

Public Document Pack

Officer Decisions

Friday, 4th February, 2022
Time Not Specified

AGENDA

1. **Blackburn Rovers Indoor Centre - Refurbishment Opportunity**
Blackburn Rovers Indoor Centre – Refurbishment Opportunity **2 - 4**

Date Published: 4th February 2022
Denise Park, Chief Executive

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS OUTLINED IN THE CONSTITUTION – Part 3 Section 16



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| DELEGATED OFFICER DECISION TAKEN BY: | Martin Kelly - Strategic Director of Place |
| PORTFOLIO AREA: | Growth and Development |

SUBJECT: Blackburn Rovers Indoor Centre – Refurbishment Opportunity

1. DECISION

To approve a Council contribution of £50,000 to enable Blackburn Rovers Community Trust (BRCT) to refurbish their Blackburn Rovers Indoor Centre (BRIC). Subject to approval, funding will be drawn from the Council's COVID economic recovery programme.

2. REASON FOR DECISION

The Council's funding would be matched by BRCT (£100,000) and the Football Foundation (£250,000) to create a major refurbishment programme, valued at £400,000, for a facility that delivers high quality grass root football programmes, and a range of community regeneration services to residents in need. The social, health and employability benefits of this investment would be especially welcome as our residents and communities recover from the severe and sustained impacts of COVID.

3. BACKGROUND

This report seeks approval for a Council funding contribution of up to £50,000 to enable BRCT, a registered charity of Blackburn Rovers Football Club, to progress their plans to refurbish the BRIC.

The BRIC is located next to Ewood Park Stadium. The facility is 25-years old and well used by the local community but is in very poor condition and no longer fit for purpose. The BRIC provides extensive opportunities for residents of all ages and backgrounds, and especially young people, to access and enjoy high quality grass root football programmes, and, equally as important, engage with and benefit from wider training, employment and education services delivered from this facility.

The proposed refurbishment of the BRIC would deliver the following outcomes, as a minimum, namely:

- No less than five grass roots football teams;
- A full-time post-16 College programme with up to 75 young learners engaged in physical education and football related studies;
- A re-purposed hub for local primary school leagues, and a facility for local schools with poor facilities to also utilise;
- Support for 75 regular walking football participants (for whom this is their primary source of exercise and social contact);
- Dedicated provision and development programmes, linked to the Club's academy, to increase the participation levels of girls;
- A disability friendly facility, which would create greater access for residents in the BRIC's catchment area; and

- Greater access to other community regeneration provision, including working with local youth groups and Council services to provide diversionary activities, as well as engagement work on raising aspirations and progression routes for young people.

Subject to Council support, the BRCT will submit an application in the coming weeks to the Football Foundation to secure the additional funding required, with the aim of commencing the refurbishment programme by summer 2022.

4. KEY ISSUES AND RISKS

The failure to upgrade the BRIC will undermine its ability to serve the needs of residents and service users – many of which have significant needs. More specifically, the lack of investment could also delay the post-COVID recovery of key target groups of residents who benefit extensively from the service offer available from the BRIC. The facility is also used by the Council to deliver some of its commissioned youth and employability services. An improved BRIC would clearly benefit Council service users. This investment would also contribute to the Council's growth aspirations for the area, which include joint working with the Rovers on plans to attract appropriate development opportunities to Ewood.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Council's funding contribution would be drawn from its COVID economic recovery programme. There is funding provision to cover this one off / non-recurring contribution. The Council's funding contribution would be conditional on BRCT confirming their match funding of £100,000 and securing an additional £250,000 from the Football Foundation or similar funding body.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications. Council funding would be conditional on meeting the match funding requirements set out in this report. The Council would recover its funding contribution should such circumstances prevail. Clawback conditions would be set out in our funding letter to BRCT.

7. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Without Council support, given the sustained financial impacts of COVID on sporting bodies and community fund raising activities, there is a major risk that the BRCT will miss the opportunity to upgrade the BRIC by failing to secure additional support from national funding bodies.

6. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of the officer with delegation and the any Member who has been consulted, and note of any dispensation granted should be recorded below:

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| VERSION: | 1 |
| CONTACT OFFICER: | Clare Turner |
| DATE: | 26 January 2022 |
| BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS: | N/A |
| Signed: | |

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| Director – Martin Kelly | Date: |
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