

EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION



REPORT OF: Executive Member for Leisure Culture and Young People

LEAD OFFICERS: Director of Public Health & Wellbeing

DATE: 14 March 2019

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED: Leisure Culture and Young People

WARD/S AFFECTED: Mill Hill and Moorgate Billinge and Beardwood

KEY DECISION: YES NO

SUBJECT: External investment for new 3G pitches at Witton Park

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Witton Sports turf pitches were constructed in 1984. The playing surface was of a sand filled design which was the latest specification at the time. These pitches have a life expectancy of 10 years; they were replaced again in 2004 (20 years later) and have not been replaced since.

The infrastructure of the site including floodlights, fencing, drainage and the shock pad under the surface is now 34 years old. The current carpet with a life expectancy of 10 years is now 14 years old. Consultants, procured through the Football Foundation provided a report identifying that the facilities are past their useful life span, present a health and safety concern.

The options considered were:-

1. Do nothing - continue to let the facility decline and close it when the surface completely fails. This would have a negative impact on participation and income levels
2. Invest in remedial work – may extend the lifespan slightly but loss of bookings to newer facilities would increase budget pressures
3. Work with the Football Association & Football Foundation to explore external funding for new state of the art 3G pitches. – this maintains and grows participation and brings develops new facilities without requiring Council investment

The Football Foundation were very keen to work with Blackburn with Darwen Council to create an excellent football hub which meets FA league standards, promotes grassroots participation and provides the borough with external investment into facilities with a robust business plan that secures funding for future replacement in 10 years' time. Therefore Option 3 has been progressed over the last 18 months.

A funding bid to the FA (for Football Foundation funding) was submitted in December 2018 to secure a grant of £778,045 (matched by £400,000 of Section 106) to develop 2 new full sized 3G pitches (including floodlights and fencing) and refurbished changing rooms. On 28th February we were informed that the FA Board had approved the full amount of grant requested.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board: NOTES the following:

- 2.1 That the Football Foundation have confirmed external grant funding of £778,045 to Blackburn with Darwen Council for the development of 2 new 3G pitches and refurbishment of the changing rooms at Witton Park.
- 2.2 The externally funded scheme will be managed by the council and be completed in September 2019
- 2.3 The changing room refurbishment works were advertised using the councils "Chest" procurement system with companies required to price for a design provided by the by the councils building consultancy team. A successful contractor has been chosen and the Council is in a position to award the contract.
- 2.4 The floodlight, fencing and pitch renewal program was advertised under the Football Foundation procurement framework by the FF consultants Robinson Low Francis Ltd. A successful contractor has been chosen and the Council is in a position to award the contract.

That Executive Board APPROVES the following

- 2.5 Award of the works contracts to the successful contractors and delegates authority to the Director of Public Health in consultation with Executive Member for Leisure, Culture and Young People to enter into works contracts with both companies to deliver the proposed development within the April – September time frame.
- 2.6 Delegates to the Director of Public Health in consultation with Executive Member for Leisure, Culture and Young People to approve and enter into the Football Foundation funding agreement that will allow the scheme to be delivered and the agree outcomes following the completion of the development.
- 2.7 **Authorise** the Director of Finance and Customer Services to arrange finances to cover the delay in the receipts of Section 106 contributions coming in from the housing developer.

3 BACKGROUND:

Witton Sports turf pitches were constructed in 1984. The playing surface was of a sand filled design which was the latest specification at the time. These pitches have a life expectancy of 10 years and were replaced again in 2004. (20 years later). The infrastructure of the site meaning floodlights, fencing, drainage and the shock pad under the surface of the grass is now 34 years old. The current carpet with a life expectancy of 10 years is now 14 years old.

Consultants, procured through the Football Foundation provided a report identifying that the facilities are past their useful life span, present a health and safety concern. In the next year or so given the reductions in council finances a decision was needed to either invest some £1.2m in the site, invest c. £320,000 in replacement of the sand filled surface (plus extra needed for fencing and lighting) or consider closing the facility. Increasing participation is a priority for the Council and its partners and with Witton Park increasingly seen as a major hub for physical activity it made sense to explore options for investment not closure.

The Football Association and Football Foundation made it clear they had funding available to support new football facilities or replace old and dilapidated facilities. This funding extended to the whole refurbishment of the facilities including new Fencing, Floodlights, Shock Pads, Goals and the latest

3rd Generation pitch surface that will allow affiliated league football to be played. There was also funding available for a total refurbishment of the modular changing rooms, bringing them up to the latest Football Association standards and including classroom to improve the educational courses on offer whilst using the pitches.

As part of their Grassroots Investment Strategy over the last 18 months the Lancashire FA has worked and undertaken consultation with teams and new partners to develop a varied and exciting programme of use for 2 full sized 3G pitches. Partners including Blackburn Rovers Community Trust, Blackburn College as well as 3rd sector providers are keen to secure pitch bookings to deliver their respective programmes including education based courses, all age provision and activities to promote mental wellbeing and social participation.

A robust and thorough business plan has been developed using the Football Foundation's detailed template and as part of the bid pre-submission was scrutinised by the peer reviewers in the Football Foundation and FA . The business plan includes a long term sustainability element, a mandatory £50,000 sink fund from income (£25,000 per pitch) that is ring-fenced year on year and will guarantee that there is a funding pot to replace both pitch playing surfaces every ten years.

Securing investment for new 3G pitches the intention is to explore assessment of and appropriate investment in the grass cricket and football pitches at Pleasington and look at renewing the dilapidated changing rooms built in the 1960's. This is seen as the next phase of a multi-phased approach to improving pitch quality and provision to meet the needs going forward.

Through a feasibility study (funded by the FA) the following works were identified as required at Witton:

- New Floodlights
- New Pitch Fencing
- New Shock-pad and sub base
- Improvements to the drainage
- A new 3G (third generation) pitch surface to allow approved league football.
- A refurbishment of the current changing rooms to allow for league football standards.
- An increase in the size of both pitches to meet the minimum size specifications for adult football.

The total cost of the above was estimated at c. £1.2M

The FA / Football Foundation required match funding of c. 30% or £400,000. Due to the Council's ongoing financial challenges discussions were had with Growth Board colleagues and £400,000 of section 106 has been secured from the planned developments at Sappi Paper site approved at Planning Committee on 20th December 2018.

Approved procurement processes for the required work have followed. The changing room works tender has been advertised on The Chest led by the council's building consultancy section. The pitch works have been advertised through the FA's own procurement framework led by FA Consultants Robinson Low Francis Limited to bespoke contractors able to carry out the specialist works. From these successful procurement processes we know the actual costs required to complete phase one.

The costs are as follows.

Pitch works	£814,164
Pavilion refurbishment	£213,668
External works elevation treatment	£11,000
Contingency	£51,393
Fees	£85,802
Statutory costs	0
Legal costs	£2,000

Total project costs	<u>£1,178,045</u>
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Funding for this project has been sourced Via a grant to the football foundation	<u>£778,045</u>
A section 106 contribution from the Sappi Paper Mill Housing development	<u>£400,000</u>

4 KEY ISSUES & RISKS:

The infrastructure of the site including floodlights, fencing, drainage and the shock pad under the surface of the grass is now 34 years old and also need replacing. The changing rooms need updating to meet current FA standards.

The cost of this level of investment is c £1.2M. Given the Council's continuing financial challenges this level of investment was not available from internal budgets.

There is a risk that unless external funding can be secured the pitches may need to be closed on health and safety due to the deteriorated pitch surface.

The FA has a strategy to invest in grassroots football and facility improvement to strengthen and generate increased participation. Working in partnership with The FA and the Football Foundation has enabled identification and securement of c. £778,000 of external funding that has been matched by section 106 funding approved at Planning Committee 20th December 2018 from the Sappi Paper mill development site.

Procurement for the pitch replacement and changing room refurbishment has been undertaken through the Council's Chest system and the FA's contractor framework both managed and coordinated by experienced officers.

The development of the business plan, led by Lancashire FA has secured a number of key partners for use of the new pitches. These include Blackburn Rovers Community Trust and Blackburn College.

Securing external funding and investment in 2 new 3G pitches at Witton Park will enabled future phases exploring opportunities for the whole of Pleasington pitches. This would include assessment of and appropriate investment in the grass cricket and football pitches at Pleasington and looking at renewing the dilapidated changing rooms built in the 1960's. This is seen as the next phase of a multi-phased approach to improving pitch quality and provision to meet the needs going forward.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Improvements in facilities that promote physical activity and participation support the Council's commitment to increase health and wellbeing and underpin the additional investment from Sport England's Local Delivery Pilot which focusses on those who are currently inactive.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Capital

The whole scheme is externally funding through a secured grant from the Football Foundation of £778, 045 and £400,000 from section 106 through the Sappi Paper mill development approved by

Planning Committee on 20th December 2018. The project's funding breakdown can be seen below

Pitch works	£814,164
Pavilion refurbishment	£213,668
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Total project costs	<u>£1,178,045</u>

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Via a grant to the football foundation	<u>£778,045</u>
A section 106 contribution from the Sappi Paper Mill Housing development	<u>£400,000</u>

The section 106 contributions will be received by the council in various instalments dependant on the progress of the housing development on the Sappi site.

1) These monies are detailed to come in as follows. Planning app 10/15/0496

upon commencement of building	<u>£100,000</u>	Commence Summer 2019
at the 12 months point	<u>£222,500</u>	
at the 24 months point.	<u>£37,500</u>	

From app 10/14/0828: £40,000 contribution received from Tauheedul Education trust in 16/17.

The council will make arrangements to borrow this money to fund the time gap from the money being spent on the scheme to the money coming in from the developer.

The project delivery and timescale sits in 2019/20; commencement in April 2019 and completion in September 2019, with retention held beyond this date.

Revenue

The business plan includes a long term sustainability element, a mandatory £50,000 sink fund from income (£25,000 per pitch) that is ring-fenced year on year and will guarantee that there is a funding pot to replace both pitch playing surfaces every ten years. This sink fund will be generated from the increased income forecast as a result of the pitch improvements as highlighted in the business case.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Procurement of the changing room works has been procured via open tender on the Chest in accordance with Council contract procurement procedure rules and procurement law. Procurement of the pitch works has been undertaken by consultants via the football foundation framework. Details of this procurement shall be reviewed by officers in Contracts and Procurement team to ensure compliance with procurement law.

Contracts for both works contracts shall be in a form approved by legal officers in the Contracts and Procurement team.

The grant funding agreement from the Football Foundation shall be in a form agreed with legal officers in the Contracts and Procurement team.

The conditions of the grant funding agreement require the Council to enter into the documents restricting the lands future use and for this to be registered at the land registry.
All agreements shall be entered into in accordance with the requirements of the constitution, including being executed under seal.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no resource implication. All costings for staff time have been factored into the project costs and are covered through the secured external funding.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA link here*)

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. (*insert EIA attachment*)

10. CONSULTATIONS;

Extensive consultations, led by the Lancashire FA have taken place with a range of current and proposed users of the new site to ensure that there are sufficient customers and partners to successfully use the site and deliver the sustainable football association business plan.

Any required relocation of current users (including hockey, men's football teams and netball league) has been secured to the community use facility at the adjacent Witton Park High School. This minimises disruption for them and secures them improved facilities compared to the current pitches at Witton Park.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION: 6

CONTACT OFFICER:	Claire Ramwell
DATE:	04/03/2019
BACKGROUND PAPER:	