

Proposed Gilbert Avenue Playing Field – Drainage Improvements and Three Pods - Due Diligence Report

Future Revenue Costs, Management Requirements and Precept Implications

Prepared for: Tuxford Town Council

Project: Gilbert Avenue Playing Field drainage improvements and provision of three pods

Purpose: Revenue due diligence and assessment of future financial liability

Date: August 2026

1. Executive Summary

The proposed Gilbert Avenue project has a substantially greater potential revenue implication for the Town Council than the proposed skatepark.

The key reason is that the project is not simply an improvement to an outdoor playing field. The proposed provision of three pods creates a managed facility requiring:

- opening and closing;
- security;
- cleaning;
- booking administration;
- inspections;
- maintenance;
- electricity;
- water;
- drainage;
- waste management;
- insurance;
- repairs;
- grounds maintenance;
- statutory and health-and-safety checks;
- water hygiene management;
- potentially Legionella controls;
- emergency arrangements; and

- staffing or contracted caretaking.

The Town Council should therefore treat this as the creation of a new operational facility, rather than simply a capital improvement to the playing field.

Indicative annual revenue requirement

A prudent initial estimate is:

£40,000-£65,000 per annum

depending particularly upon the staffing model, opening hours, cleaning frequency, utilities, booking system and whether the pods include showers, hot water, toilets, kitchen or other facilities.

A prudent initial budget for Town Council financial planning would be approximately:

£55,000 per annum

This should be refined through a detailed operating model before the project proceeds.

2. Fundamental Due-Diligence Issue

The Town Council needs to establish exactly what the three pods are intended to be.

The revenue implications will be materially different depending upon whether they are:

- simple dry storage/changing pods;
- changing rooms;
- toilets/changing rooms;
- community room;
- sports facilities;
- accommodation with showers;
- facilities with hot water;
- facilities with kitchens;
- facilities containing showers or other aerosol-producing outlets; or
- a combination of these.

The capital business case should therefore not be approved without a detailed operational specification.

For the purposes of this report, it is assumed that the pods will be managed facilities with electrical services and mains drinking water and will require regular cleaning and inspection.

3. Management Model

The Town Council needs to choose between three broad models.

Option A – Town Council directly manages the facility

The Council employs or allocates a caretaker and manages:

- bookings;
- keys/access;
- opening/closing;
- cleaning;
- inspections;
- maintenance;
- utilities;
- contractors;
- complaints; and
- emergency call-outs.

This provides the greatest control but also the greatest direct revenue and staffing liability.

Option B – Contracted management

A contractor could be appointed to provide:

- opening and closing;
- cleaning;
- basic inspections;
- booking administration;
- minor maintenance; and
- emergency response.

This reduces direct staffing responsibility but creates a contractual cost.

Option C – Hybrid model

A particularly practical model may be:

- Town Council retains overall management;
- an online booking system handles bookings and payments;
- a caretaker/operative handles opening, closing and routine checks;
- a specialist contractor handles water hygiene;
- a cleaning contractor undertakes scheduled cleaning; and
- specialist contractors undertake electrical, fire, drainage and other statutory maintenance.

This is the model assumed for the indicative financial assessment of option A below.

4. Caretaker Requirement

A key question is whether the pods can realistically be operated without a dedicated caretaker.

If the facility is available for regular community and sports use, someone will need responsibility for:

- unlocking;
- locking;
- checking the condition of the facility;
- dealing with users;
- checking for damage;
- cleaning;
- reporting defects;
- managing keys/access codes;
- checking utilities;
- dealing with emergencies;
- opening and closing outside normal office hours; and
- ensuring the facility is secured.

A nominal part-time caretaker arrangement should therefore be considered.

Indicative staffing provision

A starting assumption of approximately 0.4–0.6 full-time equivalent should be considered, depending upon opening hours and booking demand.

A prudent annual allowance, including employer on-costs, holiday/sickness cover and other employment costs, would be approximately:

£18,000–£25,000

As the Council already employs grounds maintenance staff, some of this cost could potentially be absorbed. However, it should still be identified as a revenue cost attributable to the project.

5. Booking and Administration

If the pods are available for hire, a booking system will be required.

The system should ideally provide:

- online booking;
- payment;
- availability calendar;
- cancellation arrangements;
- terms and conditions;
- deposits where appropriate;
- user contact information;
- booking records;
- automatic confirmations;
- reporting; and
- potentially door/access-code integration.

Indicative annual cost:

£1,000–£3,000

depending upon the system selected, it may be that Scribe has operates a compatible booking system.

The Council should also consider whether booking income will offset some of the operating costs.

Importantly, however, income should not be assumed until a realistic utilisation and pricing model has been prepared.

6. Cleaning

Three pods will create a recurring cleaning obligation.

The cleaning regime will depend upon their use but could include:

- floors;
- toilets;
- showers;
- sinks;
- changing areas;
- high-touch surfaces;
- kitchens;
- windows;
- bins;
- sanitary facilities;
- graffiti;
- periodic deep cleaning; and
- emergency cleaning following misuse.

Public-facility cleaning contracts commonly require daily cleaning, documented attendance, health-and-safety checks, consumables and arrangements for reactive maintenance. Recent public-sector procurement examples demonstrate the scale of this type of recurring obligation.

For three relatively small pods, an initial planning allowance of:

£5,000–£10,000 per annum

would be reasonable, subject to the final specification and usage.

7. Water Supply and Legionella

This is one of the most important areas requiring further investigation.

Once the pods have a water supply, the Council will need to understand the nature and complexity of the water system.

The HSE states that those in control of premises have responsibilities to assess and manage Legionella risks associated with hot and cold water systems.

The exact control regime will depend on the system installed.

Potential requirements could include:

- Legionella risk assessment;
- identification of a responsible person;
- written control arrangements;
- temperature monitoring;
- flushing of infrequently used outlets;
- cleaning and descaling;
- water system maintenance;
- records;
- specialist inspection;
- sampling where justified by the risk assessment;
- remedial works; and
- arrangements following periods of closure.

HSE guidance identifies temperature control as an important method of controlling Legionella risk and provides guidance for hot and cold-water systems.

The Council should therefore avoid designing a complicated water system unnecessarily.

Important design recommendation

If the pods only require drinking water and handwashing, the design team should investigate whether the water system can be designed to be as simple as possible.

Every additional:

- tank;
- cylinder;
- shower;
- hot-water outlet;
- redundant pipe;
- rarely used outlet; or
- length of pipework

can increase the management burden.

The lowest-risk solution may therefore be a system with minimal stored water and minimal dead-leg pipework, subject to the requirements of the final facility.

8. Utilities

The Council should budget for:

Electricity

Potential costs include:

- lighting;
- heating;
- hot water;
- hand dryers;
- security systems;
- Wi-Fi;
- booking/access systems;
- CCTV;
- alarms; and
- other electrical equipment.

Indicative allowance:

£1,500–£4,000 per annum

Water and sewerage

Indicative allowance:

£500–£1,500 per annum

Actual expenditure will depend substantially upon showers, toilets, usage and tariffs.

Total utilities planning allowance

£2,000–£5,500 per annum

9. Statutory, Safety and Compliance Costs

The Council should establish a compliance schedule covering the pods and associated infrastructure.

Potential items include:

- fire risk assessment;

- fire alarm inspection;
- emergency lighting;
- electrical installation inspection;
- portable appliance testing where appropriate;
- water hygiene;
- Legionella controls;
- access equipment;
- security systems;
- first-aid arrangements;
- COSHH;
- cleaning chemicals;
- accident reporting;
- risk assessments;
- emergency procedures;
- inspection records; and
- contractor competency.

Not every item will necessarily apply, but the Council should establish the requirements before accepting the facility.

Indicative annual allowance:

£2,000–£4,000

10. Grounds and Drainage Maintenance

The drainage works themselves are capital expenditure, but the drainage system becomes a Town Council asset if responsibility transfers.

The Council should therefore budget for:

- inspection chambers;
- gullies;
- channels;
- drainage outfalls;
- silt removal;

- jetting;
- vegetation;
- erosion;
- grass maintenance;
- reinstatement;
- monitoring after heavy rainfall; and
- periodic specialist maintenance.

The Council should obtain an asset maintenance schedule from the drainage designer.

Indicative annual allowance:

£3,000–£6,000

11. General Repairs and Maintenance

The pods will become buildings/assets requiring maintenance.

Potential costs include:

- doors;
- locks;
- windows;
- roofing;
- gutters;
- flooring;
- walls;
- decoration;
- plumbing;
- electrical equipment;
- sanitary fittings;
- heaters;
- hot water systems;
- access-control equipment;

- vandalism;
- graffiti; and
- accidental damage.

An initial annual allowance of:

£4,000–£8,000

should be considered.

The Council should also establish whether the District Council or contractor will retain responsibility for latent defects during an initial defects period.

12. Security

Three pods located on a playing field create a potential security risk.

The Council should consider:

- robust doors and locks;
- controlled access;
- key management;
- electronic access;
- CCTV;
- security lighting;
- alarm systems where justified;
- regular inspections; and
- clear user terms and conditions.

Access-control systems can reduce the need for physical key management but create their own maintenance and replacement costs.

Indicative annual allowance:

£1,000–£2,000

13. Insurance

The Council should obtain confirmation that its insurance arrangements will cover:

- buildings;
- contents;

- public liability;
- employers' liability;
- vandalism;
- accidental damage;
- hired facilities;
- users;
- contractors; and
- activities taking place within the pods.

An indicative additional annual allowance of:

£1,000–£2,000

should be included pending confirmation from the Council's insurer.

14. Indicative Annual Revenue Budget

Cost area	Indicative annual allowance
Caretaker/facilities staffing	£18,000-£25,000
Cleaning	£5,000-£10,000
Booking/admin system	£1,000-£3,000
Electricity	£1,500-£4,000
Water/sewerage	£500-£1,500
Legionella/water hygiene	£750-£2,000
Statutory/compliance inspections	£2,000-£4,000
Drainage/grounds maintenance	£3,000-£6,000
Building/general repairs	£4,000-£8,000
Security/access systems	£1,000-£2,000
Insurance	£1,000-£2,000
Consumables/waste	£1,000-£2,000
Contingency	£2,000-£4,000
Indicative total	£40,750-£73,500

The wide range reflects the fact that the final specification is currently unknown.

For budget planning purposes, I recommend using:

£55,000 per annum

as an initial working figure.

15. Lifecycle Reserve

The annual revenue budget should not only cover routine expenditure.

The Council should also establish a replacement reserve for:

- roofs;
- doors;
- flooring;
- heating equipment;
- hot water systems;
- electrical equipment;
- access-control systems;
- drainage infrastructure;
- external surfacing;
- repainting;
- replacement sanitary fittings; and
- eventual refurbishment of the pods.

A provisional annual lifecycle reserve of:

£5,000–£10,000

should be considered.

If the pods have an anticipated construction value of, for example, £300,000 and major refurbishment/replacement is expected over a 25-year period, a whole-life reserve of approximately £12,000 per year would be required to fully fund that amount without relying on future borrowing or exceptional precept increases.

The actual figure should be based on the capital value and anticipated life of the components.

16. Potential Income

There may be an opportunity to offset some revenue expenditure through:

- pod hire;
- sports club bookings;
- community bookings;

- events;
- block bookings;
- room hire;
- sponsorship; and
- grants.

However, income should be treated conservatively.

For example, a theoretical £15,000 annual booking income does not necessarily mean that the Town Council's net revenue cost will fall by £15,000 because additional bookings may increase:

- cleaning;
- utilities;
- staffing;
- repairs;
- administration;
- wear and tear; and
- water usage.

A detailed cost-per-booking model should therefore be prepared.

17. Precept Implications

The impact on the precept should be based upon the net cost after realistic income, not the gross expenditure.

Using an illustrative tax base of 854 Band-D-equivalent properties:

Net annual cost	Approx. annual impact
£10,000	£11.72
£15,000	£17.58
£20,000	£23.44
£30,000	£35.13
£40,000	£46.84
£50,000	£58.55
£55,000	£64.40
£60,000	£70.26

If the Council ultimately has a net additional revenue requirement of £55,000, the illustrative impact would therefore be approximately:

£58.55 per Band-D-equivalent property per year

The actual figure must be calculated using the Council's confirmed Council Tax base.

18. Major Financial Risk

The principal concern is that the project will be presented to the Town Council as a capital-funded project, while the Town Council subsequently becomes responsible for a substantial permanent revenue commitment.

The Council should therefore insist upon a whole-life cost assessment before agreeing to accept responsibility.

19. Questions That Must Be Answered Before Commitment

The Town Council should obtain written answers to the following:

Pods

1. What exactly will each pod contain?
2. Will there be toilets?
3. Will there be showers?
4. Will there be hot water?
5. Will there be heating?
6. Will there be kitchens or food preparation?
7. What will the maximum occupancy be?
8. What hours are the pods intended to operate?
9. Who will clean them?
10. Who will open and close them?
11. Who will manage bookings?

Water

17. What is the proposed water system?
18. Is there any stored water?
19. Are showers proposed?
20. What Legionella risk assessment will be provided?
21. Who is the responsible person?

22. Who will undertake monitoring?

23. What happens after periods of closure?

Drainage

25. Who owns the drainage infrastructure?

26. What maintenance does the designer recommend?

27. What are the expected annual maintenance costs?

28. Who pays for drainage failure?

29. What is the expected design life?

30. What is the replacement cost?

Staffing

31. Can the Town Council manage the facility using existing employees?

32. If not, what additional FTE is required?

33. Who covers sickness and holidays?

34. Who responds to out-of-hours emergencies?

35. Who deals with vandalism?

36. Who manages the booking system?

20. Recommended Operating Structure

Subject to the final design, a practical model would be:

Town Council

- overall asset owner;
- budget holder;
- policy and risk management;
- contract management.

Caretaker/facilities operative

- opening/closing;
- routine inspections;
- basic cleaning oversight;
- reporting defects;

- user liaison;
- access management.

Cleaning contractor

- scheduled cleaning;
- deep cleaning;
- consumables;
- waste.

Water hygiene specialist

- Legionella risk assessment;
- monitoring;
- specialist advice;
- remedial works where required.

Qualified contractors

- electrical;
- plumbing;
- fire safety;
- drainage;
- specialist repairs.

Online booking system

- bookings;
- payments;
- availability;
- automated confirmations;
- user records.

This spreads specialist responsibilities appropriately rather than expecting one Town Council employee to be competent in every area.

21. Overall Assessment

The Gilbert Avenue project has significantly greater ongoing revenue implications than the proposed skatepark.

The Town Council should not view the three pods as passive assets.

They will create an operational facility requiring staffing, cleaning, utilities, security, maintenance, compliance and administration.

For financial planning purposes, the Town Council should assume:

Routine annual revenue:

approximately £55,000

Potential lifecycle reserve:

£5,000–£10,000 per annum

Overall prudent annual provision:

approximately £60,000–£65,000

before taking account of any net income from bookings or other uses.

The final figure could be lower if:

- the pods are extremely simple;
- existing staff can absorb the work;
- cleaning is infrequent;
- there are no showers;
- there is minimal hot water provision;
- the booking system is incorporated into an existing Council system.

Conversely, the figure could be substantially higher if the pods contain showers, extensive hot-water systems, toilets, kitchens, heating/air conditioning or are operated for long hours.

22. Recommendation to Councillors

It is recommended that the Town Council does not formally accept ongoing responsibility for the three pods until a full operational and whole-life cost plan has been supplied.

The District Council/project sponsor should provide:

1. a detailed specification of each pod;
2. an annual operating-cost estimate;
3. a lifecycle-cost assessment;
4. a water-system schematic;

5. Legionella/water-hygiene proposals;
6. a cleaning specification;
7. a staffing proposal;
8. drainage maintenance requirements;
9. electrical and fire-safety requirements;
10. insurance requirements;
11. warranties and defects liability arrangements;
12. a proposed booking/charging model; and

Subject to those matters being satisfactorily resolved, the project may be deliverable.

However, the Town Council should recognise that accepting the pods could create a permanent annual revenue commitment in the region of £55,000–£65,000, which will have a material impact on the Town Council's precept.

The project should therefore be assessed on its whole-life cost, not solely on the fact that the initial capital expenditure is being funded by the District Council.