

# Cabinet Report



Listening Learning Leading

Report of Acting Deputy Chief Executive – Place

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Wards affected: Sonning Common

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To: CABINET

Date: 18 March 2021

## S106 Request – Sonning Common Parish Council

### Recommendations

1. That Cabinet recommends Council to create a budget of £267,671 in the approved capital programme for the Memorial Hall Field project (ground levelling and access works and installation of fence along the western boundary) in Sonning Common, to be funded by the section 106 contributions set out in this report.
2. That Cabinet (subject to Council creating the budget):
  - i) approves funding to Sonning Common Parish Council of £267,670.53, towards the Memorial Hall Field project in Sonning Common as detailed in their application.
  - ii) authorises the Acting Deputy Chief Executive – Place, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic to:
    - agree a funding agreement with Sonning Common Parish Council regarding the terms of use of the S106 funding; the instalments in which the funding is paid; the timing of instalments; the conditions subject to which instalments are paid and to otherwise protect the interests of South Oxfordshire District Council as the provider of the funding
    - approve the payment to Sonning Common Parish Council of £267,670.53 towards the Memorial Hall Field project, subject to and in accordance with the funding agreement.

## Purpose of Report

1. To consider a request from Sonning Common Parish Council to release funds of £267,671 from two S106 contributions. Sonning Common Parish Council is seeking this funding towards the ground levelling, creating public access and the installation of fence along the western boundary at the Memorial Hall Field, Reade's Lane, Sonning Common.
2. As the funding requested is above £100,000 and under the terms of our constitution approval is required by full council to create a new budget.
3. The Memorial Hall Field land was acquired by Sonning Common Parish Council under a Section 106 agreement on 2 May 2018, which included the following provisions;
  - (a) the freehold of Site SON3 to be offered to Sonning Common Parish Council for the sum of £1 prior to the commencement of development of SON2
  - (b) a financial contribution of £250,000, no indexation agreed or applied (**£250,000**) towards the costs of levelling works, drainage works, seeding and public access on the SON3 site
  - (c) a contribution of £16,000, Index-Linked (**£17,670.53**), towards the cost of fencing on the SON3 site
4. The Memorial Hall Field is identified for sport and recreational use within the made Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan and is referred to as SON3. Neighbourhood Plan Policy HS1 specifies that SON3 is to come forward as a publicly accessible sports and recreation ground. The supporting text to Policy H1 explains that the long-term aim for the recreational space is to have a community leisure or sports space to be provided by the parish council. The principle use of the site as a sport and recreational facility has been established through a planning permission (P15/S4119/FUL).
5. The detailed sums secured for the ground and access work requested by Sonning Common Parish Council are set out in the summary table below:

### ***S106 18S20 - Development of Land at Bishopswood Middle Field and Memorial Hall***

Infrastructure category	Contribution towards (extracts from S106 agreement)	Amount in Agreement	Contributions Received (incl. indexation)	Amount requested	Balance
Outdoor Sport	The sum of £16,000 Index-Linked (£17,670.53) to be used towards fencing around the Memorial Hall Field	£16,000.00	£17,670.53 received on 11.2.19	£17,670.53	£0

Infrastructure category	Contribution towards (extracts from S106 agreement)	Amount in Agreement	Contributions Received (incl. indexation)	Amount requested	Balance
Outdoor Sport	The sum of £250,000 for the provision of a	£250,000.00	£250,000.00 indexed?	£250,000.00	£0

	public recreation area on the Memorial Hall Field and FOR THE AVOIDANCE OF DOUBT the provision of which is to include public access, levelling, Drainage Works and top soil with seeding on the Memorial Hall Field to provide an area suitable for the purposes of sports and public recreation		received on 11.2.19		
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## Background

6. The proposal is to undertake groundworks to change the existing contours of the land to create an active destination for the local community, with areas of level playing space for informal recreation, sport, physical activity and community events, along with the installation of a 2.4 metre high weldmesh fence along the western boundary of the site.
7. Planning permission for ground works and the various recreational and sports areas and a 2.4m weldmesh fence was granted on 19 November 2020 (P20/S2526/FUL).
8. Site access to the SON3 site was granted under planning permission P20/S0459/FUL on 6 August 2020.
9. The space will address some of the recreation and sports deficits identified in the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan and provide space for community activity events in a setting which is sympathetically landscaped and in keeping with the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in which it is located.
10. The works to proposed to start in March 2021 and be completed ready for use by June 2021.

## Options

11. The development of SON 3 was explicitly provided for through the Sonning Common Neighbourhood Plan 2012-2017. The SCNDP identified a lack of appropriate recreational facilities within Sonning Common for all ages and abilities. Those facilities that do exist are either at Maiden Erlegh Chiltern Edge School (MECE), which are not fully open to the public and are in need of renovation, or in the Village Hall where there is there is limited capacity, or are run by sports clubs where membership is required.
12. A sport and recreation deficit in Sonning Common was identified in three studies undertaken in 2008, 2011 and 2015 by Nortoft Consultants commissioned by South Oxfordshire District Council.

13. Sport England have fully supported the vision for the Memorial Hall Field site and have provided advice and guidance on the facility composition and have supported the parish council's community use discussions with MECE.

## **Financial Implications**

14. The financial implications of this request can be accommodated by the secured S106 contributions.
15. As the funding requested is above £100,000 and under the terms of our constitution approval is required by full council to create a new budget.
16. The total project cost is estimated at £648,000 plus VAT.
17. The S106 contributions sought in this application, and the CIL monies due to be passed to the parish council in April 2021 provide Sonning Common Parish Council with the necessary funds to deliver the project.

## **Legal Implications**

18. A funding agreement is recommended between the Council and Sonning Common Parish Council to ensure that the S106 funds are used appropriately to cover the cost of this project.
19. Sonning Common Parish Council is the local authority and own the land at the Memorial Hall Field, Reade's Lane, Sonning Common. A transfer of land between Linden Limited and Sonning Common Parish Council took place on 28 January 2019 and is registered.

## **Risks**

20. There is no shortfall in funding. The project works will be overseen by Aurora CC in conjunction with the Memorial Hall Field working group and project co-ordinator reporting to the parish council and its finance committee.
21. A funding agreement will be secured with Sonning Common Parish Council before any payment is made. This will reduce risks to the Council regarding any inappropriate use of funds. An amount of £267,670.53 will be paid to Sonning Common Parish Council, subject to completion of the funding agreement.

## **Conclusion**

22. The project will provide sustainable recreation facilities to meet the needs of the growing community, now and in the future, promoting a healthy and active lifestyle, which it is hoped will, in turn, reduce healthcare needs.
23. It will create a site which can be easily accessed on foot from most of the village. The site will be cleared of sharp flints and stones and offer space for play and exercise. It will facilitate the re-starting of the village's Summer Fun programme, which provided much needed school holiday activities for all families.

24. The on-going Covid19 restrictions have seen even greater need for safe open spaces and the Parish Council is keen to do all it can to offer its residents opportunities for exercise, fresh air and activities as soon as possible
25. The proposed project conforms to the spending parameters of the S106 agreements and is a suitable use of the funds.