

SUBJECT:	CHEPSTOW SCHOOL AND LEISURE CENTRE OUTDOOR PLAYING FACILITIES AND PITCHES
MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	2nd MARCH 2022
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL CHEPSTOW WARDS

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to progress to full application and acceptance of the Sport Wales and Football Association of Wales WG Development grants programme for funding to upgrade the outdoor playing facilities and pitches at Chepstow Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre and to receive an update on further investment into the Leisure Centre facilities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve a capital budget of £101,907 (19% contribution) to be created in the 2021/22 financial year from the Council's Capital Match Funding budget to match fund the upgrade and improvements of the outdoor playing facilities and pitches at Chepstow Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre, the remainder of the project costs, £433,058 (81% of total costs), being sourced through external grant funding.
- 2.2 That Cabinet agree that Officers progress and deliver the project, through partners Alliance Leisure and the UK Leisure Framework.
- 2.3 That Cabinet note the ongoing investments at Chepstow Leisure Centre, which when completed will represent a total investment of more than £1.6 million, including carbon reduction improvements to the leisure centre and outdoor facilities, upgrade of health and fitness equipment and the improvements to the outdoor playing facilities and pitches, as detailed in 3.2 of the report.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Cabinet are committed to continue their investments across the leisure portfolio, and have prioritised this as a key action in their, 'Looking Ahead, Delivering Now Our Strategy to Summer 2022. Chepstow Leisure Centre is benefiting from significant improvements to facilities which include the sports hall, outdoor playing facilities and pitches, swimming and fitness facilities, demonstrating, Our Actions of an ambitious place of hope and enterprise and contributing to Our Long Term Challenges of health inequalities. This investment will ensure that many customers have an improved experience, and more opportunities to continue to increase their health and wellbeing.

- 3.2 There are three main phases of the investment for the overall project at the Chepstow site:
- £576, 068, carbon reduction improvements, to the leisure centre, including LED lighting and shower upgrades, swimming pool plant AHU and CHP and boiler replacements, pool hall refurbishments – Complete.
 - £575,000 health, fitness and wellbeing improvements, including upgrade of fitness and studio equipment. Start date 7th March, completed by July.
 - £534, 965 outdoor facilities and pitch improvements, Start date 14th March, completion by September 2022.
- 3.3 The second phase which has Cabinet approval is the improvements to the fitness offer which is soon to commence.
- 3.4 The third phase is the improvements to the outdoor playing facilities and pitches and for which match funding is requested as part of this report. An outline of the proposed improvements can be seen in **Appendix A**.
- 3.5 The current condition of outdoor playing facilities and pitches on all School and Leisure Centre sites, particularly the Astro Turf Pitch (ATP) and Multi Use Games Areas (MUGA), are coming to the end of their life. The ATP's and outside pitches are used extensively by both school and leisure centre and as a result have suffered extreme wear and tear. The carpets require replacing and is identified as a Capital Pressure, (£250,000 per site), within the Council's capital MTFP.
- 3.6 In December 2021 MonLife were invited to apply for a grant from the Welsh Government, via Sport Wales, and a separate grant from Football Association of Wales, to develop the outdoor playing facilities and pitches at Chepstow Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre.
- 3.7 The proposed project has been developed in consultation with key stakeholders including Leisure Centre, Comprehensive School, Sport Wales, Football Association of Wales, Hockey Wales and Monmouthshire Junior Football League. The improvement of the outdoor playing facilities and pitches in this location is a priority of the Council's strategy, 'Looking Ahead, Delivering Now Our Strategy to Summer 2022. It will extend the curriculum, extracurricular and community and community sport club programme. The leisure centre will continue to build on the excellent work already being undertaken to increase provision and an improved community sport hub. A plan underpinning the support of this project is evidenced in **Appendix B**.
- 3.6 Due to tight timescales for grant application the work to pull together this project has been immense and along with the recent energy efficiency work undertaken that has received positive feedback from customers, this project will provide further enhancement to the site.
- 3.7 The development at Chepstow will also benefit Caldicot Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre, where the demand for outdoor facilities, including

the 3G and ATP, exceeds capacity. Any Clubs or Groups from Chepstow utilising facilities at Caldicot can be relocated to Chepstow. Additionally, this enables a more local offer for all Chepstow community clubs and eliminates barriers to access – such as transport.

- 3.8 These proposed improvements will see Chepstow as a site future proofed and with the ability to enhance and improve many different sports, enabling growth and providing opportunities for all Through existing provision, partnerships and identifying new links, the project has the potential to close some of the gaps already identified through the school curriculum, school sport survey and local sport club data and insight.
- 3.9 The sustainability of outdoor facilities, fresh air and the ability to exercise and play in a safe, secure environment is more important than ever before. Not only have we seen a detrimental effect to children and young people's physical and mental health as a result of the pandemic, we already knew that physical activity levels across our population in Wales was declining.
- 3.10 Football in Chepstow is popular with children, young people and adults. There are active mini, junior, girls and Welsh League Men's team. Chepstow has an active Walking Football team, who has represented the town in a number of tournaments across Wales and England. The initiative was an exit route established from our National Exercise Referral Scheme in Monmouthshire. A great example how we can build on this initiative with other sports. More than 300 adults are referred direct to the Chepstow exercise referral programme each year. More evidence of need is identified in the FAW Strategy, **Appendix C**.
- 3.11 There will be a potential loss of many grass pitches at the local Army Barracks, based in England, currently used by many local Chepstow football clubs, which is more reason to develop more opportunities at Chepstow Leisure Centre.
- 3.12 The ATP is the main facility and playing surface for many sports, football is the main sport played on the surface, for the school and the community clubs. This presents many opportunities, and more often or not, the established sports and first teams takes priority to fulfil their training and fixtures. Quite clearly we have an inequality of opportunity for all, and whilst the school, leisure centre and community clubs are working hard to find solutions, the lack of space and quality of facility is the deciding factor. Growth and opportunity to participate in junior hockey, girl's football and rugby and many recreational opportunities are limited. Subsequently children and young people are seeking opportunities, where they can access into England.
- 3.13 The sport of rugby, like football is served very well in the school and community with strong pathways. However, like other sports the school provision in winter months is delivered on the ATP. Winter training for community clubs is focused on the leisure centre, competing for space with other sports. The rugby hub officer based in the school enables the project to focus on the development of rugby, transition and those fundamental skills of primary school children.

3.14 Unfortunately, like many towns there is evidence and data on anti-social behaviour in Chepstow. Young people often get badged with a small minority of the population who go out to create anti-social behaviour. Working with our colleagues in our youth service and delivering programmes through Positive Futures, our Active Gwent PCC funded initiative, we will build on our engagement through sport sessions and target hot spots. In our other town's we have created very successful diversionary sport activities – Friday Night football projects, Operation Bang, that have included turn up and play football sessions, in a safe environment, taken some of the hardest to reach children and young people to compete and try other sport festivals, along with our Active Gwent colleagues. Chepstow will host Friday Night football projects at the leisure centre, as part of the project.

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING)

4.1. There are no negative impacts to note in this significant investment in sport and community wellbeing. These additional facilities and programmes will ensure there are improved opportunities for all in Chepstow and surrounding areas. A completed integrated assessment accompanies this report in **Appendix D.**

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

5.1 The opportunity to secure external funding awards of potentially 81% (£433,058) to upgrade and improve the outdoor playing facilities and pitches represents good value for money. In the event the project isn't progressed both the Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre will retain the existing provision but the consequence will be that this will remain a Capital Pressure for the Council.

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA:

6.1 There will be a project evaluation commitment directly reporting to the grantees. Additionally, all measures, outcomes and impact will be measured and monitored through quarterly reporting of service business plans and against the corporate plan.

7. REASONS:

7.1 To ensure the Chepstow continues to be hub of sporting opportunity where all sports can be played by all the community and necessary funding is available in the Council's capital budget in the 2021/22 financial year to enable the project to commence.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

8.1 Pending successful grant awards being received that Cabinet approve a capital budget of £101,907 (19% contribution) to be created in the 2021/22 financial year from the Council's Capital Match Funding budget to match fund

the upgrade and improvements of the outdoor playing facilities and pitches at Chepstow Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre.

- 8.2 The ongoing revenue costs for the project will be met from within existing budgets. The delegated budgets are currently held by the schools.
- 8.3 Any additional costs, will be offset by improved maintenance. The project will purchase a ride on mower, to increase regular maintenance across the 3G and ATP surfaces. Routine maintenance and upkeep will be undertaken jointly by the school site maintenance staff and leisure centre team.
- 8.4 There is the potential for an increase in energy costs through increase usage, particularly in the winter months. However, the recent upgrade to LED lighting will mitigate some of this increase in energy costs.
- 8.5 Any costs incurred due to increase in demand will be offset by an increase in income and annual revenue grants.

9. **CONSULTEES:**

Cabinet.

Strategic Leadership Team.

10. **BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Appendix A – Chepstow Comprehensive School and Leisure Centre Scope of Improvements.

Appendix B – MonLife Sport Development Delivery Plan 2022/23.

Appendix C – FAW Strategy Our Wales.

Appendix D – Integrated Impact Assessment document.

11. **AUTHORS:**

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