

Full Council

Date:	22 January 2019
Title:	Thame Football Partnership - Artificial Pitch
Contact Officer:	Graham Hunt, Town Clerk

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to enable a decision on the extent of Thame Town Council's involvement in the project to install a new artificial pitch by the Thame Football Partnership (TFP) at Meadow View Park.

Background

2. The Thame Sports Facility Strategy defines a need for an additional artificial pitch in Thame and suggested three potential locations: Lord Williams's School, Meadow View Park or Chinnor RFC.
3. The Town Council's understanding is that Lord Williams's School (already has such a facility / no room for another pitch) and Chinnor RFC (not a current priority / alternative ideas) are content that TFP (who are keen to progress) should be the defined site for the new artificial pitch. Both are likely to use it.
4. The Town Council has already given permission to TFP to submit the relevant planning application (Council 25/04/17), and has also agreed the merging of s106 funding from three related projects to maximise the funding opportunity (NPCC 18/12/18).
5. Cllr Dyer has provided updates on TFP's ambitions via his External Organisation report at the last two CLR meetings.
6. TFP's ambition is to install the facility during summer 2019 working with the Football Foundation and Oxfordshire Football Association. A full feasibility report, with two proposed solutions, from the Football Foundation's preferred supplier (Surfacing Standards Ltd) is available on request.
7. A meeting was held on 5 December 2018 with the Chairman of TFP, the Town Clerk, the Community Services Manager, Cllr Dyer (TFP External Organisation representative) and Cllr Bretherton (Infrastructure Delivery Plan Working Group Chairman). Notes of that constructive meeting were circulated to all Councillors.
8. Agreements / proposals / information discussed in that meeting included:
 - a) The project is significant – at a likely cost of £660k + VAT.
 - b) TFP will take the lead on the project (including Project Management), with the Town Council's involvement minimised.
 - c) It is financially advantageous for the Town Council to be the named applicant for any funding (and a requirement of the main funder) and to place the orders of the work. This will also require annual rent to be reset from £50 to £1.

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- d) Most funding will come from the main funder (the Football Foundation) with the balance from s106 funds, reallocated across projects as necessary.
 - e) A new formal partnership / working together agreement will be required to ensure clear responsibilities (at some legal cost).
 - f) Changes to existing leases may be required (at some legal cost).
 - g) The pitch will be made available for community use.
- 9. The main funder has confirmed that a Restriction to Title is required on the Town Council's lease.
 - 10. The Town Clerk has sought legal advice, and quotes / estimates for current known legal work is in the region of £2,000.
 - 11. The Town Clerk has sought input from Oxfordshire County Council, who are content with the approach being taken.
 - 12. The Town Clerk has sought advice from SODC s106 officers to check that assumptions with regard to allocation / reallocation of s106 monies are valid. Final confirmation is awaited, but the Town Clerk is of the view that the funds ultimately required are safe.

Proposal

- 13. That the Town Council supports TFP in its ambitions for a new full size artificial pitch at Meadow View Park, in line with the resolutions recommended below, as part of continued improved infrastructure provision for Thame.
- 14. There are similarities with the Cricket Club Clubhouse Redevelopment project and it is suggested that a working group similar to the Cricket Club Clubhouse Redevelopment Working Group be created, with appropriate authority, for decision making between Council meetings. One further Councillor will need to be nominated, in addition to Cllrs Dyer and Bretherton.

Resource Appraisal

- 15. The main impact will be time from the Town Clerk and the Community Services Manager.
- 16. Main funding will be from external Football Foundation / s106 sources.
- 17. Some legal costs will need to be borne, from existing legal fees budget lines, though likely to cause an overspend, as they did for the Cricket Club Clubhouse.
- 18. A total spend limit of £10,000 of the Town Council's own funds on the project would be sensible.

Risk Assessment

- 19. Risks will be minimised through the creation of a partnership / working together agreement.

Legal Powers

- 20. There are specific recreation related powers that could be applied, but the project is also covered by the General Power of Competence, Localism Act 2011.

Report Author: Graham Hunt, Town Clerk

Recommendation

The Council is recommended:

- i) To resolve that Meadow View Park is the correct location for the Artificial Pitch.***
- ii) To agree that Officers, likely to be the Town Clerk and the Community Services Manager, do what is required to enable the success of the project (while minimising time spent and restricting total project spend to under £10,000).***
- iii) To create a working group, similar to the Cricket Club Clubhouse Redevelopment Working Group, with similar authorities, nominating one further Councillor to serve. (Terms of Reference to be agreed at a future meeting).***
- iv) To agree to any required lease changes that may be required by the funders and / or Oxfordshire County Council as freeholders (subject to scrutiny by the Working Group).***
- v) To define a new partnership / working together agreement, based on that with the Cricket Club, making it clear what TFP is responsible for and what the Town Council is responsible for. (For agreement at a future meeting / or by the proposed Working Group).***
- vi) All in line with the content of this report.***