

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 15 January 2024
Title: Major & Strategic Projects
Contact Officer: Project Officer

Background

As Members are aware, Witney Town Council's Open Spaces Strategy cited 5 themes to deliver improvements for our community: Parks, Sport, Leisure, Infrastructure & Effectiveness.

This report aims to provide the Committee with an update on the major projects linked to Parks and Recreation, which are: Wheeled Sports Park, West Witney Sports & Social Club and the Courtside Master Plan for the hub at The Leys.

The Leys - Wheeled Sports Park

Recap: The existing park was built almost 20 years ago and needs modernisation. This belief has been reinforced with community feedback and resident survey results asking for an improved wheeled sports park, which caters for more abilities, promotes inclusivity and is suitable for more wheeled sports equipment (Skateboards, BMX, Scooters etc). After a robust tender process, Bendcrete were successfully awarded the contract in September 2023. The target completion date is March 2024.



Current Situation

- Public consultation on 14th Nov was successful, with good attendance and constructive feedback. As a result, new features and colour was added to the final design. The pictures above show the old design on left and the revised design on the right.

- Work is due to start middle of January. When WTC know exact dates from Bendcrete, officers have a communications plan in place to advise residents and users of closure, potential disruption around the Leys and construction progress.
- The press release of the new design was well received and was front cover news on the Witney Gazette. Also, the Council's Social Media accounts received higher engagement rates than normal, when it posted about the Wheeled Sports Park.
- Courtside have agreed in principle for Bendcrete to utilise their old tennis courts to establish a temporary construction site for the wheeled sports park, instead of using the Leys Field outside the skatepark entrance. This means, the Council can minimise the risk of disruption to Ley's users/residents and eliminate risk of football pitch closures.
- Planned completion date is 28th Mar 2024. Opening event is in the planning stages.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26th June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make regarding its facilities and services it operates.

- The project delivery plans, risk and method statements will be analysed with regular site supervision to mitigate environmental hazards. In addition, Bendcrete have used recycled materials within their design, and officers have eliminated the risk of damaging nearby trees and root structures by negotiating with Courtside to use their Tennis Courts as a temporary construction site.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should consider any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

- This report is an update of progress with this project and risks associated with delivery will be managed by Council Officers.

Financial implications

- Final budget for project is £157,975 and we have been awarded £57,975 funding from FCC Community Action Foundation.
- WTC are contributing the remaining £100,000 to this project.

Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.

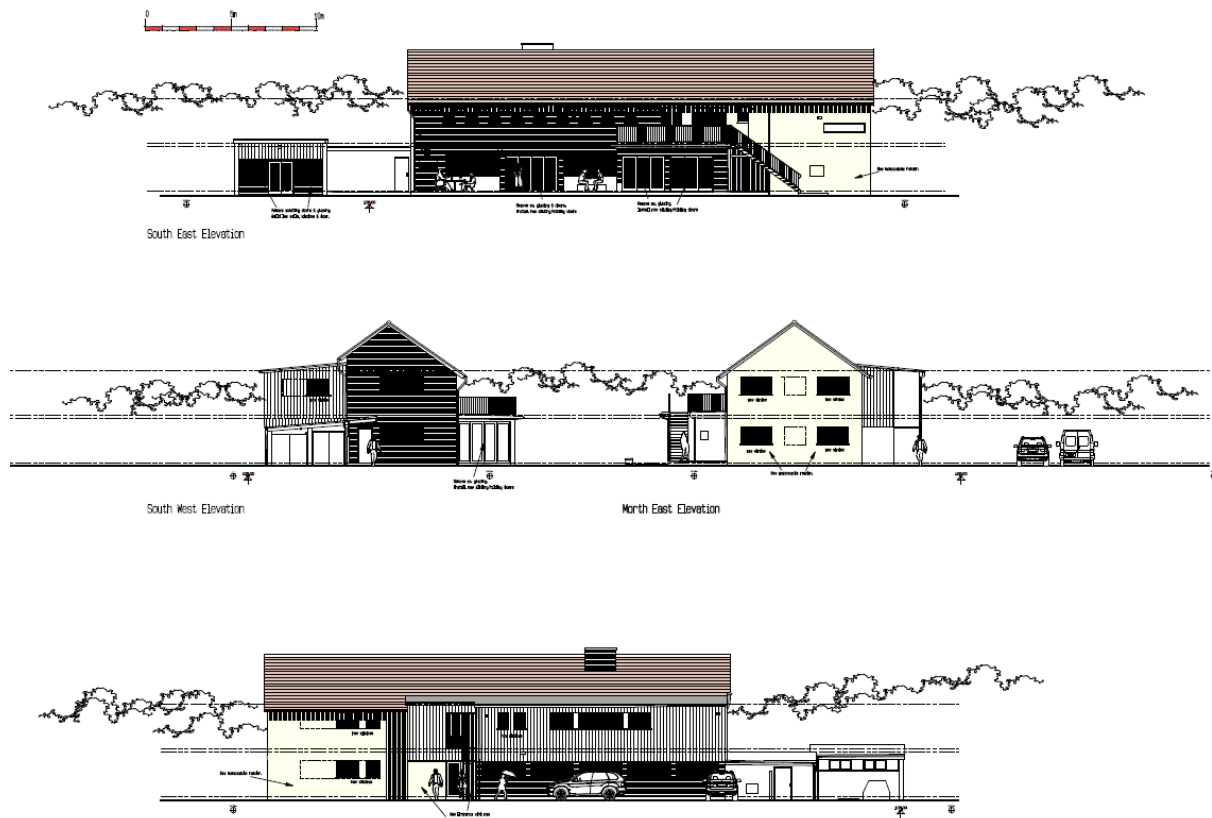
West Witney Sports & Social Club (WWSSC)

Recap: WWSSC is one of Witney's largest outdoor spaces, offering a large variety of sports facilities (Football, Cricket, Tennis, Bowls, Projectile Range). Built in the 1950's, the building needs major interior and exterior refurbishment to ensure it remains a premier recreational location for Witney's residents, whilst improving the appearance, energy efficiency and user experience.

Current Situation

- Planning Permission was approved in December 2023 with a requirement to demonstrate adequate drainage provision.
- WTC are exploring ways to obtain funding to support this project, with the Community Ownership Funding Level 3, Sports England and the National Lottery being the targeted funders.
- At the design and specification stage to prepare to procure and tender.
- Anticipated construction start date is late 2024 or early 2025.
- The planning application link is [Link to planning application](#)

Architect drawings



Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26th June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make regarding its facilities and services it operates.

- The project specification will include energy efficiency initiatives with detail to follow as the project advances.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should consider any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

- This report is an update of progress with this project and risks associated with delivery will be managed by Council Officers.

Financial implications

- The project costs will be made up of Section 106 funds and a WTC contribution which will be minimised by exploring funding opportunities to support.
- A new lease agreement is in the process of being produced to recover this investment and at the same time build a sinking fund for future improvements.

Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.

The Leys - Courtside Hub

Recap: Courtside are a community interest company dedicated to increasing physical activity and promoting a sense of community through the transformation of local parks. The current activities at The Leys are adventure golf, netball and tennis with a café (Coffee Shed). Courtside lease the land from Witney Town Council (WTC).

In late 2022, Courtside ran a public consultation regarding a proposed multi-activity hub in The Leys. This resulted in a design for an open, flat, wheelchair friendly, flexible design allowing for 20+ sports activities to be offered. In addition, a new MUGA (Multi-Use Games Area) will offer extra free activities, which is important for our young community.

Current Situation

- Awarded Grant from the Community Ownership Fund, matched by contributions from WTC & Courtside.
- Planning Application was recently amended after consultation and feedback from neighbouring residents resulting in changes to the car park. The WODC planning committee date for decision is 08 January 2024. The planning application can be viewed using the following link.

[Link to Planning Application](#)

- A planning application is being produced for a new WTC depot to be built at the West Witney recreation ground.
- Revised timeline/plan covering below milestones to be provided if/when planning permission granted.

Key milestones:

- Planning decision on 08 January 2024 (committee meeting)
 - Construction partner contract awarded.
 - Commencement on site.
 - Practical completion.
 - Staff training & induction.
 - Targeted opening date.
- The following pictures provide a visual of the improvements being made however please note the car park in the new complex has not been updated to reflect the amendments made in the planning application to reduce its size in include a marked crossing.





Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make regarding its facilities and services it operates:

- The project intends to include energy efficiency initiatives to include a photo voltaic system in the new pavilion.
- In addition, the construction company will be evaluated on its environmentally friendly construction processes and materials.

Risk

In decision making, Councillors should consider any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability. This report is an update of progress with this project and risks associated with delivery will be managed by Council Officers:

- Courtside have requested for WTC operations team to vacate the existing depot at the Leys when their construction begins. WTC officers are working with Courtside on an exit plan to manage the risk associated to providing a continuous service delivery.

Financial implications

- The project costs are estimated to be circa £1.25m with WTC contributing £250,000, the community ownership fund providing £650,000 and the remaining £350,000 from Courtside.
- A new lease agreement is in the process of being produced to recover this investment and at the same time build a sinking fund for future improvements.

Recommendations

This is a project update however any feedback is always appreciated.