

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 28th September 2020
Report for: Noting
Report of: Executive Member for Culture and Leisure

Report Title

Crossford Bridge, Sale

Summary

In June 2020 the Executive received a report regarding Sale Sharks' vision and ambition to return to their hometown of Sale and their proposals for the creation of a new community sports and activity hub at Crossford Bridge. The Executive noted that the proposal would be subject to engagement with the local community, and that a further report would be brought to Executive on the conclusion of the initial phase of engagement.

This report sets out the conclusions of the first phase of engagement.

Recommendation(s)

The Executive are recommended to:

Note the extensive engagement carried out with local residents;

Note the conclusion that the local engagement phase one consultation did not demonstrate a clear balance of support for the proposals from residents or current users of Crossford Bridge;

Note that on the basis of the results of the engagement programme to date the Council is not minded to support the proposal.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Richard Roe
Phone: x4265
Background Papers: None

Implications:

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	Health and Wellbeing, Pride in our Area and Successful and Thriving Places; Green and Connected
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	<i>None directly arising from this information report.</i>
Financial	<i>None directly arising from this information report.</i>
Legal Implications:	<i>None directly arising from this information report.</i>
Equality/Diversity Implications	<i>None directly arising from this information report.</i>
Sustainability Implications	<i>None directly arising from this information report.</i>
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	<i>None directly arising from this information report.</i>
Risk Management Implications	<i>None directly arising from this information report.</i>
Health & Wellbeing Implications	<i>None directly arising from this information report.</i>
Health and Safety Implications	<i>None directly arising from this information report.</i>

1.0 Background

1.1 At their meeting on the 22nd June 2020 the Executive received a report regarding Crossford Futures' proposals for the establishment of a community sports and activity hub at Crossford Bridge which would allow for the return of Sale Sharks to Trafford. The report also detailed the public engagement strategy which it was proposed should be undertaken in order to assess the support for the proposals amongst the community and users of the existing Crossford Bridge facilities. The report also noted that the proposal had the potential to bring significant investment to the Borough.

1.2 The report noted that the site was currently operated by Crossford Bridge Management Association, who maintain the facility, and that current usage included Sale United and Old Altrinchamians, Sale Harriers and North West Rockers.

1.3 The proposed engagement strategy, was to be led by Crossford Futures, and would involve local residents and existing users of Crossford Bridge. It was noted that a two stage engagement strategy was proposed, with Phase One running from 22nd June to 13th July, and that a report would be brought back to the Executive on the conclusion of the initial phase of engagement.

2.0 Engagement Strategy and outcomes

2.1 The informative Phase One consultation to listen to the views of the community took place from Monday 22nd June to 13th July, and in accordance with Covid19 restrictions and the continuing need for social distancing was conducted predominately on line or printed material. The consultation was extensive, and undertaken in a professional and transparent manner by Crossford Futures, with a clear commitment to listen and work collaboratively with the local community. It generated significant local interest and a high level of responses. This is included:

- Three week consultation period on the early stage vision
- A consultation pack to approx. 30,000 households in M33/32
- Outreach via email to local stakeholders database including businesses, schools, community clubs/groups, disability and BAME networks
- Press activity
- Targeted social media.

2.2 There was a total number 2,359 respondents to the online questionnaire including responses from all the key stakeholder groups: local residents, local business owners, schools, local community groups and Sale Sharks fans.

2.3 Of the 2,359 respondents 1,138 were identified as 'local residents', of which 812 were local to Sale. There were 919 not local to Sale and they had been asked to comment on topics relating to the community stadium and travel to the site. A total of 1,732 of the respondents were identified as Sale Sharks fans.

2.4 In addition to the online questionnaire a further 304 email respondents were received of which 124 were identified as local residents. The remainder were undisclosed or identified as other categories e.g. business

2.5 In addition to the community consultation a number of meetings were held with Crossford Bridge Management Association and the clubs who currently use Crossford Bridge facilities to discuss proposals and concerns. The clubs engaged fully in these discussions but overall had significant concerns as to the potential for their requirements to be fully met on the site.

2.6 The most common comments in relation to existing sports and leisure facilities in the local area pointed to:

- Facilities for local sports club was one of the top three priorities for respondents when considering proposals.
- Responses demonstrated a trend towards non-team based activity/facilities (walking/running, dog walking and cycling)
- Importance of green space
- Improvements to grass pitches and athletics facilities also ranked highly, particularly by members of local sports clubs
- All weather facilities scored highly in questions relating to new or improved facilities
- Active travel routes - walking, running and cycling - consistently ranked highest in questions related to new or improved facilities in the local area
- There is an appetite for more local health and social programmes in the local area
- Sustainable transport options were prioritised by respondents with enhanced public transport services and new/improved walking routes ranking highest
- Around 70% of people said they would like to see disability and inclusive sports groups, as well as social inclusion programmes
- Appetite for modernisation/improvement of existing local sport and leisure facilities
- Multi-use indoor space was the most important community facility highlighted by respondents and those specifically within 0.5 mile radius of Crossford Bridge
- Food and drinks facilities and health facilities also scored highly, while a play area and community gardens was featured in comments from those living closest to the site.
- The three key concerns raised by the local community were:
 - o Loss of green space
 - o Loss of facilities for local sports clubs (current users)
 - o The suitability of local infrastructure

2.7 A summary report on the outcomes of the Phase One 'Crossford Bridge Strategy Consultation' is attached for information (Appendix 1)

Members Consultation

2.8 In addition to the formal consultation there was extensive contact by residents and others with local ward Councillors, primarily via email. In total 317 contacts were received directly by local ward members of which 308 were opposed to the proposals.

Examples of the feedback from local residents are given below.

'During this pandemic I think we all know how important people's mental and physical health has become so to lose this space would be severely detrimental to people's health. The proposed idea by Sale Sharks to repurpose some of the area is not sufficient as the green space given back to the community cannot obviously be the same as what we have as a huge stadium will be taking up the majority of the space!'

'Having lived in a house that looks out on to the fields for 30 years, there is an irony in the fact (especially during this time of Covid19) that I can honestly say I have never seen the field as busy (I took a couple of pictures the other night which I've enclosed). Today (Sunday), I just nipped out and all 7 pitches are in use, there are loads of youngsters at Sale Harriers, there are dog walkers, joggers, families and I even spoke to someone from Cumbria who had come to photograph some of the birds that we have in the trees by the motorway.'

'Crossford Bridge on average hosts about 15-20 junior and adult football matches every weekend as well as Sale Harriers events. The vast majority of members of these clubs live locally and it might do serious damage to the clubs if people were expected to travel further afield to an alternative venue and this would also damage the community identity of the clubs.'

'As a keen bird watcher and natural water watcher, I spend many an hour of the day in Crossford Bridge park. I can also vouch for the local ecosystem that would be harmed a great deal should any construction take place on the land.'

'As a local resident of 40 years & my husband was also born in the local area we are extremely alarmed to hear news of the proposal put forward by sale sharks. Having witnessed the many changes to the local area over the years the one thing which has remained constant is the green space & trees behind our house which provides a vital barrier between the residents & ever increasing traffic, pollution & noise.'

'As a local resident I believe this will have a negative impact on the local community. My daughter was a member of sale harriers as a child and my son played for sale united throughout his childhood. Both clubs play a vital part in promoting the physical and emotional health of our younger generation and the wider community as a whole. I am concerned about the pollution, congestion and accessibility to Crossford Bridge and the impact on parking for local residents, which is already overcrowded. There will also be a negative effect on our local metro link station at Dane Road which does not have the capacity for large volumes of people to pass through.'

'I am against the loss of yet more local green spaces within the Trafford community where many people do not have their own outside space to enjoy. As a NHS nurse during this

Covid -19 pandemic Crossford Bridge has been a haven into which I can escape. The availability of being able to walk out my door with my dog or run round the field after a long shift at work has been vital in the protection of my emotional wellbeing and mental health.'

2.9 In summary, the consultation generated a range of views, and whilst there was support for Sale Sharks moving back to Sale, residents in the vicinity and current users of the site have raised significant concerns. These concerns relate principally to access to facilities, loss of green space and the potential impact of traffic, noise and parking.

2.10 In their discussions about the proposals when the matter was considered at the Executive meeting the Executive had made it clear that they only wished to move forward with the proposal if it was supported by local residents and if the needs of the clubs on site could be met, and neither of these ambitions have been met.

2.11 The Council remain committed to seeking opportunities to bring in additional investment into the Borough's sporting facilities, and to working with clubs and communities in an open and transparent way.

Reasons for Recommendation

To enable a decision to be taken in relation to the proposals for Crossford Bridge following the first phase of consultation.

Key Decision

No

Finance Officer Clearance GB
Legal Officer Clearance JLF

[CORPORATE] DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE *(electronic)*



To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.