

**ESSEX PARK & GAWLER SHOWGROUNDS REGIONAL SPORTING PRECINCT
MASTER PLAN**

Record Number: CC19/484;IC19/693

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Previous Motions: Nil

Attachments: Nil

PRESENTATION

JPE Design Studios and Inside Edge Sport and Leisure Planning will give a brief presentation to Council on this matter.

OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION

That the Corporate & Community Services Committee notes:

1. **The Essex Park & Gawler Showgrounds Regional Sporting Precinct Master Plan report.**
2. **That the discussion had at this meeting, further to the details provided in the report, will assist in the ongoing consideration of the main interrelating opportunities and constraints that will go to inform the formulation of the Master Plan over the coming period.**

SUMMARY

This report is presented to the Corporate & Community Services Committee to afford additional context to the presentation being delivered by JPE Design Studio and Inside Edge Sport and Leisure Planning at this meeting.

The Essex Park & Gawler Showgrounds Regional Sporting Precinct Master Plan project commenced in July 2019, with significant desktop research and site analysis having occurred in the recent months. A series of stakeholder consultation sessions were held in late September, with Council staff and project consultants, JPE Design Studio and Inside Edge Sport and Leisure Planning meeting with lease holders and facility user groups from across the Essex Park and Gawler Showgrounds precinct.

The opportunities identified across these sessions by key stakeholders of the Essex Park and Gawler Showgrounds precinct, and in turn this Master Plan, will be highlighted within the presentation to be delivered. There are a number of significant and dynamic opportunities that could materially impact the precinct and as such the direction of the Concept and Draft Master Plan – these concepts are being presented at this early stage of the project for consideration and deliberation.

It should be remembered that this project has at its core the development of a strategic long term vision and direction for Essex Park, Gawler Showgrounds, its precinct users, and ultimately the Gawler community. As such a number of the presented opportunities have been discussed informally across the community or have even been considered in some way by Council previously.

BACKGROUND

In June 2016, Council adopted the Gawler Open Space, Sport & Recreation Plan. The plan was developed to guide the future provision, improvement and management of open space and sport and recreation facilities over the next ten years. This plan was specific to the Gawler Council area and followed the adoption by Council in April 2015 of the Barossa, Light and Lower North Region Open Space, Recreation and Public Realm Strategy, a joint document that included the local government areas of Gawler, Barossa, Light and Mallala (now Adelaide Plains).

The following is taken from the Gawler Open Space, Sport & Recreation Plan Directions Report:

Undertaking further planning for key sites should be a priority as the planning will ensure the most appropriate design and improvement of sites and the plans can be used to seek grant funding and guide developments.

The main priority for future planning is as follows:

1. Develop a master plan for Karbeethan Reserve to guide development of the site expansion as well as the design of and improvement to the whole site. (Refer separate report in this agenda for an update in this regard).
2. Undertake a feasibility study and develop a master plan for Gawler Oval, Princes Park, the Showgrounds site and Essex Park. One feasibility and master plan study that connects these areas could be undertaken. This planning will guide the future provision of aquatic and indoor facilities and also guide the design and development of the sites.
3. Allocation of appropriate land for sporting and recreation facilities and open space in new development areas.

In response to the above identified key priority of the Gawler Open Space, Sport & Recreation Plan, Council undertook the Gawler Aquatic Centre Needs and Feasibility Analysis to allow a high level understanding of the future provision of a community aquatic facility within Gawler. This study reinforced the community and Council's desire to continue planning for this facility as part of the larger Essex Park & Gawler Showgrounds Regional Sporting Precinct, through the development of a Master Plan.

The Essex Park & Gawler Showgrounds Regional Sporting Precinct is a large physical area, running along the North and South Para rivers, as shown in the image below outlining the precinct.



The development and implementation of the Essex Park & Gawler Showgrounds Regional Sporting Precinct Master Plan will ultimately increase community participation in sport and recreation, both active and passive. The project will provide strategic direction to enable precinct facilities to accommodate population growth, be adaptable and flexible to the changing needs of current and new community members, and to enable Gawler to host high level sporting competitions and events.

The following paragraphs are taken from the Essex Park & Gawler Showgrounds Regional Sporting Precinct Master Plan Project Plan and are provided to further outline the objectives of this initiative:

1. The development of the Essex Park & Gawler Showgrounds Regional Sporting Precinct Master Plan will provide strategic planning and direction for a highly utilised and significant regional community precinct. It will also allow for clubs and associations to develop their own organisations and facilities in line with the strategic direction for the precinct. The impact of unplanned and uncoordinated facility and infrastructure development has been experienced by many organisations in the precinct, with potential future benefits not being fully realised due to this lack of singular direction, in what is such a multi-use area.
2. There has not been coordinated planning across the precinct undertaken previously with only limited strategic planning undertaken for the Gawler Showgrounds. It should be noted that the Gawler Central to Adelaide railway line creates a physical divide across the precinct, one that is greatly exacerbated by the location of Gawler Show Society infrastructure such as exhibition sheds. This project will build on the shared use (walking, cycling) path that runs along the North and South Para rivers and create a more connected (visually and physically) sporting and community precinct.
3. The significant majority of the facilities and infrastructure within Essex Park and the Gawler Showground precinct are aging, with a number approaching the end of their useful life or their current and future uses being not in line with their construction/development. These changes in facility and infrastructure use, require in many cases significant upgrades that will benefit from collective planning to achieve the best outcomes and efficient use of resources.

COMMENTS/DISCUSSION

This report is provided to the Corporate & Community Services Committee to afford additional context to the presentation being delivered by JPE Design Studio and Inside Edge Sport and Leisure Planning. The Essex Park & Gawler Showgrounds Regional Sporting Precinct Master Plan project commenced in July 2019, with significant desktop research and site analysis having occurred in the recent months. A series of stakeholder consultation sessions were held in late September, with Council staff and project consultants, JPE Design Studio and Inside Edge Sport and Leisure Planning meeting with lease holders and facility user groups from across the Essex Park and Gawler Showgrounds precinct.

The opportunities identified across these sessions by key stakeholders of the Essex Park and Gawler Showgrounds precinct and, in turn this Master Plan, will be highlighted within the presentation to be delivered to the Corporate & Community Services Committee. It should be remembered that this project has at its core the development of a strategic long term vision and direction for Essex Park, Gawler Showgrounds, its precinct users, and ultimately the Gawler community. As such a number of the presented opportunities have been discussed informally across the community or have even been considered in some way by Council previously, although it is prudent to include these concepts within this master planning context.

There are a number of significant and dynamic opportunities that could materially impact the precinct and as such the direction of the Concept and Draft Master Plan – these concepts are presented at this early stage of the project for initial discussion and sharing of ideas in this regard, as detailed below:

Consolidation of Gawler Aquatic Centre and Gawler Sport & Community Centre in a central location

The consolidation of the Gawler Aquatic Centre and Gawler Sport & Community Centre, two Council managed community recreation facilities located within 800m of each other has been raised on a number of previous occasions within the community and Council. The most recent occasion that this matter has been considered by Council was during the development of the Gawler Aquatic Centre Needs and Feasibility Analysis, adopted by Council in March 2017.

There are meaningful and numerous operational benefits and efficiencies from a management perspective achieved by the consolidation of the two centres into a single facility. The following is a summary of the challenges posed by this concept that would require consideration in order to realise any of the possible operational positives:

Consolidation at the existing Gawler Aquatic Centre site:

1. Positive for the Aquatic Centre, maintain existing and loved outdoor location with indoor facility incorporated onsite
2. Would require relocation of Gawler & District Tennis Association
3. Physical limitations of available and suitable land (noting the flood plain) within site e.g. between North Para River and Victoria Terrace, not only for buildings, but for associated infrastructure required, in particular car parking

Consolidation at the existing Gawler Sport & Community Centre site:

1. Aquatic Centre loses existing outdoor location (difficult to recreate similar experience within Gawler Showgrounds), as well as visibility – location on Main North Road
2. Significant level of additional infrastructure/building footprint within Gawler Showgrounds - potential impact to precinct uses

Relocation of Gawler Show from Gawler Showgrounds

The relocation of the Gawler Show from the Gawler Showgrounds is also a concept that has been previously raised within the community, with one of the main drivers to this proposal being the physical limitations of the Gawler Showgrounds itself and its surrounds, placed upon the Gawler Show and the ongoing growth of the annual event.

The successful delivery of the Gawler Show is seeing annual attendances increase, although given a number of factors, including various site restrictions and limitations, an increase in attendances also necessitates increases in variable event costs and as such does not result in a lineal improvement in financial success from the increased patronage.

The concept for the relocation of the Gawler Show is focused upon the provision of opportunities for the Gawler Show to physically expand and respond to the increasing popularity of the event – this is in relation to both the event site and surrounds e.g. car parking and access considerations.

The use of an alternative site for the Gawler Show may also provide the Gawler Show Society with a greater level of infrastructure ownership and control, so providing both increased and varied year round event and income generating opportunities, as well as reduced infrastructure set up for the Gawler Show. The idea of successfully relocating the Gawler Show is significantly impacted by the physical space and infrastructure requirements of such an event and as such there is not a readily available alternative site within the Council area.

The Gawler Show Society is focused on improving its viability through the exploration of additional and year round revenue opportunities and the reduction in both fixed and variable costs in relation to the delivery of the Gawler Show. The development of the Essex Park & Gawler Showgrounds Master Plan provides an opportunity to strategically address these concepts, providing meaningful benefit to both the Gawler Show Society, but also for other precinct users and the broader community. These opportunities range from significant infrastructure redevelopment such as the current sheds located at the northern end of the Showgrounds and the potential relocation of the Show Office, to more minor infrastructure projects such as improved power around Princes Park and the main Showgrounds car park.

Redevelopment and expansion of Gawler Sport & Community Centre

Gawler Sport & Community Centre (including the Gawler Central Sporting Club leased areas) is an ageing facility that has recently needed, and will continue to require, significant planned and reactive maintenance to ensure that it remains able to cater for the in excess of 140 different user groups that utilise the facility annually.

The significant variety of facility users is a positive outcome for a community facility such as the Sport & Community Centre, although this diversity of activity is at times problematic given the absence of purpose built and planned facilities/infrastructure and the conflicting requirements, causing numerous operation and facility management difficulties.

The following are identified opportunities in relation to the redevelopment and expansion of the Gawler Sport & Community Centre:

1. Increase in the size of the stadium to a minimum three court facility (currently two court)
 - a. this would significantly improve the multi functionality of the space for additional uses
 - b. provide numerous new opportunities for existing roller sport users
2. Relocation of current Gawler Elderly Centre user groups to a redeveloped Gawler Sport & Community Centre with purpose built facilities to cater for user group requirements
3. Incorporation of Gawler Show Office and public toilets (able to be accessed when facility is closed) within building footprint
4. Development of purpose built gymnastics, dance sports facility (currently incorporated within the draft Karbeethan Reserve Master Plan)
5. Relocation of Gawler Central Sporting Club facilities from Gawler Sport & Community Centre to be in closer proximity to Gawler Oval and netball courts

Building consolidation and/or relocation

There are a number of opportunities that have already been identified that could be further investigated in relation to the premise of building consolidation and/or relocation within the Essex Park and Gawler Showgrounds precinct, these include:

1. Gawler Show Office and public toilets incorporated with Gawler Sport & Community Centre
2. Gawler Central Sporting Club facilities relocated from Gawler Sport & Community Centre to the southern side of the Showgrounds and combined with the existing Gawler Central Netball Club facilities
3. Relocation of all current users of Gawler Elderly Centre to redeveloped Gawler Sport & Community Centre, with an assessment of the required future use of the Gawler Elderly Centre
4. Evaluation of other structures within the Gawler Showgrounds to consider their current location and uses against possibly more suitable locations and/or uses e.g. stables along south-eastern boundary of Showgrounds, stalls along eastern side of Showgrounds, Gawler Show and Gawler Para Pigeon Club sheds along southern boundary of Showgrounds
5. Consolidation of facilities, in particular building and non-sporting infrastructure within Essex Park e.g. Gawler Bowling Club and Gawler Petanque Club, Gawler Aquatic Centre and Gawler & District Tennis Association

In addition to the above concepts that have wide spread impact across a broad area of Essex Park and/or the Gawler Showgrounds, numerous other opportunities for facility and site improvement have been identified, including the following:

Essex Park

1. Upgraded Aquatic Centre (indoor and outdoor) with link to and provision of facilities for Gawler & District Tennis Association
2. Development of additional tennis courts
3. Shade for bowling greens
4. Petanque participant facility upgrade
5. Realignment and upgrade of Gawler & District Netball Association courts
6. Upgrade of Hallam Drive – traffic calming, improved pedestrian experience

Gawler Showgrounds

1. Upgrade of Gawler Show infrastructure – multipurpose facilities that allow for year round use
2. Increase in size of Princes Park – compliant sporting facility
3. Improvements/changes to Showground access, in particular Gate 4 located near Gawler Sport & Community Centre entry and internal vehicle movement, including car parking and dust suppression
4. Upgrade to Gawler Oval – turf pitch, drainage from greyhound track

Precinct wide

1. Community facilities – seating, BBQ, playspace, public toilets
2. Improved wayfinding and signage
3. Upgrades to lighting and provision of accessible power

COMMUNICATION (INTERNAL TO COUNCIL)

Chief Executive Officer

Manager Library & Community Services

The development of the Essex Park & Gawler Showgrounds Regional Sporting Precinct Master Plan will be guided by an internal project group consisting of members from the following Council teams:

1. Aquatic and Recreation Services
2. Engineering
3. Finance
4. Property
5. Strategic Planning
6. Town Services

Additional Council teams will be involved during the project, as and when further specialised expertise is required.

An initial workshop for the Essex Park & Gawler Showgrounds Regional Sporting Precinct Master Plan was held with Council Members at the 10 September 2019 Corporate & Community Services Committee Meeting.

CONSULTATION (EXTERNAL TO COUNCIL)

The development of the Essex Park & Gawler Showgrounds Regional Sporting Precinct Master Plan will incorporate a significant level of community consultation. The consultation plan for the project includes the following key identified external stakeholder groups:

1. Lease/Licence Holders
 - a. Gawler & District Netball Association
 - b. Gawler & District Tennis Association
 - c. Gawler Agricultural, Horticultural & Floricultural Society (Gawler Show Society)
 - d. Gawler Amateur Swimming Club
 - e. Gawler Bowling Club
 - f. Gawler Central Sporting Club
 - g. Gawler Greyhound Racing Club
 - h. Gawler Para Pigeon Club
 - i. Gawler Petanque Club
 - j. Gawler Primary School (Department of Education)
2. Industry/Sporting Organisations
 - a. Barossa & Light Cricket Association
 - b. Barossa, Light & Gawler Football & Netball Association
 - c. Bowls SA
 - d. Greyhound Racing SA
 - e. Netball SA
 - f. Office for Recreation, Sport & Racing
 - g. Recreation SA
 - h. South Australian Cricket Association
 - i. South Australian National Football League

- j. Sport SA
- k. Swimming SA
- l. Tennis SA
- 3. Facility user groups and organisations (Gawler Aquatic Centre, Gawler Sport & Community Centre, Princes Park)
- 4. Event organisers (Princes Park)
- 5. Gawler Community

Community and stakeholder engagement has commenced for the project, with the following consultation having already occurred:

1. JPE Design Studios attended the Saturday of the 2019 Gawler Show. The Essex Park & Gawler Showgrounds Regional Sporting Precinct Master Plan display, located within the Gawler Sport & Community Centre, sought the ideas and comments of show goers about their desires for a redeveloped precinct.
2. Stakeholder consultation sessions were held with Lease/Licence holders and user groups and organisations from Gawler Sport & Community Centre on 24 September 2019. These sessions sought information from the precinct users in regards to current use and site limitations, as well as projected future use and site opportunities.

The draft Essex Park & Gawler Showgrounds Regional Sporting Precinct Master Plan is scheduled for formal community consultation (subject to this committee's endorsement) during February 2020, with the outcomes of the community consultation to be presented to Council in March 2020.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Nil

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Nil

FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

The Essex Park & Gawler Showgrounds Regional Sporting Precinct Master Plan is funded through the 2019/20 Council budget, with the total project budget being \$84,850. Council was successful in obtaining \$34,850 of funding from the Office for Recreation, Sport & Racing through the 2018/19 Planning and Research program, with Council contributing the remaining \$50,000 for the project.

COMMUNITY PLAN

- Objective 1.2: Build a local community that is proud of Gawler
- Objective 1.4: Foster a vibrant and active, event-filled Council area
- Objective 2.1: Physical and social infrastructure to service our growing population and economy
- Objective 3.2: Sporting facilities to meet local and regional community needs
- Objective 3.3: Provide facilities for a range of different recreational activities.
- Objective 4.1: Create and maintain a riverine environment that reflects the social, cultural and landscape values of the river corridor
- Objective 5.1: Support and encourage community teamwork
- Objective 5.2: Be recognised as a 'best practice' Local Government organisation