the demolition of the existing pavilion on the basis of health and safety (subject to the Local Planning Authority giving prior approval).
- b) Approves the purchase of a temporary portacabin style changing facility once demolition has occurred.
- c) Approves a public engagement exercise to inform the master planning for Jackey Bakers, based on the draft master plan attached at annex 1.

- d) Delegates authority to the Chief Executive Officer to investigate the options for a future development on the site based on the master plan, to include a new car park, new pavilion (to include changing facilities) and other sporting/recreational facilities that might enhance the offer at the site. A report will be represented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and the Cabinet once these options have been further explored.

That Cabinet Recommends to Council that:

- e) A one-off 2023/24 supplementary General Fund Revenue budget of £370,000 be approved, for the demolition of the existing pavilion and the provision of a temporary portacabin facility, to be funded from the Risk Reserve.

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

An open tender process will be undertaken for each of the following to ensure that a competent contractor will be appointed to:

- a) Undertake the demolition of the existing pavilion. It is anticipated that based on the size of the building, which is 510 sqm, demolition might be in the region of £250,000.
- b) Provide a suitable temporary portacabin facility with changing rooms (and showers), officials change, storage and toilet facilities. It is anticipated that a 150 sqm building might be in the region of £120,000 to purchase and install.

It is proposed the funding to pay for both of these projects shall come from the Council Risk Reserve.

The proposals set out in the Master Plan are not currently funded.

Legal

This report is for consideration and in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel may make recommendations to be considered by Cabinet.

In relation to the decision to demolish the existing pavilion, planning permission or prior approval will be required. The tender documents will be reviewed by the legal and procurement departments.

The proposed Master Plan should be congruent with the provisions of any local plan for this area.

Risk Management

A risk register has been developed for the project. The risk register considers financial, health and safety, procurement, legal and community risks. The risk register will be maintained as a live document and will be updated as the project progresses.

Corporate

Jackey Bakers Recreation Ground is a key location in the district for football facilities. In addition this is an important local community recreation ground, providing outdoor facilities for the mental and physical well being of residents.

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

This report relates to the following aim of the equality duty: -

- To advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- To foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Corporate Priorities

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Communities and community engagement.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Council received a petition with 1941 valid signatures on 30 June 2023 relating to the Council's management of the public open space, Jackey Bakers Recreation Ground, from Mrs June Tyrell. The petition contained the following petition prayer:

"Jackey Bakers is a public open space, given to the people of Ramsgate, by Dame Janet back in 1924. Over the years, we have seen a decline in the way Jackey Bakers is managed. We want a safe place to be able to walk our dogs, somewhere the children can run around and improved facilities for the weekly football matches. Jackey Bakers is lacking bins, both normal waste and dog waste. More bins should improve the amount of littering that is left on a daily basis. The changing room has had no hot water or electricity for a couple of years, meaning the footballers have nowhere to change or clean up. The football pitches are in a very poor state, not being rolled and the grass not being cut, especially around the goals. This is causing injuries each week. Car parking is also another concern. Planning permission has previously been requested for a hard standing car park to be built at the Sainsbury's end of Jackey Bakers, yet has never happened. Highfield Road is becoming congested due to the amount of cars being parked there on a Sunday morning, and only recently caused issues for emergency services to get through. Each week the pitches are in use, funds are accumulating, but where is this money going? Some weeks, this amounts to just over £400! So let's all come together and make Jackey Bakers fit for purpose, by the people of Ramsgate, for the people of Ramsgate!"

- 1.2 A petition that receives over 1500 signatories would normally be subject to a debate at a meeting of the Full Council. However in this case due to the date that the petition was received, this would have meant that the Council taking no action regarding the petition until the Council meeting on the 12th October 2023, a wait time of some months. This would have been unfair on the petitioner, so after discussing this issue with the petitioner, they agreed for the petition to be treated as a petition with 50 - 1500 signatories, so that the Council could act much sooner namely that a “senior officer of the Council, after consulting with the relevant portfolio holder, should respond to the petition, and a report on the petition noting what action has been taken should be referred to the next meeting of Cabinet or Council for their information.”
- 1.3 This approach has allowed for work to be planned and undertaken in relation to the wishes of the petitioners as set out in the petition response at Annex 1, whilst retaining transparency and accountability to the public, which is an important aspect of democratic governance.

2.0 The Current Situation

- 2.1 A formal response to the petition was sent to the petitioner and is attached at annex 2 to the report. This was reported to Council on the 12th October 2023. During the debate the Leader noted that he would consider the petition at a future Cabinet meeting. Following the debate by Members, the petition was noted.
- 2.2 Since the petition response the following actions have been completed:
- a) A sign has been placed on the gates at the entry to the site so that no parking occurs in front of the gates, as this is an access point for emergency services.
 - b) A review of the bins on the site has been completed.
 - c) New goal posts have been received for pitch 3 and shall be installed in the spring when the ground is suitable to install.
 - d) The Open Spaces team have undertaken works to improve the goal mouths in pitches 6 & 7.
 - e) A further container has been provided as a changing facility, in addition to the container for storage and portaloos provided on the site in September.
 - f) A prior notification form for the demolition of the pavilion at Jackey Bakers Recreation Ground has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority and shall be considered at the Planning Committee meeting of Thanet District Council on Wednesday 13th December 2023.

3.0 Master Planning

- 3.1 The council recognises the need to invest into the improvement of the facilities provided at Jackey Bakers and enhance the recreation ground for the benefit of all of its users and local residents.
- 3.2 The council has therefore commissioned some initial master planning work, to illustrate the potential for the site to be further improved in the future, including possible locations for new parking facilities, new pavilion and the upgrading of the sports offer across the site. The draft master plan is attached at annex 1. The drawings in the master plan are examples only and the exact number of pitches that

can be provided for different sports is flexible and can be adjusted to accommodate current users and emerging demand for new sports.

- 3.3 At its meeting on the 2nd March 2023, Cabinet agreed to the transfer of the strip of land, off of Highfield Road, to the East of the Jackey Bakers site, to the council's Housing Revenue Account for the delivery of affordable housing, and this scheme is included in the council's housing development programme. The detailed scheme proposals and funding arrangements will be reported to cabinet when they are available and planning consent has been secured.
- 3.4 The report stated that the land had an assessed capital value of between £900k and £1.12m, and advised that a corresponding transfer of debt between the council's general fund and Housing revenue Account would create additional general fund borrowing capacity of between £489k and £611k which could be utilised for future improvements at Jackey Bakers. The final figure will be known, once a detailed housing proposal for the Highfield Road site has been agreed.
- 3.5 In addition, the council has secured a contribution of £28,247, through a section 106 planning agreement from the nearby Eurokent/Spitfire Green housing development specifically for investment in Jackey Bakers. The council has not yet received this funding, as agreed trigger points in the Eurokent/Spitfire Green housing development have not yet been passed, however the development is progressing and it is expected that this funding will be available during 2024.
- 3.6 It is clear that the funding set out above is only a start, and not sufficient to deliver the proposals set out in the master planning document. However, the adoption of a master plan for Jackey Bakers does provide an opportunity to bid for further external funding if and when opportunities arise, and to work collaboratively with local and national partners to deliver an ambitious vision for the site.

4.0 Next Steps

- 4.1 If the prior notice of approval is received for the demolition of the pavilion at Jackey Bakers Recreation Ground, officers shall undertake the tender to achieve a price for demolition. Currently it is anticipated that based on the size of the building it might be in the region of £250,000.
- 4.2 Once the demolition has been completed the Council will install a temporary facility using the existing power, water supply and concrete base. The facility will not be as big as the existing pavilion (approximately 150 sqm) but will provide team changing rooms with showers, officials changing, storage, male and female toilets. Currently it is anticipated that based on the size of the building it might be in the region of £120,000.
- 4.3 Following community engagement, the adoption of a master plan for Jackey Bakers will enable the council to seek external funding opportunities, as they arise, to support its delivery.

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Reporting to: Mike Humber - Director of Environment

Annex List

Annex 1 - Draft Master Plan
Annex 2 - Response to the Petition

Background Papers

None

Corporate Consultation

Finance: Chris Blundell - Director of Corporate Services

Legal: Ingrid Brown - Head of Legal and Democracy (& Monitoring Officer)