

CABINET**30 SEPTEMBER 2019****TRANMERE ROVERS PARTNERING AGREEMENT**

Councillor Janette Williamson, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, said:

“The Council have a long history of links to Tranmere Rovers Football Club. We have worked with them for many years but we have never had a statement of intent that brings together all the engagement with the Club in one place. In compiling and implementing this Partnering Agreement this is a great opportunity to showcase our relationship with the Club and provide openness and transparency about the work we engage them to do. It also provides an opportunity for people to see the other activities that the Club are involved in that provide beneficial outcomes to the community. We are proud to work with our local Club and look forward to a continued solid relationship well into the future.”

REPORT SUMMARY

Tranmere Rovers Football Club (the Club) has a long and successful history of working in partnership with the Council to deliver commissioned services on behalf of the Council - and to deliver services that are not commissioned or paid for by the Council, but support the delivery of beneficial outcomes to Wirral residents.

The current relationship and communication channels with the Club are dispersed across the organisation, as individual officers are responsible for individual parts of the work commissioned from the Club. This does not provide for a whole view of the relationship the Council has with the Club, as one of its trusted partners, and the work that the Club does to support the delivery of critical Council functions, commissioned and non-commissioned.

The establishment of a Partnering Agreement lays out our ambition to work with the Club on a more holistic basis and recognise their contribution to community activities and programmes to support vulnerable people. It also sets out how we will work together for the benefit of Wirral residents and the Wirral Economy.

In 2016 the Club created an international business arm, forming an official partnership with the Inner Mongolian Chinese Government to grow football as a sport in China. The Club was named as a key strategic partner in developing campus football in Inner Mongolia, the pilot province for football development. Subsequently this business has expanded into international activities in North America, Indonesia, Australia and other provinces in China.

The Club has delivered five coach education courses - in line with The Football Association (FA) international coaching badge - which has brought just under 150 Inner Mongolian coaches to Wirral. As a result of this, the Club estimates that their international activities have contributed over £500,000 to the local economy.

This open and transparent way of working together provides an opportunity for fans, the public, members and investors to see the value that the Club brings to the area, as a community asset, in one place.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That Cabinet:

Endorse the Partnering Agreement between Wirral Council and Tranmere Rovers Football Club.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To bring together all the activity undertaken between the Council and the Club – including the Club’s activities that are not part of Council commissioned services - into one place.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Not to enter into a Partnering Agreement with Tranmere Rovers Football Club and to continue with the current relationship with the Club. The current relationship is based on individual commissioned projects that are not consolidated into one place. This means there is no oversight of the commissioned and non-commissioned activity provided by the Club for the benefit of the Wirral community.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Tranmere is a club which is firmly rooted in its community and is committed to harnessing the unique power of football to engage with and improve the lives of those at risk of social isolation, whether through poverty, unemployment, mental or physical health issues, or any other reason. They are also a dynamic and forward-thinking club - with diversified activities which offer many training and employment opportunities for local residents. Tranmere also have rapidly growing football tourism and elite football development businesses, which bring significant cash into the local economy.
- 3.2 The Club has an excellent track record of measurable delivery and success, in both our charitable and our wider commercial work in the Wirral community - driving economic growth and improving the lives of some of the Borough’s most vulnerable people, as well as giving locals a sense of pride and identity in their own professional football team. Working hand in hand with Wirral Council will enable both parties to achieve more, and faster, than either could alone.
- 3.3 The Wirral Plan sets a long-term plan to bring about real change – not just in what can be achieved, but in the way it is delivered. Tranmere is committed to working in partnership to deliver corporate objectives and their ambition is to work with all partners in the public, private and community sector to achieve higher aspirations and to achieve a better Wirral.
- 3.4 In 2016 Tranmere Rovers created an international business arm, forming an official partnership with the Inner Mongolian Chinese Government to grow football as a sport in China. The Club was named as a key strategic partner in developing campus football in Inner Mongolia, the pilot province for football development. The Club has subsequently expanded its international activities into North America, Indonesia, Australia and other provinces in China.
- 3.5 Tranmere has delivered five coach education courses in line with The Football Association (FA) international coaching badge. This has brought just under 150 Inner Mongolian coaches to the Wirral to gain an understanding of English football culture and coaching techniques.

- 3.6 In Spring 2018 Tranmere created the International Soccer Academy (ISA) and expanded into other international markets: North America, Indonesia, Australia and other provinces in China. The Club estimates that their international activities have contributed over £500,000 to the local economy.
- 3.7 Over the past month(s) there have been two instances of football clubs being in financial difficulty with some consequences of not being allowed to play in the football league. Tranmere have been diversifying their activities for a number of years to ensure the Club can be sustainable in the event of an unplanned or adverse situation. The Club has grown a significant community strand of businesses to support local residents and contribute to delivering the 20 pledges of the Council.
- 3.8 However, the Council's activity with the Club is disparate across various sections of the Council and data has never been gathered that brings together all the elements of work and engagement with the Council to enable this to be reported on.
- 3.9 This Partnering agreement seeks to do just that, bringing openness and transparency to the relationship between the Council and the Club, so that either party can be confident and proud of the joint achievement of objectives.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council commissions the Club to provide functions on its behalf. There are no financial pressures for the Council in doing so as these are funded from current established budgets.
- 4.2 Any future financial activity with the Club will be subject to separate approval.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The partnering agreement is a statement of intent to co-operate and is not intended to create a formal legal partnership or any other legal obligations on either the Council or Tranmere Rovers.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no adverse resource implications.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 There are no adverse risks.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 An Overview and Scrutiny Session was held on 11 September for members of all Overview and Scrutiny Committees, with the Chairman of the Club, Mark Palios, to discuss the Partnering Agreement.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no adverse equality implications.

REPORT AUTHOR: Shaer Halewood
Director of Finance and Investment
telephone: 0151 691 8688
email: shaerhalewood@wirral.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Partnering Agreement

BACKGROUND PAPERS

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date