



## Partnership Committee

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<b>Date:</b>	<b>5 June 2014</b>
<b>Title:</b>	<b>Developing community use of the Astral Park facility.</b>
<b>Purpose of the Report:</b>	<b>To seek Committee agreement to allocate up to £3k of Big Plan budget funds to facilitate children &amp; young peoples' use of Astral Park, Community &amp; Sports Centre.</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Vivien Cannon, Interim Head of Economic Development</b>

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### 1. RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To agree the allocation of up to £3k of Big Plan budget funds to facilitate children and young peoples' use of the Astral Park, Community & Sports Centre in keeping with the Council's broader Big Plan aims and objectives.

### 2. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Astral Park has been open for business since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 and income generation has had a positive start. Thus far the income secured is from regular small business/ self-employed delivery of activity uses and one off private hire/function events. The Council seeks to serve as many of its communities as practically possible through access to the centre. The reality is that there is limited available funds associated to the Astral Park venue hence the need to generate income as a priority. In addition, the ultimate aim is for the facility is to secure a 'cost neutral' status for the Council.
- 2.2 The initial need has been to cover the basic running costs through hire fees. Profit is then to be utilised to reinvest in necessary building and facility improvements as well as subsidise the local community's use of the venue. The existing hire fee structure is tiered to offer reduced rates to local constituted community groups.
- 2.3 Whilst the focus remains on the above income activity, the staff team's ambition is to seek alternative funding opportunities to enable broader community use for the centre and utilise their current skill set to the benefit of the community, e.g. youth work, sports coaching, training and food preparation.

- 2.4 From 19<sup>th</sup> May' 14, the centre will have in place the full substantive staff team of three people which brings opportunities to manage the full potential opening times of the centre and undertake focused developmental work. Therefore the team is ready to allocate time to developing community use.
- 2.5 It has been apparent since opening that local young people would benefit from being invited into the centre and being involved in activities that interest and/or develops them. The stumbling block for the staff team is having adequate leverage funding to initiate contact with young people or to create a programme of activity specifically for them. Initial contact has been made with qualified youth worker staff at the TACTIC centre to explore what resources are available however their time and budgets are already allocated. Likewise, parent and children groups may also benefit from initial start-up support to help establish their use leading to self-sufficiency.

### **3. CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 The Astral Park facility is recognised as supporting the achievement of Big Plan ambitions, i.e. an events venue serving the town and developing sporting infrastructure (football). The venue is also placed ideally within new developments to address Council aspirations for developing activities for Children & Young People.
- 3.2 At this point in time, it would be unwise to offer a predicted set of activities to be delivered as initial time will need to be spent establishing rapport with local young people. It is however important to have secured a budget in order to offer a prompt response to young people when activities are identified as needed/wanted that avoids disappointment and loss of confidence in the centre team.
- 3.3 To assure appropriate use of allocated budget funds, the centre team will liaise with staff from the TACTIC centre to ensure funds are used in a way that is in keeping with established Council methodologies for working with young people.

### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 It is unlikely that 'spare' funds will be forthcoming soon through Astral Park's income generating activity. Income to date has not included sums from community group/club use. There is an opportunity to utilise the centre to facilitate the delivery of broader Big Plan ambitions. In turn this recognises the need for activity in these new development areas.
- 4.2 With the school holidays fast approaching and with the staff team now complete, it would be a timely opportunity to establish a budget to facilitate liaison with young people especially as well as parents and children.