

PARKS & RECREATION COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 10 January 2022

Title: King George V – Provision of Toilets

Contact Officer: Project Officer - Nicky Cayley

Background

In August 2021, a meeting was held with Members, Town Council Officers, a representative from the Oxfordshire F.A and representatives from the local football clubs, at the end of which the clubs were tasked with drawing up a ‘wish list’ of potential facility improvements. One of the items on the list was toilets at King George V Field and it was noted there was a grant available for such items from the F.A. The Project Officer has been tasked with looking into this further to see how this could be achieved.

Current Situation

The Project Officer has been in contact with Andy Earnshaw, Business and Facility Development Manager for the Oxfordshire F.A to establish exactly what sort of facilities would be suitable for funding. He confirmed that funding was possible for 75% of up to £25,000 and that “what [they are] seeing now is clubs using companies that sell converted containers hosting toilets, storage, changing rooms etc”.

The Project Officer has obtained some rough costings for a converted shipping container and they are in the region of £14,000 - £15,000. However, this is for one set of toilets in one container and the F.A has a strong preference for two sets, one for players and one for spectators, for safeguarding reasons. The F.A would also require the toilets to be locked so that only the football teams could benefit from them.

The F.A will not fund anything other than the container so the Council will need to consider how it would fund the pipework to connect the container to water and sewers and potentially install an electrical connection. The Maintenance and Environment Officer and the Project Officer would expect this to be significant – at least £25,000 based on the cost of the quote for a new pipe at The Leys.

Members should also take into account the revenue cost for cleaning. The Cemeteries, External Contracts and Compliance Officer was recently quoted in the region of £6,000 p.a for twice daily cleaning of The Leys toilets – whilst these toilets are not likely to need twice daily cleaning, there would still be a cost implication.

As the container would be connected to the water mains, it could not be classified as a temporary structure and would therefore need planning permission. This may not be straightforward as King George V Field is in a conservation area. The Maintenance and Environmental Services Officer and the Project Officer have identified a location towards the back of the field for the potential siting of the container which they would hope would minimise its impact on the surroundings.

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 with regard to its facilities and services it operates. There is a carbon footprint associated with the shipping containers manufacture but using a recycled container is a better option than a new one.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability. This project involves a high level of Council investment so should be considered with care. Additionally, if the Council takes ownership of the Woodgreen field and the football moves to that location, a significant amount of money will have been spent for a short-term gain.

Financial implications

The financial implications are:-

- Purchase of a converted shipping container – if grant funding application was successful then the Council would need to fund around £3,750 – bearing in mind that the F.A have preference for two sets of toilets
- Water, sewage, and possibly electrical connection – at least £25,000
- Revenue costs of cleaning
- Planning permission application (awaiting a quotation from WODC)

This project has not been funded in the 2022/23 draft budget.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider whether the Town Council should obtain further costs on connection to services for the container before going ahead with sourcing a firm price for the container and applying for a grant from the F.A.