

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 22nd March 2021
Report for: Decision
Report of: Executive Member for Housing and Regeneration

Report Title

Crossford Bridge: Fields in Trust dedication

Summary

The report sets out the proposal, to protect Crossford Bridge in Sale via Fields in Trust, Deed of Dedication

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Executive:

- (i) Approves in principle to the dedication of the of Crossford Bridge playing fields as a Field in Trust.
- (ii) Authorises the Corporate Director of Place to:
 - Undertake public consultation of the proposal to dedicate;
 - Review and consider the responses to the consultation; and
 - make the application to dedicate Crossford Bridge as a Fields in Trust.
- (iii) Authorises the Corporate Director of Governance and Community Strategy to enter into any document required to give effect to the recommendations of this report

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Tom Haworth: Sport & Physical Activity Relationship Manager

Extension: 07702 674376

Background Papers: None

Implications:

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	This work supports the Council's Corporate Plan priorities of Health and Wellbeing; Successful and Thriving Places and Green and Connected. It also supports the following key strategies:
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Wellbeing Strategy • Trafford Moving: Trafford Sport & Physical Activity Strategy • Trafford Playing Pitch Strategy • Local Football Facilities Plan
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	This work supports the aims of the GM Strategy, GM 5 Year Environment Plan, draft Places for Everyone, and GM Cultural Strategy relating to Natural Capital, Green Infrastructure, Climate Change and Public Health and Sport England's Playing Pitch Strategy
Financial	Crossford Bridge Management Association CBMA is currently responsible for maintenance and management and will continue to do so via this process. This is currently supported by an annual subsidy from the Council of £26,000.
Legal Implications:	Legal resource will be required from within the Council to complete the dedication. Once the land is dedicated there will be restrictions on what the Council can do with it as set out in the report.
Equality/Diversity Implications	None
Sustainability Implications	Not applicable
Carbon Reduction	Not applicable
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	Legal resource will be required from within the Council to complete this dedication.
Risk Management Implications	None
Health & Wellbeing Implications	Access to greenspace leads to improved health and wellbeing of residents
Health and Safety Implications	None

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Crossford Bridge is 4.5 ha (11.1 acres) site in the Central locality of the Borough.
- 1.2 The site has been used as a multisport site for decades and is predominantly used for football and athletics and has been used for cricket.
- 1.3 Crossford Futures, a scheme backed by Sale Sharks submitted proposals to develop a community stadium on the site. These were withdrawn following a public consultation in November 2019
- 1.4 Crossford Bridge Management Association (CBMA) manages the sport facilities on site via a subsidised management agreement which has been in place since 2002. The CBMA consists of the following community sports clubs,
 - Sale United FC (*has been using the site since 1975*)
 - Old Altrinchamians (*has been using the site since 1977*)
 - Sale Harriers AC

In a normal season the three clubs provide sporting outcomes for hundreds of participants per week and the wider site is popular for residents, cyclist, runner and walkers

- 1.5 CBMA wishes to secure a long term lease and has submitted an EOI via the Long Term Security of Tenure process. CBMA are keen to secure their sustainability and that of the site for sports and physical activity and for broader community use.
- 1.6 Current facilities on Crossford Bridge include:
- 3 Adult pitches - spare capacity of 6 Match Equivalent Sessions
 - 2 Youth 9v9 pitches - no spare capacity
 - 5 Mini 7v7 pitches – spare capacity of 1 Match Equivalent Session
 - 1 Cricket Square
 - 1 Cinder Track (Built in 1910)

2. Fields in Trust (FiT)

- 2.1 FiT works in partnership with landowners including local authorities, to protect land through a deed of dedication – a binding legal commitment with the landowner – which allows green spaces to be protected for current and future generations to enjoy.
- 2.2 The programme dedicates green spaces with the aim of increasing participation in physical activities on local parks and green spaces which will be protected for future generations to use and enjoy.
- 2.3 By entering into a deed of dedication the Council is agreeing to certain restrictions with how it uses and deals with the land. These are:
- (i) Spaces must have public access and should be accessible in terms of location and affordability for the local community.
 - (ii) Dedications will restrict the use of the land to playing fields and recreation ground. It will be a non-charitable dedication.
 - (iii) FiT will permit new buildings, structures and alterations for the purpose of maintaining the site as open space/public playing field/recreation ground. For example, a sports pavilion, changing rooms etc. could be built without permission from FiT.
 - (iv) No buildings or structures falling outside the permitted use will be allowed without the prior consent of FiT. Requests to build a building or structure for commercial use may be turned down by FiT.
 - (v) Any new buildings (if permitted by FiT) cannot exceed 20% of the total square footage of the dedicated site.
 - vi) The Council will continue to be responsible for maintenance of the land and have regard to any advice given by FiT on the management of the land.

(vii) The Council cannot dispose of the land without the consent of FiT. If the Council wishes to dispose by sale of the whole or any part of the land included in the Deed of Dedication, the Council must use their reasonable endeavours to replace it with a piece of freehold land approved by FiT of similar quality than the original land of no less area, in the same catchment area and as accessible to the general public. The Council must apply proceeds from the sale of any land to the replacement of land and facilities. The replacement land would be dedicated in a similar manner to the original. Consent would also be required for other disposals such as granting of leases and rights. The Council may be required to enter into a deed of dedication.

2.4 Once approved by the Executive an application needs to be made to the Fields in Trust to protect the site. This is then followed by a site visit from a Fields in Trust Development Manager to review the site based on the application. Once this has happened the deed of dedication will be drawn up which needs to be signed and sealed by both parties. The Council must be able to complete the agreed deed of dedication within six months of submitting an application.

2.5 It is anticipated that a long term lease will be granted to a body (CBMA have already expressed an interest) to manage the site and ensure its sustainability. A key mechanism for this is the ability to charge fees and reinvest that revenue into facility maintenance and improvement, Fields in Trust has confirmed that such a management model would not be prevented by FiT status.

3.0 Other Options

- 3.1 The Council could do nothing. This would not secure the use of the site for public recreation. Ultimately this would fail to capture the significant potential of the site to deliver against key Council and partners priorities around natural capital, health and wellbeing, sport and physical activity and climate change.
- 3.2 The Council could seek to designate the land as Town and Village Green which would protect the status of the land as public recreation land. However, it would not allow the management model that is being proposed.

Consultation

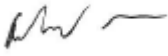
Consultation with community stakeholders will need to be undertaken, post approval, for a period of 14 days

Reasons for Recommendation

The recommendations set out in the report will serve to safeguard the long term future of Crossford Bridge as playing fields and recreation ground. Access to greenspace leads to improved health and wellbeing of residents.

Key Decision No
If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given? n/a

Finance Officer Clearance (type in initials) PC
Legal Officer Clearance (type in initials) TR

[CORPORATE] DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE (electronic) 
To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.