

Agenda Item 6

For publication

Bedford Borough Council – Environment and Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Meeting: 26 September 2024

Report by: Chief Officer Environment

Subject: BEDFORD PARK PAVILION

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This report has been prepared following a request from the Committee regarding an update on Bedford Park Cricket Pavilion.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 **That the Committee notes the contents of this report.**

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To inform the Committee of the current position with regards to the Bedford Park Cricket Pavilion.

4. THE CURRENT POSITION

4.1 Bedford Park Cricket Pavilion is currently available as a changing facility for sports played in Bedford Park, primarily football.

4.2 The pavilion building is in need of refurbishment. This refurbishment will help preserve the building, but also bring its changing room facilities up to more modern standards for the use of cricket and football. It is also hoped that refurbishment will allow more park users to use the pavilion as a community resource.

4.3 There is funding in place through Council Capital Funds and S106 to the value of £235,000 to be spent on refurbishing the pavilion and provide more accessible access into the building. The estimated cost of works in June 2023 was £856,000.

4.4 Planning Permission has been granted for the pavilion's refurbishment in June 2023 (22/02685/DC3).

5. DETAILS

5.1 Bedford Park Cricket Pavilion was built in around 1890, as the park was increasingly being used for more sporting activities. The design of the building was the result of a competition and complements the design of the café pavilion, also in the park.

5.2 The pavilion has previously been used as a changing facility for both cricket and football activities within the park. However, during Covid-19 the demand for cricket reduced, and the sport is no longer played in Bedford Park. However, there is still football played and the pavilion provides a changing room area for players if required. In the past the pavilion was also used as a Grounds Maintenance Mess Room, but this was ceased in 2015, due to structural loading issues with the floor in the main room (this is not an issue for regular use of the pavilion).

5.3 The layout of the changing rooms inside the pavilion are not ideal and require updating. At the moment, users are having to walk through one changing room to access the second, and there are shared toilet and shower facilities, which are not in line with current sport pavilion standards. In addition to this, the whole pavilion requires updating and refurbishing.

5.4 Work has been undertaken with Cricket East and the Football Association to ensure that a revised layout for the building (within the existing footprint) meets the requirements for both sports. It is hoped that through working with the professional sporting bodies we can increase sporting participation within the park, and in particular bring cricket back into the park.

5.5 Planning permission was granted in June 2023 for refurbishment works. This permission covers providing accessible access into the pavilion through an external ramp, along with some infill extensions to allow for an updated internal layout. The estimated cost for these planning permission works, internal layout changes and general refurbishment as of June 2023 is £856,000.

5.6 Currently the Council has £235,000 secured through the Capital Funding Programme and S106, but there is a significant shortfall which is preventing the project from progressing further. External funding such as the National Lottery Heritage Fund is currently being investigated to allow this project to commence.

6. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

6.1 To do nothing to refurbish the Bedford Park Cricket Pavilion would result in its continual decline, and ultimately will be taken out of public use for safety reasons. This would impact the sporting activity within the park, as there would be no available changing facilities. The cricket pavilion is also a heritage feature within the park and would impact the Victoriana layout of the Grade II listed park. The pavilion is part of the late 1800’s layout, and there would likely be a severe negative response from park users to see the building deteriorate further. This would impact the Council’s reputation, and for these reasons this alternative has been rejected.

7. KEY IMPLICATIONS

<p>7.1 Legal Issues</p>	<p>The Council has an obligation to ensure that facilities are safe for members of the public to use. Without investment in Bedford Park Cricket Pavilion, then the pavilion would eventually have to be closed on health and safety grounds, otherwise the Council would be open to insurance claims.</p>
<p>7.2 Policy Issues</p>	<p>The Council’s Corporate Plan 2022-2026, vision of the period of this Plan is:</p> <p>“We want Bedford Borough to thrive as a place, that people are proud of, want to live in and move to. To do this we need a growing and strong local economy and an active response to climate change. From this foundation, our residents will be able to thrive and realise their potential, supporting and celebrating our diverse and inclusive communities.”</p> <p>To achieve this the plan focusses on goal and strategic priorities. The refurbishment of Bedford Park Cricket Pavilion falls under ‘Develop Places’. This supports the strategic priorities of, ‘develop our urban and rural places’, and ‘enrich our local environment’. The project also works to achieve the Cross-Cutting Theme of well-being by increasing satisfaction within parks and open spaces and participation in leisure and cultural events.</p>
<p>7.3 Resource Issues</p>	<p>There is a resource issue with the project at the moment, as not all funding is currently in place to undertake refurbishment works on the pavilion. External funding is being investigated to address this, with the existing secured Capital and S106 funding in place as match funding.</p>
<p>7.4 Risks</p>	<p>There is a risk that the full funding for this project is not available, as we will be reliant on external bodies awarding funding to the project. However, there will be a continual review of funding opportunities to ensure any potential grants are investigated.</p>

7.5 Environmental Implications	The refurbishment of the pavilion will have a positive environmental impact, with new technologies for heating, electricity etc being installed as part of the works.
7.6 Equalities Impact	<p>In preparing this report, due consideration has been given to the Council's statutory Equality Duty to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, as set out in Section 149(1) of the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>This project will make the building more accessible, with a new ramped access which avoids the multiple steps around the building. Disabled toilet and changing facilities are also included within the new internal layout, bringing the building up to current standards.</p>
7.7 Impact on Families	This project will have a positive impact on families, giving a better sporting and community facility for park users.
7.8 Community Safety and Resilience	There is currently an element of ASB around the cricket pavilion. It is hoped that by refurbishing the area, the building will be used more frequently and create more natural surveillance that in time will reduce any ASB in the area.
7.9 Impact on Health and Wellbeing	The project will have a positive impact on health and well-being through providing better sporting infrastructure and bring more people into the park to exercise and participate in community events.

8. **SUMMARY OF CONSULTATIONS AND OUTCOME**

8.1 The following Council units or Officers and/or other organisations have been consulted in preparing this report:

Deputy Mayor & Portfolio Holder for Environment
 Director of Environment – Craig Austin
 Trustees of Bedford Park

(Bedford Park Pavilion / Environment Committee / 26 September 2024)

Chief Officer for Finance – Rhiain Bevan
Manager for Asset and Estate Management – Margaret Birtles
Interim Monitoring Officer – Lee Phanco

All relevant comments have been incorporated into the report, as necessary.

9. WARD COUNCILLOR VIEWS

9.1 This is a project which is supported by Ward Councillors.

10. CONTACTS AND REFERENCES

10.1 Please see references in the table below:

Report Contact Officer	Paul Pace – Chief Officer (Environment) paul.pace@bedford.gov.uk ext. 47275
File Reference	I: Environment/Committees/Reports
Previous Relevant Minutes	None
Background Papers	Planning Permission 22/02685/DC3
Appendices	None