

DECISION TAKER: Councillor Martin Tod – Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management

REPORT TITLE: WINCHESTER CITY FOOTBALL CLUB ARTIFICIAL PITCH

5 DECEMBER 2022

Contact Officer: Calum Drummond Email: cdrummond@winchester.gov.uk

WARD(S): ST BARTHOLOMEW

### PURPOSE

The Council, as landlord, has been working in partnership with Winchester City Football Club (WCFC) in order to secure funding to install an artificial grass pitch on the site the club currently occupies. To date £200,000 of CIL funding has been allocated to the project and an agreement in principle has been reached with the Football Foundation for a grant towards the likely cost of circa £1m,

The Football Foundation (FF) has indicated a willingness to approve a grant, subject to several conditions, including that the council submits a grant application jointly with WCFC, with council as lead applicant.

This report seeks approval to proceed with a funding bid to the FF and details any associated conditions.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management approves:

1. The submission by the council of a funding bid to the Football Foundation for an artificial pitch at Winchester City Football Club;
2. Delegation to the appropriate Corporate Head of Service to agree the details and submission of a planning application for an artificial pitch on council owned land as marked by the red line in appendix 1;
3. That, in the event that the funding bid is successful and the project proceeds:
  - a. Football Foundation branding may be placed on our asset.
  - b. A note can be added to the title to the premises at the Land Registry,

which recognises the Football Foundation's interest in the facility.

4. The delegation of authority to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management, to accept the full terms and conditions of any grant award from the Football Foundation.

That the Leader and Cabinet Member for Asset Management notes:

5. That the facility would be operated by Winchester City Football Club and that all income would be used by the Club to meet the costs of operating, maintaining, repairing and replacing the pitch, including index-linked annual contributions to a pitch replacement fund; and
6. That the project would not proceed unless the grant application to the Football Foundation secures all funding required to deliver the project in full.

## IMPLICATIONS:

### 1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 Living Well
- 1.2 Sports facilities such as this enable our residents to live healthy and fulfilled lives offering them the right mix of facilities for all ages and abilities that are accessible and offer a wide range of activities.
- 1.3 This project would deliver on aims and commitments such as reduced health inequalities, a wide range of physical and cultural activities for all ages and abilities and supporting communities to extend the range of sports and cultural facilities across the district.
- 1.4 There would be opportunities to host inter-school tournaments and skills workshops for under 16s (youth leagues, coaching programmes, affordable open sessions), older adults (walking and veterans football), as well as disability football.
- 1.5 Through the involvement of Winchester City Flyers FC, the project would offer new opportunities for female coaches and players, enabling the growth and development of the game. The facility will be made available for local community use, schools, external partner clubs and holiday clubs for organised sessions and private hire.

### 2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

#### Capital implications

- 2.1 This report is seeking authority to submit a funding bid towards the cost of the facility.
- 2.2 The Football Foundation (FF) has undertaken a tender process for the pre-construction works which also includes the subsequent supply and installation of the artificial pitch (subject to funding approval) through its pre-tendered framework. The supplier selected is FieldTurf and their Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) is £1,005,119.
- 2.3 Two sources have been identified to contribute towards the cost of this project:
  - a) Winchester City Council has secured £200k from the Winchester District CIL fund to take forward as a council-led project (CAB3360).
  - b) The FF has provisionally offered to support the project by way of a grant. This report seeks authority to submit an application for the grant, however, the amount of this grant would not be confirmed until April 2023 when the grant application is considered.

- 2.4 Budget will be included within the capital programme for 2023/24 in anticipation of a successful outcome from the grant application, but the council's stated position is that no funding would be made available beyond the £200k of CIL funding already approved so, if the FF is unable to provide sufficient grant funding to meet the £805,119 shortfall, the project would most likely not be able to proceed.
- 2.5 The Programme and Capital Strategy (PAC) Board has approved the business justification case and, should the bid be successful, would provide governance and oversight of the project.

#### Revenue implications

- 2.6 WCC has committed to £11k cost of pre-planning works, which are a requirement of the FF if they are to consider an application for funding in spring 2023. Approval for the £11k spend was given via a Significant Officer Decision on 25 October 2021 and will be met from within existing budgets.
- 2.7 The proposed terms of lease for the facility to WCFC would see the club take responsibility for all revenue, with the income generated by the facility to remain with the club and be used to meet the annual maintenance costs and allow for the creation of a sinking fund to replace the pitch surface in the longer term.
- 2.8 WCFC has produced financial projections that show an annual surplus after allowing for maintenance and an annual contribution to the sinking fund of £25,000 pa. If the surface is well maintained it will have a life of 10-12 years and would cost (in today's prices) circa £230,000 +VAT to replace, so the sinking fund contribution will need to be index linked.
- 2.9 There would be no revenue implication for the council, unless WCFC had to step away at some point. The business plan appears sound and suggests that, in the event of the facility being handed back to the council, there would be sufficient income generated to cover all costs, including contributions to the replacement fund.
- 2.10 WCFC will be responsible for meeting all financial and social KPIs that are conditions of the grant award and this will be included within the terms of the new lease (see section 3).

### 3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The build project would be procured by the FF on behalf of the council using its pre-tendered framework which includes multiple suppliers for artificial grass football pitches. This framework is compliant with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 (PCR2015). It covers design, manufacture, supply, and installation and includes contract administration, cost management, health and safety compliance and independent testing to FIFA standards. The council's procurement team has been consulted on the proposed

arrangements and use of the framework would be permissible in accordance with the council's Contract Procedure Rules and PCR2015.

- 3.2 There would be a Framework Alliance Contract whereby the FF is the client and the council is the additional client. The council would be required to sign a joining agreement to enable the council to award the contract to an artificial grass pitch supplier. This will need to be tested against the FF grant funding agreement and the Joint Contracts Tribunal (JCT) contract.
- 3.3 The council would enter into a new lease with WCFC but would keep control of all collateral warranties/ insurance policies rather than pass them onto WCFC. This would allow the council to get remedial work completed under the warranties/ insurance. If these are passed onto WCFC, the council would find it difficult forcing WCFC to act if remedial work is needed during the relevant time period.

#### 4 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 4.1 A report by the Football Association has indicated that there is a significant shortfall of community accessible artificial grass football pitches in Winchester. This is supported by the council's current Playing Pitch Strategy.
- 4.2 WCFC has researched potential demand via engagement with various stakeholders, potential partners, community groups and schools. WCFC has also gained letters of support from Winchester Youth FC, Winchester Flyers FC, St Swithun's School, Chelsea FC Foundation and Winchester Castle FC to name a few. The club are currently waiting for the plans from the contractor and will then show/ discuss with the club supporters and then the general public with particular focus on their neighbours.
- 4.3 The Leader of the Council and relevant Cabinet members have been consulted on the and further engagement will take place with ward councillors.

#### 5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 5.1 3G pitches are more eco-friendly than a natural grass alternative. This is because 3G pitches do not require high amounts of water, they become a much more sustainable option for sports facilities. There is also no need for fertiliser, pesticides, or any toxic chemicals to keep up with regular maintenance.

#### 6 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

- 6.1 The proposal would increase opportunity for under-represented groups. There would be increased opportunities for women and girls through involvement of Winchester City Flyers. Winchester Youth FC has been in dialogue with Hampshire FA with a view to offer a pan-disability football course as part of its community provision to support the bid. Although women and girls are not the WCFC's specific target group, the club will partner with Winchester City Flyers to double their ladies team participation (100% growth)

and a 10% growth in their youth set up, particularly amongst the younger age groups. The club currently have 27 teams and there will be space for approx. 3 more. Winchester City FC do not have a disability team at the moment but intend to have at least 1 pan-disability team that can use the facility as a home ground for matches and training.

6.2 In regards to recreational use the following KPIs have been proposed for 2027/28:

- a) Mini-Kickers Development Group (4-6 years) – 30 children
- b) Wildcats (female specific sessions) – 30 children
- c) Walking Football (18 adults)
- d) Pay & Play – 36 (adults)
- e) Small-sided Commercial League – 50 adults
- f) School, College , University & Extra-Curricular – 300 children

## 7 RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The primary risk is if the FF is unable to provide sufficient funding to meet the shortfall in project cost. If this is the case, then the project will not go ahead.

7.2 All other risks will be mitigated as detailed below and reported in more detail should the funding bid be successful.

| <b>Risk</b>   | <b>Mitigation</b>   | <b>Opportunities</b>  |
|---|---|---|
| <u>Financial Exposure</u><br>Cost increases beyond budget | The FF tender process required a Guaranteed Maximum Price so there would be no unexpected increases.  |   |
| Facility creates a revenue pressure for the council       | The proposal is for WCFC to manage the facility, with all maintenance, repair and replacement responsibility. However, in the unlikely event WCFC ceased to trade, the council would become responsible for the maintenance, repair, and replacement in | Options would exist for in-house management or contracting out. |

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|---|---|---|
| Insufficient funds are set aside in the sinking fund  | <p>accordance with the grant conditions.</p> <p>Annual sinking fund contributions will be required to be index-linked to account for inflation increases.</p>                                     |   |
| <p><u>Exposure to challenge</u><br/>Challenge from other potential sites for a 3G pitch</p>                             | Other sites identified in the FF strategy for Winchester could also seek funding to develop a 3G pitch and would have the same option to submit a CIL bid.  |   |
| <p><u>Innovation</u><br/>Latest 3G pitch technology proves unsuitable or troublesome</p>                                | The FF has extensive experience of 3G pitch provision and is fully confident of its suitability for this site.  | 3G pitches allow greater usage than grass so increase opportunity to participate.   |
| <p><u>Reputation</u><br/>Failure to support club</p>  | WCFC has been made very aware that the council can provide no further funding beyond the £200k via CIL.   | Should funding be secured and the project proceed, the relationship between club and council should be noticeably strengthened. |
| <p><u>Achievement of outcome</u><br/>Grant is not secured</p>   | Project does not proceed.   |   |
| <p><u>Property</u><br/>Facility is not adequately maintained</p> <p>Insufficient provision for facility replacement</p> | <p>New lease to WCFC will include clear responsibilities for maintenance and repair.</p> <p>Agreement with WCFC will require them to invest in a sinking fund for replacement at end-of life.</p> | WCFC will be invested in the facility which increases sense of pride and ownership.   |

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|---|--|--|
| <u>Community Support</u><br>Lack of support from other football clubs and partner organisations | WCFC has done significant work to engage other clubs and secure their support.   | Increased opportunity for a wide range of clubs and large numbers of local people. |
| <u>Timescales</u><br>Failure to meet deadline for FF funding bid                                | WCFC is preparing much of the information that supports and evidences the bid. Capacity exists within the community team to work with the club to ensure a high quality bid. |  |
| <u>Project capacity</u><br>See timescales above   |  |  |
| Other   |  |  |

## 8 OTHER KEY ISSUES

8.1 The funding bid to the Football Foundation will be the responsibility of council officers with support from WCFC. The procurement and installation of the pitch would be managed by the FF through its framework. A project team would oversee this work with representatives from the council, WCFC and Hampshire FA. This will be absorbed within existing staff resources.

## 9 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

9.1 WCFC is based at the football ground, in the northeast corner of North Walls Recreation Ground, a site that is owned by Winchester City Council. The ground is the home venue for WCFC who currently play in the Southern Football League Division One South. WCFC is a committee-run members club and has a history dating back to 1884.

9.2 WCFC currently has:

- a) U23, U18's and U16's teams.
- b) Over 300 boys participating in youth football from U7 to U18 and a development section that covers Year R and Year 1 children who are just starting their journey in organised sport.

- 9.3 WCFC has asked the council to partner with them to install an artificial grass pitch on the site (106x70 community stadia 3G AGP). The club has secured £200k of CIL money (CAB3310) which has since been reallocated to WCC, as landowner to take forward as a council-led project (CAB3360). WCFC has also negotiated an agreement in principle with the FF for a grant towards the £1M cost.
- 9.4 Most of the usage will be taken up by WCFC and the 2 youth organisations that are partnering with WCFC in this project (Winchester Flyers FC & Winchester Youth FC). Winchester City Flyers is a partner club with a youth setup with over 300 girls participating in youth football and an adult ladies section with 3 teams.
- 9.5 Both clubs struggle to find suitable space to train and play at weekends with teams frequently having to postpone fixtures due to the weather. A suitable and conveniently located 3G surface would enhance the match day experience. Furthermore, a reliable surface would greatly benefit the teenage groups of both organisations where there is a drop off in participation from the U15 to U18 age groups. A venue with suitable changing facilities would help to retain and attract participants in this age group and provide a transition to open-age football.
- 9.6 The Football Foundation (FF) has indicated a willingness to approve a grant, subject to several conditions:
- a) The council submitting a grant application jointly with WCFC, with council as lead applicant.
  - b) A notice to be registered at HM Land Registry against the title to warn that the FF has made a grant.
  - c) Pre-contract services in relation to the detailed design and planning application for the new artificial grass pitch indicating that the project can proceed. The council has approved £11K for the necessary pre-contract services work.
  - d) The securing of planning permission made by WCC.
- 9.7 Once completed, the asset would remain in WCC's ownership. The FF funding agreement would require the artificial pitch to be maintained and renewed during the funding period. The pitch would be leased to WCFC on a new long-term lease and the club would, as part of the lease, be responsible for the ongoing maintenance of the pitch and for its eventual surface replacement.

## 10 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 10.1 The council could have chosen not to proceed with a funding bid, but this would result in a number of missed opportunities. The work of WCFC has created an opportunity to bid for a substantial amount of external funding for

facilities in the district and this funding would otherwise be directed elsewhere. This project also creates an opportunity to increase participation amongst women and people with disabilities – an opportunity that would be lost had a bid not been pursued.

#### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

##### Previous Cabinet/Committee Reports or Cabinet Member Decisions:-

1. CAB3310 - COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY SPENDING PROGRAMME UPDATE. 15 September 2021
2. CAB3360 - COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY – COMMUNITY AND WINCHESTER COUNCIL PROJECTS APPROVAL. 14 September 2022

##### Other Background Documents:-

None

#### APPENDICES:

Appendix 1: Site plan

Appendix 1

Site Address:- Winchester City Football Club - Location plan



Winchester City Council  
Estates Division

Scale:- 1:1,500 @ A4 Portrait  
Date:- NOV 2022  
Ref:-

Map Ref:- 4830

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