

Strategies for Developing Three Major Parks for Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) Information Notice

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Just Solutions Consultants have been engaged by BCBC to review and appraise the alternative options for the management of three major parks leading to the presentation of preferred models and future plans. For a project summary see Annex A.

The work needs to involve the engagement of senior BCBC managers as well as appropriate stakeholders and community groups to identify support and ideas for the development of preferred alternative delivery models.

For a number of reasons, this work will not be easy, not least because:

- The current constraints caused by Covid-19 restrictions are severely restricting normal working practices and consultation, community engagement, communication and activity;
- There is a long history of many challenges (not unique to Bridgend), in securing alternative community organisation/club management of parks pitches and pavilions. These facilities are generally used by small sports clubs, often not best placed, set up, or able to takeover responsibilities previously undertaken by the Local Authority;
- The three parks are very varied in their physical make-up, use, and place within their different local communities. The options and ultimate solutions are unlikely to be same.
- It will be necessary for all concerned to remain open minded and flexible throughout the process in order to respond to opportunities, needs and challenges that emerge.

Given all the above considerations, the approach to this work needs to be bespoke to each community, carefully thought through and staggered in order to test options and potential scenarios building an agreed vision appropriate for each park.

Informed by initial site visits, Just Solutions have prepared an order of consultees and information gathering schedule to build a complete picture and inform next steps. This will include a 360° community, sporting and strategic review.

Finally, it is also important that the work builds on and adds value to existing BCBC policies, service delivery experience, performance measures and management information. The Consultants' work will depend on the different managers and community groups providing requested information, alongside being available to contribute to any consultation meetings which will enable Just Solutions to better understand information as well as taking on board experiences, expertise, views and advice.

We look forward to working with you and your assistance with this important project.

Sara Green

*Project Manager, Just Solutions Consultants. 07885 155814. www.justsolutionsconsultants.co.uk.
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SUMMARY PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Need

Public parks, playing fields, open spaces along with the individuals and organisations that rely on them, critically serve community cohesion, health and well-being. The importance of this has been further reinforced during the current 'pandemic', where their contributions have come to the fore.

However, with the ongoing and escalating pressures on public finances, levels of Council subsidy required to continue to maintain these important community amenities have become increasingly unsustainable. As well as this, the poor condition of many public pitches and pavilions is deteriorating as a result of diminishing maintenance regimes - the threat of closure is real.

The support for alternative community management models continues to be pursued for smaller parks. However, for larger sites, levels of usage, numbers of groups involved, and scale of investment and improvement needed, have led the Council to accept that alternative options should be considered in addition to standard community asset transfers.

The Strategic Parks

Three locations have been identified for this work:

- Newbridge Fields;
- Maesteg Welfare Park;
- Aberfields, Nantymoel - 'The Planka'.

For each area the commission is expected to identify potential alternative models/approaches

to:

- ensure that sporting and community activities are protected for future generations and in a sustainable manner;
- address the issues of cost alongside improving and maintaining the assets;
- enable different collaborative models to operate assets under new fit for purpose governance arrangements.

The Approach

The proposed approach has been designed to focus on delivering sustainable sporting outcomes for the communities.

These should include:

- Resilient cohesive communities through stronger clubs/community organisations;
- Better community amenities:
 - infrastructure masterplans that cover the next 5 to 15 years.

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- improved sporting facilities helping deliver the sports' governing bodies local/regional plans.
- More activity:
 - healthy activity delivering enhanced wellbeing.
 - addressing equality and diversity agendas.
- Council savings.
- Successful business models making the case for investment, generating more income and reducing running costs.
- Delivering Welsh Government's Wellbeing of Future Generations Goals and Sport Wales strategic priorities.

Secrets to Success

- Local ownership of a shared vision – commitment to the direction of travel
- Community organisations ready, willing and able – with direct support
- Relevant delivery models appropriate to the community bringing added value/betterment
- Practical, achievable, sustainable business plans - informing winning investment proposals
- Fit for the future facility and maintenance plans
- Flexibility to address needs and challenges as well as responding to opportunities, not forgetting Covid-19
- Never been done before ... so not easy and needs time and patience

General Methodology

- Desk work and review of existing information, reports and data.
- Consultation with current and potential stakeholders to establish their current interest, future requirements and suggestions for development.
- Site visits, community and location options appraisals. For each site under review, preparing a draft overall masterplan to upgrade the current facilities with all anticipated capital costs shown. This will follow visual site inspections and analysis of any previous ground investigation reports and maintenance records. It will involve the preparation of a 'desk exercise' natural turf facilities upgrade report and cost plan.
- The preparation of an off-pitch infrastructure upgrade report will also be prepared taking account of previous condition surveys, including a cost plan based on a performance, design and planning brief, using a standard BCIS cost planning approach.
- Identifying challenges – strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for each park.
- Identifying future development potential to meet the need of stakeholders and to maximise income generation as well as informing future management options.
- Preparing governance/management models and costed development options for each site.
- Identifying new income generation and cost reduction opportunities, alongside improved usage for each site.
- Identifying potential funding opportunities to facilitate identified works and future potential development requirements.
- Presenting and discussing plans with local representative groups.

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- Preparing a draft and final end of Project report for client approval i.e. Option Appraisals / Feasibility Studies for each site in accordance with the specification.

The Just Solutions Team

Company Profile

Established in 2007, Just Solutions provide a bespoke, specialist support service offering a wide portfolio of experience and building on a combined leisure and culture, directorate and senior management experience spanning more than 40 years.

In over 13 years working as self-employed consultants, we have successfully delivered over 350 consultancy service contracts. We have worked on projects in a diverse range of fields, including leisure, culture, education, economic regeneration, sport and the arts.

We are Wales-based consultants, who specialise in early days feasibilities – getting the project right, informing successful business plans and making funding applications.

We are able to draw upon our extensive experience and contacts in Welsh Government, Sport Wales, Governing Bodies and Local Government, having successfully secured grant funding in Wales over a ten-year period amounting to over £50m.

We also have extensive experience of supporting local, community club/associations and town councils.

Further details of our work can be found at: www.justsolutionsconsultants.co.uk.

Consultants CVs

Howard Tolley, Just Solutions, Managing Director

- 40 years culture, leisure and sports facility, development, and management experience
- Director in 4 Authorities in England and Wales (East Midlands, Norfolk, London and south Wales) – including the management of Leisure Services – Sport and the Arts; Library and Museum Services; Historic Buildings - restoration and management; Countryside and Outdoor Education; Rural transport
- Managing the Sports Lottery Fund for 10 years which included the delivery of over 400 sports facilities and a national facilities strategy informing the development of 7 national centres
- Director Sports Council for Wales
- Establishing Just Solutions - in 2007, and since been engaged to undertake over 350 contracts, including many repeat engagements, generating over £50m of funding and investment, with contracts for clients including:
 - Government (education, sport, leisure, museums – national museum feasibility study)
 - Universities and Colleges



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- Local Authorities
 - National Governing Bodies – including developing National Football Centres at Dragon Park (Newport), Colliers Park (Wrexham) and the Vale Resort (Hensol)
 - Commercial Sector - including feasibility studies for the House of Sport and a 5-star hotel in north Wales; establishing a Housing Maintenance 'Newco'
 - University Health Boards
 - Town and Community Councils
 - Housing Associations
 - Schools
 - Sports Clubs
- Particular specialities: Visioning; Options Appraisals; Feasibilities; Financial and Operational Management Plans and Advice; Governance; Problem Solving; Project Management and Procurement; Facility Design Briefs.

Sara Green, Just Solutions, Business Partner

- Over 35's year's sport and leisure experience – teaching – lecturing – sports development and management, as well as serving as a sports club treasurer and secretary
- Director of Sport Wales – responsible for many programmes and new approaches, as well as setting up the Sports Lottery Fund for Wales in 1994 and distributing over £60m in grants
- Head of Sports Policy for Welsh Government – responsible for authoring a series of Government policy documents
- Formerly: Teacher; Lecturer; University Facility Manager; National Governing Body of Sport Manager in England
- Established as a consultant in 2007 and Business Partner with Just Solutions
- As a consultant - over 75% repeat business – based upon expertise, experience, unique added value, quality of service and value
- Particular specialities: stakeholder consultations; options appraisals; workforce reviews; facilitated strategic reviews; evaluations; feasibility studies; business cases; management reviews; funding.



Tom Overton, Just Solutions Associate

- A highly experienced sport, physical activity and community development professional
- More than 20 years' experience working in various roles across the public sector
- 14 years in senior, strategic leadership roles - most recently as a senior leader in Sport Wales as Head of Community Sport and strategic lead for governance and leadership.
- Previously various sport development, coaching and facility management roles across England and Wales.



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- Recently set up a bespoke consultancy, Dysgu Ltd, offering specialist support for leadership, strategy, people and governance. Currently working on commissions with Sport Scotland, a charitable Leisure Trust and a National Governing Body in Wales.
- A non-executive Director for Welsh Triathlon, Welsh Athletics and Show Racism the Red Card Wales.
- Alongside being a qualified Change Management Practitioner (Prosci), Tom is also the module leader for the Strategic Leadership in Sport Master's programme at the University of South Wales and leads the Community Sports Development module on the Foundation Degree Sports Coaching and Development course.
- Skilled in Negotiation, Budgeting, Business Planning, Customer Service, and Sports Management.