

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Council

**DATE:** 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019

**CONTACT OFFICER:** Catherine Meek  
**(For all enquiries)** Head of Democratic Services  
(01753) 875011

**WARD(S):** All

### **PART I** **FOR DECISION**

#### **PETITION – NEW HOME FOR SLOUGH GYMNASTICS CLUB**

##### 1 **Purpose of Report**

To advise the Council of a Petition that has been received under the Council's Petitions Scheme. The Petition contains 1,608 signatures, all of which were submitted online via the e-petition facility on the Council's website:

*'We the undersigned petition the council to Provide a location that is suitable to house Slough Gymnastics Club - either a building with suitable use, or a location to build a purpose built multi-sport venue that incorporates SGC, and provide space for a temporary building until a suitable location is found to build on.'*

*'Slough Gymnastics Club is an inclusive affordable gymnastics club that was founded with the community in mind. We offer classes to boys and girls from all ages at affordable prices.'*

##### 2. **Recommendation**

Following debate, the Council is requested to resolve what action it wishes to take with regard to the Petition.

##### 3. **The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five Year Plan**

###### 3a. **Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy Priorities**

###### **Improving mental health and wellbeing**

Physical activity and sport play a crucial role in maintaining good health, preventing illness, supporting mental wellbeing and generally enabling people to be healthier and happier for longer.

###### 3b **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

###### **Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful**

Taking part in regular sport and is proven to improve the physical health and mental wellbeing of children and young people, along with educational attainment and confidence and self esteem.

#### 4. **Other Implications**

##### (a) Financial

- (b) This is dependent on the decision(s) the council wish to take. No budget has been earmarked in the council's medium term financial plan to support this. Risk Management

There are no reported risks associated with the recommendations stipulated in section 2.

##### (c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Human Rights Act Implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

##### (d) Equalities Impact Assessment

There is no requirement for an EIA.

#### 5. **Supporting Information**

- 5.1 Under the Council's published Petitions Scheme a Petition that contains 1500 signatures triggers a debate at Council.

##### **Debate**

- 5.2 The Petition Organiser has been invited to the meeting to speak on the Petition (up to five minutes) and the Petition will then be discussed by Members of the Council for a maximum of 15 minutes. The Mayor has discretion to extend this time taking account of the degree of public interest in the issue, the level of support given to the petition and the number of elected members wishing to express their views on the subject.
- 5.3 Following this discussion the Council will need to decide what action to take with regard to the Petition. Where the issue is one on which the Cabinet is required to make the final decision the Council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision.
- 5.4 The Scheme indicates that the Council's response to a Petition will depend on what a petition asks for and how many people have signed it but may include one or more of the following;
- Taking the action requested in the Petition
  - considering the Petition at a Council Meeting
  - Holding an Inquiry
  - Commissioning relevant research
  - Organising a public meeting
  - Mounting a wider public consultation
  - Meeting with the Petition Organiser or representatives of signatories
  - Providing a written response outlining the Council's views on the subject
  - Referring the issue to the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee **OR**
  - Referring the issue to the relevant Committee/Cabinet
  - Consulting statutory partners and local service providers

- Instigating discussions with the voluntary and community sectors
- Making representations to Commercial or other Interests

## **Background**

- 5.5 Slough Gymnastics Club was established in 2010 and operated from a converted warehouse on Slough Trading Estate, leasing the provision from SEGRO. Since this date the club has grown in size with a membership of over 500; of all ages and abilities. The club is a private business set up as a community interest company.
- 5.6 In 2017 the council received information that Slough Gymnastics Club (SGC) had been given notice to quit by SEGRO from their bespoke venue on Buckingham Avenue and contacted the club to offer support. Slough. The club unfortunately were unable to find a suitable alternative venue and the council negotiated the use of a space at Montem Leisure Centre at a reduced rate of £3K per month. At this point it was explained to the club that this was a temporary measure up to March 2019, when Montem would be closed for demolition. The club moved to Montem in the March 2018.
- 5.7 The council has no responsibility to provide facilities for community sports clubs in the town. At no point did the council agree to fund or subsidise any alternative provision for SGC.
- 5.8 During this period the council contacted Sport and England and British Gymnastics to discuss potential support for the club in reference to capital funding towards a new facility. Unfortunately they confirmed that no support was available.
- 5.9 In the summer of 2018, the council undertook a feasibility study to extend Cippenham Community Centre to house an artistic gymnastics venue. A master plan was produced and it proved it was possible to meet the gym club's needs at this proposed venue. SGC would have been charged the full commercial rate for the hire of this facility. Unfortunately the project could not proceed when the planning authority confirmed that planning would not be granted as the development was situated on high risk flood plain. The club was informed of this as soon as we received this information.
- 5.10 The council subsequently has met regularly with the club and has searched for suitable sites in the borough including council owned facilities and commercial industrial units. All were declined by the club as either being unsuitable in regard to size or not affordable. These sites and options included:
- Cippenham Community Centre (without the extension to the existing provision)
  - Weekes Drive Community Centre
  - Thames Valley Athletics Centre
  - Langley Pavilion
  - 7 x commercial business units at various sites across the borough
  - Keep Montem Leisure Centre open for 3 to 12 months
  - Thames Valley Athletics Centre
  - Slough Cricket Club
  - Wexham Park (privately owned facility)

5.11 In January 2019 the club presented the council with a temporary building design and costs and requested land for them to put a temporary structure on. The size of the structure was 800m<sup>2</sup> and the council's immediate response was that there were no affordable or suitable sites in the borough to house such a large structure, which would also require planning consent.

5.12 The council are continuing to work with the club to identify potential venues.

6. **Conclusion**

Members are requested to consider what action to take with regard to the petition, as outlined in Paragraph 5.4 of the report.

7. **Appendices Attached**

None

8. **Background Papers**

Petition