

Title of Report:	Strategic Direct Investment to Harry Gregg Legacy Project– Feasibility Report
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure & Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	15 March 2022
For Decision or For Information	For Decision

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, healthy & engaged communities
Outcome	Citizens will have access to Council recreational facilities and protected natural environments which help them to develop their physical, emotional and cognitive health.
Lead Officer	Head of Sport & Wellbeing

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	£15k (and up to £42k)
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/NO
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date:
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Feasibility Study received from the Harry Gregg Foundation for the proposed development of a Youth Sports Zone in Coleraine and to provide options regarding the release of further financial support.

2.0 Background

In May 2021, the Harry Gregg Legacy Foundation (HGLF) made a presentation to Council's Leisure & Development Committee outlining a capital legacy project for the late Harry Gregg.

The initial paper proposes an indoor sports dome at the Ulster University Coleraine campus to include: 4G pitch, four court hall, gym, climbing wall and youth provision at a cost of c.£7m. The concept design is inspired and based on On-side Youth Zone model which is operated in various cities in England to offer highly subsidised services and meals to children and young people from marginalised communities.

The project was presented in 3 development stages:

- Stage 1 – Feasibility Study. This stage involves early design options, a review of possible project sites, a community survey, and a visit to On Side Youth Zones in the North West area of England. This stage, estimated to cost £15,000, will establish the principle of the project and seeks to secure buy in from external funding bodies.
- Stage 2 – Pre-Application Notification (PAN) process. This stage is estimated to cost £5,000 and will enable the HGLF to make a formal planning application.
- Stage 3 – Formal Planning Application. This stage involves full design, environmental studies, development of a full business case, legal advice and support. This stage is estimated to cost £22,000.

In June 2021, Council agreed the following motion:

Direct Strategic Investment of £15,000 in the Stage 1 feasibility study for the Harry Gregg Legacy Foundation. Funding for Stages 2 & 3 (i.e. the Planning Process) being subject to Council's consideration of the outputs recommended by the feasibility study;

Resulting in a Direct Strategic Investment of £15,000 in the Stage 1 feasibility study for the Harry Gregg Legacy Foundation. Funding for Stages 2 & 3 (i.e. the Planning Process) being subject to Council's consideration of the outputs recommended by the Feasibility Study.

More recently at the Leisure & Development Committee meeting in February 2022, the HGLF presented the completed Feasibility Study and requested further financial support to progress the project.

3.0 Preliminary Review of the Feasibility Study

Officers conducted a detailed review of the Feasibility Study which was shared with the HGLF and Copious Consulting prior to their presentation to the Leisure & Development Committee.

In summary, this constructive critique of the analysis highlights the strong conceptual design of the On-side Youth Project, compelling Vision with stakeholder buy-in and potential benefits of targeted investment in bespoke community / sport facilities for many young people from deprived areas within the Coleraine catchment area.

However, the critique also highlights the need for further consultation with Ulster University, Sport NI, Coleraine FC and Council (particularly with reference to other capital development projects within Coleraine). It also points to the need for further consideration of options, potentially scaled back and developed on a phased basis in response to confirmed need and demand.

Despite the forecasted financial surpluses, of key concern is the financial viability of the project and the indication from On-side Youth that 'there is insufficient potential in the local private sector to sustain a Youth Zone in Coleraine using the On-side Financial Model'.

The critique concludes that it is not possible to be conclusive on the feasibility of project concept and raises questions over affordability and financial sustainability of the options presented. An Outline Business Case prepared in line with Better Business Cases NI guidance to explore a wider range of potentially lower scale options and robustly challenge the 'Economic Case' and 'Financial Case' would be worth considering prior to advancing the project through the Planning process and incurring significant cost in the process.

4.0 Recommendation & Next Steps

Members are asked to note this update and recommend one of three options:

- Option 1 – Do nothing and provide no further financial support to the HGLF; or
- Option 2 – Provide no further financial support to the HGLF until the key concerns highlighted within the Preliminary Review are addressed; or
- Option 3 – Progress to Stage 2 and provide further financial support of £5k to the HGLF towards the development of an Outline Business Case that addresses the key concerns within the Preliminary Review. ***This financial support is instead of and therefore replaces the original proposal of Stage 2: Pre-Application Notice support of £5k.***

Subject to Council decision, and if required, a further paper can be brought back to the Leisure & Development Committee to consider the Outline Business Case prior to any decision on requested financial support of £22k towards 'Stage 3 – Formal Planning Application and Full Business Case'.