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Preferred location for the provision of an Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) in Adur

Report by the Director for the Economy

1.0 Summary

1.1 This report considers the various options available for the provision of a new Artificial Grass Pitch (AGP) in Adur utilising the s106 agreement funding provided in connection with Brighton and Hove Albion Football Club's (B&HAFC) new training facility in Lancing. The possible sites have been considered having regard to the recently completed Playing Pitch Strategy prepared by Consultants KKP. The report recommends the preferred location to be the Sir Robert Woodard Academy, although the report acknowledges that this would be subject to satisfactory negotiations with the Academy and a detailed financial appraisal being undertaken.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 On the 6th February 2013 planning permission was granted for B&HAFC to build a new First Team Training and Academy Facility on land originally passed to Adur District Council for use as sports pitches. This land was originally transferred to Adur's ownership in connection the granting of planning permission for an 18 hole golf course on adjoining land. To compensate for the loss of formal open space a s106 agreement was entered into with the Club requiring community use of the new Training Facility and a financial contribution of £1.35 million towards improving sports facilities across the District.

2.2 The s106 agreement entered into with the Club provides £700,000 towards the provision of a 3G pitch (Third Generation Artificial Grass Pitch) to include fencing, floodlighting and changing rooms and £650,000 towards the cost of provision/enhancement of other off site leisure facilities in Adur. The triggers for the release of the funding are as follows:

- 20% of the pitch contribution upon the issue of the planning permission (£140,000 received in accordance with the agreement)
- 80% of the pitch contribution upon the grant of planning permission for the off-site pitch and,
- the leisure facilities contribution to be paid upon the occupation of the development (this contribution is now due).

2.3 Since the grant of planning permission the Club has obtained permission for an additional 3 pitches on land to the east of the training facility (two AGP's and one grass pitch). One of the AGP's is to be used predominantly as a community pitch

and has recently obtained permission for floodlighting. The Community Use Agreement required by the original s106 is close to being signed and currently would secure 86 hours use of community use of the extended training facility (70 hours use of the floodlit community pitch AGP).

- 2.4 A Working Group consisting of Councillors Neil Parkin, Pat Beresford and Keith Dollemore was set up following the grant of permission for the training facility to discuss the optimum location of the off-site AGP. At an early stage the priorities for the use of the off-site pitch contribution was to secure a AGP on a site in Lancing (to compensate for the loss of the sports pitches in the Parish), provide maximum community benefit and to ensure value for money. It was also agreed to have regard to the emerging Playing Pitch Strategy in any final decision on a preferred location. The 3 main sites considered by the Working Group have been Lancing Manor Sports Centre, Monks Recreation Ground and the Sir Robert Woodard Academy. These sites are considered in more detail later in this report.

Playing Pitch Strategy

- 2.5 The Playing Pitch Strategy for Adur and Worthing has recently been received from Consultants KPP. This Strategy forms part of a wider review of Open Space, Sport and Recreation across both authorities and sets out a number of key recommendations and an Action Plan to address any shortfall in provision and qualitative issues with existing pitch provision. Copies of the report in relation to Adur are available in the Members Room.
- 2.6 Regarding football the Strategy identifies that there is a shortfall of two AGP's in the area. The Strategy also identifies the need for investment in pitch provision to address the shortfall in youth provision in Adur of 1.5 pitches (11 a side) and that the predicted future increase in mini football teams would also result in a deficiency equivalent to 9.3 pitches in the District.
- 2.7 The Strategy has 5 main aims the first being to protect and enhance levels of outdoor sports facilities. To meet this aim the Strategy states that the following objectives need to be implemented:
- Rectify qualitative shortfalls in current pitch stock and outdoor facilities
 - Identify opportunities to add to the overall stock (including AGP's) to accommodate both current and future demand and,
 - Protect existing sports facilities where there is a need to do so.
- 2.8 The Strategy recognises that the current level of grass pitch provision is protected, maintained and enhanced to secure provision now and in the future. It also stresses the importance of securing long terms community use at schools and colleges.
- 2.9 In terms of future development trends the Strategy states that demand for AGP pitches (primarily 3G) for football continues to increase. However, it also identifies that there is an overplay for rugby particularly on Buckingham Park and therefore the provision of 3G pitches that are IRB compliant would also help to reduce overplay as a result of training on rugby pitches.

- 2.10 The Strategy sets out criteria that should be used in determining the best location for a new AGP:
- Proximity and demand for existing AGP provision.
 - Access on site to existing ancillary facilities (e.g. changing facilities and car parking etc.).
 - Opportunities to maximise community use (e.g. the potential to create a shared facility such as dual use with a school or sporting facility).

3.0 Potential Sites for a new Artificial Grass Pitch

- 3.1 As stated previously there have been 3 sites considered as potentially suitable for the provision of a new AGP in Lancing. The 3 sites would all have the potential for on site management of the facility, and would have some existing car parking provision available. However, each site has its constraints and all would need further investigation in terms of design and layout and financial implications for the Council in the future.

Lancing Manor

- 3.2 As indicated previously there is the potential for significant revenue to be secured from any new AGP facility given the demand for training by existing clubs and the scope for marketing 5 a side leagues. As such the starting point for reviewing available sites was on land owned by the Council. The only suitable site with on site management, car parking and changing facilities was Lancing Manor Leisure Centre and initial discussions have been undertaken with Impulse.
- 3.3 Lancing Manor already has floodlit tennis courts although the main demand for these courts is for 5 a side football. Initially Officers looked at the scope for a full size AGP but it was apparent that this could not be secured on the site given the land available without impacting on the existing Nursery building. The site is also constrained in that the land falls away sharply to the car park and any extension to the existing hard courts would require a costly cut and fill operation. Various alternative layouts have been provided but the largest pitch that could be realistically constructed would be a $\frac{3}{4}$ quarter size pitch which would provide scope for junior football matches and training facilities as well as being able to expand the 5 a side provision at the site.
- 3.4 In terms of car parking a new AGP would require additional car parking to be provided. This is an issue already for the Leisure Centre and additional traffic to the site may require alterations to the existing access (providing additional passing spaces).
- 3.5 From a planning perspective the provision of a smaller AGP extending the existing tennis courts/floodlighting could be designed to reduce any impact on residents to the north of the Leisure Centre. In this respect existing screening could be retained and enhanced. Consultation with the National Park would be required and it would be likely that any planning permission would require additional car parking and access improvements.
- 3.6 The main advantage of this option would be that it would be enhancing the Council's leisure offer/asset and potentially maximising the level of revenue that

could be secured from the site. Impulse would be in a strong position to market the new AGP and the opportunity for additional 5 a side leagues to be set up. In this respect Impulse considers that the other facilities at the Leisure Centre as well as the bar would make the site a more popular venue for 5 a side teams.

- 3.7 The main drawback of this option, however, would be the inability to provide a full size pitch which would assist some of the over use of existing pitches identified in the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. Compared to the other two options the construction costs would also be disproportionately high because of the levels across the site. For this reason it is not considered that this option should be pursued.

Monks Recreation Ground

- 3.8 During the determination of the planning application for Brighton's training facility the possible use of Monks Recreation Ground as a location for the new AGP was raised. Representatives of Sussex FA, whose headquarters are based at Lancing United's ground at Culver Road, have met the Working Group to discuss the scope for the AGP being located adjacent to the existing floodlit pitch on land owned by Lancing Parish Council. Sussex FA has indicated that it would be able to manage the AGP on behalf of the Council.
- 3.9 The proposed AGP at Monks Recreation Ground would be located parallel to the existing Culver Road pitch. Although there are changing facilities on site, the Sussex FA has suggested that new changing rooms could be provided which could also provide replacement public toilets.
- 3.10 Although there is a car park for the Culver Road pitch and some public car parking along the frontage of the site, additional car parking would be required to serve the new AGP. Access to this car parking would be difficult to achieve from Culver Road and any access elsewhere would have an adverse impact on the Recreation Ground.
- 3.11 Although the AGP would be adjacent to the existing floodlit facility there would be concern about the impact of the facility on flats to the east of the site. The other disadvantage with the Monks Recreation Ground option would be that the facility would result in some impact on existing junior/mini football pitches on the site. Whilst Sussex FA has provided an alternative pitch layout, given the findings of the recent Playing Pitch Strategy which identified a shortage of youth pitches, any loss of formal pitch provision should be revisited.
- 3.12 As the land is owned by the Parish Council, pursuing the Monks Farm Recreation Ground option would also need to seek the formal agreement of the Parish Council. Whilst, this would not be difficult to secure as previous proposals for a 3G pitch have been considered on the Recreation Ground, the Parish Council could seek some of the revenue stream likely to be generated by the facility as it is located on its land.

Sir Robert Woodard Academy

- 3.13 The last option is to site the AGP at the Sir Robert Woodard Academy (SRWA). The large field in front of the school and leading up to the A27 would provide sufficient space for a full size facility. The Academy has changing rooms located on the north side of the school and these would be available and suitable for use in connection with the AGP. The Academy also has significant parking at both the north and south sides of the school. The increasing use of the school for various community activities could cause difficulties with available parking at certain times and, therefore, this may require some additional parking, albeit limited, adjacent to the AGP.
- 3.14 The key benefit with this option is the scope to provide enhanced sport provision for the Academy at the same time as providing the Council a revenue stream for community use. The site is flat having already been prepared for a football pitch and sports facility and there is sufficient land for a full size pitch. Unlike Monks Recreation Ground the proposal would not result in the loss of any public open space or require the provision of additional changing rooms.

4.0 Financial Considerations

- 4.1 Sport England's Facilities Cost Guidance (2013) suggests that a new AGP would cost between £840,000 to £890,000 (based on different 3G surfaces). This cost would include ground works, fencing and floodlighting. The s106 agreement only provides for £700,000 as B&HAFC was able to demonstrate through its own tender process for its pitches that an AGP could be built for this lower amount. Clearly the cost of the facility would depend on the ground conditions and the usual competitive tender process. For an AGP to be IRB compliant for rugby training, additional shock pads would need to be installed at an additional cost of approximately £70 - 80,000. Whether this additional cost is necessary will be dependent on an analysis of the extra use that this would provide and consequent additional income.
- 4.2 In terms of ongoing maintenance and replacement costs Sport England provides guidance on the typical life cycle costs for AGP's. This is based on a typical annual allowance based on a percentage of the overall estimated project cost. For a full size 3G pitch this would require a combined sinking fund/maintenance cost of 3.7% equating to approximately £29,000 per annum.
- 4.3 In terms of future revenue funding this would be dependent on demand. However, previous revenue streams from Worthing Leisure Centre's sand dressed pitch were approximately £100,000 pa. Adur Members may be aware that Worthing Leisure Centre has recently installed a replacement 3G pitch and is marketing the new facility as a Soccer Centre seeking to maximise future revenue for football and, in particular, 5 a side leagues. Projections for the new Soccer Centre, on a conservative basis, are predicting income in excess of £200,000. It is clear therefore that there is scope for a significant revenue stream for a new AGP/3G facility.
- 4.4 In terms of the 3 options that have been assessed, a facility at Sir Robert Woodard Academy would appear to be the most cost effective in terms of initial capital costs and future revenue streams. Although the facility would not be available during school days and, therefore, this could affect future revenue, the reality is that off

peak demand is significantly less during the day. At Worthing Leisure Centre, day time use accounts for only 17% of all usage. Furthermore, the school would make full use of the facility during the day and this 'benefit' to the school would influence negotiations around any percentage split of future revenue income. At the present time the Academy has indicated that it would only look to cover its staffing, management and replacement costs with all other revenue income being passed on to the Council. The following table highlights some of the financial differences between the 3 options.

Site	Pitch Size/Capital Costs	On Site Management	Changing Rooms	Additional Car Parking	Future Revenue Streams
Leisure Centre	£850 – £950K 3/4 size pitch	Y	N	Y	£100-150K** pa
Monks Recreation Ground	£780K Full size pitch	Y This may require additional hours for existing staff or new part time post	Y £255K*	Y	£100-150K pa
Sir Robert Woodard Academy	£780K Full size	Y This may require additional hours for existing staff or new part time post	N	Y	£100-150K pa

* Based on Sport England Guidance for two changing rooms

**Likely to generate less income as no scope for full size adult games on ¾ size pitch. However, scope for Impulse to secure other revenue streams (increase in bar and food takings).

5.0 Remaining B&HAFC Funding

5.1 The Working Group has considered various schemes that have been put forward to benefit from the remaining S106 funding. However, at this stage it does feel that it is not appropriate to commit funding until the full cost of providing the 3G facility is known. In terms of an emerging Strategy for the use of the remaining funding, the Working Group is keen to spread the benefit of the funding across the District and, in this respect, would be supportive of a larger project to the east of the River to address some of the qualitative issues highlighted in the recent Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study. A further report on the use of the remaining S106 funding will be presented later in the year once the 3G pitch project has advanced.

6.0 Legal

6.1 Section 111 Local Government Act 1972 provides that the Council shall have the power to do anything (whether or not involving expenditure or the acquisition of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of their functions.

6.2 Part 1 Local Government Act 2000 places a duty on Councils to promote or improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their area.

6.3 Section 1 Localism Act 2011 provides the Council with a general power of competence and empowers the Council to do anything which individuals generally may do, including a power to do it for a commercial purpose or without charge, and the power to do it for the benefit of the area and those resident or present in the area.

7.0 Recommendation

7.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- i) Agrees in principle to pursue the option of a 3G pitch at Sir Robert Woodard Academy,**
- ii) Supports the development of a detailed financial appraisal and management agreement in partnership with the Academy setting out future arrangements for maintenance, management and future revenue streams for Adur Council in consultation with the existing Member Working Group.**
- iii) Note the Working Groups initial thoughts on the use of the remainder of the Brighton and Hove Albion s106 funding as detailed in paragraph 5.1 of this report.**

Local Government Act 1972

Background Papers:

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014

Sport England Guidance – Life Cycle Costs Artificial Surfaces April 2012

Sport England Guidance – Facilities Costs (Fourth Quarter 2013)

The FA Guide to 3G Football Turf Pitch Design Principals and Layouts 2013

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Schedule of Other Matters

1.0 Council Priority

1.1 A mixed economy of Partnership working.

2.0 Specific Action Plans

2.1 Work more closely with and commission our communities, the voluntary sector, public organisations, business and commercial sectors to:

- Develop and deliver services.
- Reduce crime, fear of crime, antisocial behaviour and support the Early and Family Intervention projects.
- Deliver interventions that improve the health of our communities.
- The provision of improved sports facilities for the schools and Local Community would help to meet the above objectives.

3.0 Sustainability Issues

3.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

4.0 Equality Issues

4.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

5.0 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

5.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

6.0 Human Rights Issues

6.1 The provision of a 3G pitch potentially could impact on human rights issues in relation to the amenities of local residents. However, this would be addressed as part of the planning process and permission would only be granted on the basis that the proposed development would not materially affect the human rights of local residents.

7.0 Reputation

7.1 The provision of improved sport and recreational facilities would enhance the Council's reputation. In particular, the proposal would be a good example of partnership working providing maximum community benefit.

8.0 Consultations

8.1 Internal consultation with Management Team and Senior Members, including a Member Working Group.

9.0 Risk Assessment

9.1 Matter considered and no issues identified

10.0 Health & Safety Issues

10.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

11.0 Procurement Strategy

11.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

12.0 Partnership Working

12.1 The recommendation proposes a partnership scheme with Sir Robert Woodard Academy and the County Council to deliver enhanced sports provision for the school and local community.