

Agenda Item 7

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Date	13 th January 2015

Subject	The Future of Dorking Football Ground, Meadowbank		
RECOMMENDATIONS			
Ward (s) affected	Dorking	Key Decision	Yes
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Executive is asked to approve the refurbishment of the Dorking Football Ground, Meadowbank at an estimated cost of £4m (construction costs and professional fees) less any secured grant funding. The scheme includes; The replacement of all football facilities on the site and the provision of a 3G artificial playing surface, all to Football Association standards. The construction of a new community based well being centre including: multi-purpose sports hall, cafeteria, soft play area and meeting rooms. 2. If the above is agreed, to move forward with the development of a detailed design scheme and tender documentation, submit a full planning application, go to the market and move forward with the construction phase. 3. Actively pursue any grants that may be available to help reduce the cost on the public purse. 4. The Corporate Head of Service for Assets to examine the options for operating the facility and make a recommendation to the June 2015 Executive 			

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over many years the Dorking Football Ground at Meadowbank, with its central location and excellent transport links has provided a community hub for outdoor sports facilities. When the ground came back to Mole Valley District Council (MVDC) in May 2014 it was in an extremely run down condition and a number of options have been looked at in order to bring the ground back into use for the community. This report recommends a

brand new football facility which will include a 3G multi-purpose artificial pitch, new clubrooms, changing facilities, administrative offices and associated infrastructure. The recommendation also includes the construction of a new community building to provide a multi-purpose sports hall, cafeteria, soft play area and meeting rooms. The proposed new café would be centrally located in order to service both the multi use community building and the adjacent children's play area within Meadowbank recreation park.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Access to Services – Helping residents to access the services they need

1. Improve the way we engage with our Customers and listen to our communities

This redevelopment of the Dorking Football Ground at Meadowbank is seen as a community based project which will provide a range of facilities and activities across a wide age group. It is the councils long term aim to improve both sporting and leisure facilities within the district as well as promoting healthy lifestyles.

- 2. Working with our partners-** we work closely with local football clubs, schools and community groups with whom discussions have already started. This will ensure we understand their requirements and needs within the community.

Environment - Maintaining the character and environment of Mole Valley

- 1. Enable growth in the District** by carrying out a full refurbishment of the existing ground with a multi-use artificial pitch. This will allow maximum use of the facility.
- 2.** The site occupies a unique location in the centre of Dorking and is situated on the edge of the conservation area. The design and aesthetic appearance of the buildings will be sympathetic to the area and blend in with their surroundings.
- 3.** All the new buildings will be constructed to meet the current levels of sustainability under the building regulations and wherever possible there will be a requirement for materials to be sustainably sourced. Further to this, it is intended to install PV panels to the roof as a sustainable design feature.
- 4.** A permanent soft play area is a use currently not available in the Dorking area.

Value for Money - Delivering quality, value for money services

- 1.** The existing buildings are not capable of being repaired or economically refurbished. The redevelopment of this site will provide a unique opportunity to give the community a brand new high quality facility for sports and well-being.
- 2.** Close attention will be paid to the delivery of project. The construction phase will be competitively tendered using a standard form of building contract which will safeguard the interest of both the MVDC and contractor. The recommended approach will provide open and clear accounting in order to provide value for money and lower lifecycle costs.

3. Continue to provide quality services to our residents, by creating additional income through making better use of property assets. The development will provide a long term investment for the council derived from the rental income or through income derived from the range of different facilities on the site. Incorporating design features to allow future flexibility of use, sustainable design resulting in lower running costs and sustainable energy sources will not only have financial benefits but also be an exemplar project demonstrating the Council is a leading organization in sustainable building design. Ensuring that the proposed uses either pay a reasonable rent for the facilities or directly generate an income stream that will assist in a repayment of the initial capital costs of the works over time and support a robust management strategy.
4. By developing a 3G pitch and multi-purpose community facility, the facilities will be used and enjoyed by thousands of people every month in contrast to the two occasions each week that the football club used the grass pitch.

1.00 BACKGROUND/INTRODUCTION

1.1.0 Since the ground returned to the Council, the options for its future use have been explored with new owners of Dorking Football Club (DFC) presently operating the Club from Horley and wanting to return to what they feel is their natural home at Meadowbank.

1.2.0 Football Clubs

1.2.1 The two Senior Football Teams in Dorking (Dorking FC and Dorking Wanderers) are looking for improved facilities and want to be based at Meadowbank. Both of these senior clubs have links with Junior football sides with Dorking FC running an under 18's team and has strong links to Brockham Badgers one of the most successful youth clubs in Surrey, with over 350 children playing in 25 teams. Dorking Wanderers are associated with Mole Valley Rangers (formerly Ockley Acorns) has 150 children playing in 10 teams.

1.2.2 The developing Dorking Girls and Ladies football are looking for better facilities to help grow their club and bridge the gap between girls and ladies football. This Council is currently working with Active Surrey, Surrey FA, Circle Housing and Chelsea FC Community Foundation to introduce a disability football project to Mole Valley as part of the successful Inclusive Sport Fund application to Sport England.

1.2.3 The other clubs in the area, St Paul's, Dorkinians and Westcott often have difficulties managing their pitch requirements particularly in poor weather as they all rely on grass pitches for practice and match time. Additionally there is interest from local primary and secondary schools in a 3G facility and therefore it is likely that the pitch will be embraced by many helping to develop improved sports participation in the Dorking community and immediate hinterland.

- 1.2.4 There are more than 10 football clubs within a 2 mile radius of the Meadowbank ground and we believe many will be interested in utilizing the 3G pitch. The surface is not suitable for rugby. Due to serious waterlogging in recent winters, the lack of local pitches has resulted in many clubs struggling to fulfill their fixtures. In Mole Valley District there are several clubs looking for new sites and many looking for additional sites. There are 10 schools within a 2 mile radius of the site many of whom are likely to be interested in using a first class facility. At the time of writing this report plans are being drawn up to carry out a soft market testing exercise with all the local football clubs and schools to assess their demand for such a facility. Other sports clubs will be contacted regarding their level of interest in the community building and their ability to pay for use. Initial public consultation suggests that an artificial grass pitch would be well received.
- 1.2.5 DFC 1880 have confirmed their support for option 2 (full option) and are prepared to accept that they may not be able to return until to the site until the start of the 2016/17 football season.

1.3.0 Development of the Ground

- 1.3.1 The site is currently secured with Heras fencing, with replacement padlocks fitted to all gates and signage warning trespasser's not to enter. Whilst this has clearly been a deterrent, there have been a few minor instances of trespass onto the site. All the services have been cut off.
- 1.3.2 A detailed topographical survey has been undertaken of the entire site to identify and plot ground levels, existing buildings, drain runs and any underground services within the site boundaries. Further investigations have also been commissioned and undertaken including a full asbestos demolition survey and a structural survey of the existing 200 seat stand.
- 1.3.3 A consultant was appointed to look at a number of costed options for the ground with the brief to ensure that at a minimum, they complied with relevant Football Associations 'National Ground Grading as required by the Clubs for the levels of competition that they are involved in.
- 1.3.4 As a result of this work, two options were chosen for further consideration and development to be taken forward to the business case.

1.4.0 Options Under Consideration in detail

1.4.1 Option 1 (grass pitch option)

As a result of early discussions with the new management at Dorking Football Club, it is clear there is considerable interest from them to return to the Meadowbank ground as soon as possible, ideally for the 2015 season commencing in July/August of that year.

With this in mind and on the basis of contributory funding from the club, a basic refurbishment option was looked at which could be fast tracked and provide all the basic facilities in order to meet the requirements of the Football Association Category F for the start of the 2015/16 season.

A consultant architect was asked to carry out some initial scoping of the site with the brief to provide the required facilities to the minimum budget possible. This has been referred to as the 'Basic Option'.

Central to this option would be the refurbished grass pitch which would be re-laid in the spring of 2015 in order to be ready for the start of the season. Initial conversations were had with planning officers regarding this option and useful guidance was provided regarding a possible application and in particular the requirements which the Environment Agency is likely to impose as a result of the proximity of the site to the Pipp Brook.

During the examination of this option, it became clear that although the pitch cost is significantly cheaper than a 3G pitch, the site infrastructure would be the same specification as option 2 (full option) i.e. the changing rooms, toilets, stadia, parking and enclosures etc. The cost of this site infrastructure is substantial yet due to the limitation of only being able to use a grass pitch once or twice a week, the income that can be generated by a grass pitch is significantly less than the income that can be generated by a 3G pitch operating up to 10 hours a day.

Key Points

This is very much a basic option with the newly laid grass pitch in the same location as the existing. It provides all the requirements of the FA's Category F at the minimum cost. However a lot of the infrastructure requirement would be the same as in Option 2.

Summary:

- New grass pitch with an improved drainage system and replacement pitch floodlighting
- Changing facilities for two 20 person teams
- Male and female changing rooms for official's
- Public toilets
- Spectator's stand and terracing
- Clubhouse, committee room/meeting room, kitchen and bar area
- Site infrastructure including: parking, turnstiles, fencing, site enclosure etc.

This option allows for buildings to be of a basic construction and very much utility in appearance.

1.4.2. Option 2 (full option)

The principal differences with this full option, compared to Option 1 above, is that it includes the provision of an artificial 3G all weather playing surface and a community building.

In order to maximize the available useful space on the site the location of the pitch on the feasibility drawings was moved to the west of the site by approximately 12 meters which in turn has released an area next to the Meadowbank recreation ground, thus allowing space for the new facilities. Consideration was given to keeping the pitch in its existing location and building on the west end of the ground however, this had access difficulties and servicing challenges.

An all weather pitch would incorporate an integrated drainage system and provide a surface which unlike grass, can be used to a greater extent, dependent on the planning restriction regarding floodlight use. There is currently one 3G playing surface in the district which is based at St John's primary school and is not a full size pitch. It is massively over-subscribed and is difficult to book. Mole Valley will work with the operators of this facility to help ensure its success is maintained.

As well as the football facilities, this option provides a community building. Within this is a 'Soft Play' area which will accommodate up to 105 children at any one time. Within the soft play area a breakout space will be created which can be hired out for private parties for which it is anticipated that there will be considerable interest. There is currently no soft play facility in the Dorking area.

The other main area within this complex will be a multi-purpose sports hall which will be sized to accommodate a number of different potential uses including: club uses, gymnastics, trampolining, judo, etc. All are capable of paying a level of rent to make construction viable. The proposed Community Building could include a number of facilities for a wide range of ages and needs within the community and further research is needed to establish the best way forward by the officers at MVDC.

The cafeteria will be centrally located within the new complex to service both the Community Building and the Meadowbank recreation ground. Its location is ideally situated so that there is a terraced area overlooking the park playground and a seating area overlooking the soft play allowing parents and carers good visibility of their charges whilst they relax and have a cup of coffee.

The proposed site layout has been carefully designed in order to ensure that the Football Facilities and the Community Building can operate totally independent of each other. This allows for occasions when there is a football match taking place and attracting several hundred spectators whilst at the same time, the Community Building is busy with members of the public. People entering the football ground will pay to do so via a traditional turnstile whereas the entrance to the well being facilities will be through the purpose built reception off the recreation ground. These two separate entrances will be independently operated and open as and when required.

Key Points

A 3G pitch is an artificial "grass" surface supported by a thin base layer of sand and by an infill of rubber crumb. The surface is laid onto various bases

consisting of stone base, porous tarmac layer and shock pad. The surface is robust and can be used effectively at all times, requiring little in the way of maintenance. This therefore allows greater use, with reduced maintenance costs when compared with a standard grass pitch.

- This option will provide a modern facility for the community.
- A key part of the option is designed around a new multi-usage artificial grass pitch located approximately 12 metres further to the west of the site in order to release land to the east. This released land will enable the proposed new buildings to be located close to the site entrance and car parking as well as being adjacent to the Meadowbank Recreation Park.
- It provides all the requirements of the FA's category F.

Summary:

- New multi usage artificial grass pitch with full drainage system and floodlighting
- Changing facilities for two 20 person teams
- Male and female changing rooms for official's
- Public toilets (Male and Female)
- Spectator's stand and terracing
- Clubhouse, committee/meeting rooms, administrative offices, kitchen and bar area
- Site infrastructure including: parking, turnstiles, fencing, site enclosure etc.
- Dual use Cafeteria for both the ground and Meadowbank Recreation Park. To include a terraced area onto the park.
- Reception area
- Community building to include: Soft Play, Multi-Purpose Sports Hall, and possibly Treatment Rooms
- Additional rooms to hire

This option allows for buildings to be constructed by using the latest modern methods both in terms of design, appearance and sustainability.

1.5.0 Business Case – Financial Appraisal

1.5.1 As part of the business case for the future of the site, a specialist consultant was engaged to look at the financial viability of the recommended option. The Basic Option (1) was not considered by the consultant as the only source of revenue would come from the grass pitch and any rental agreements from football clubs.

1.5.2 Draft designs were produced by the architects for both options one and two and the following estimated construction costs were provided:

Option 1 £800,000

Option 2 £4,100,000

In addition the costs in obtaining planning would need to be factored. The income from Option 1, the replacement football facilities and grass pitch, would not make the Councils investment hurdle rate of a minimum return on investment of 5%. With all of the potential incomes from the multiple facilities on offer in Option 2 a return in excess of 5% is expected, which when considered together with the increased community benefits through greater usage makes this option more attractive.

- 1.5.3 There are a number of grants that maybe available to help support a project of this type. Application has already been made to Sport England and a final submission is required by the 26th January 2015.
- 1.5.4 Other funding streams might be available from The Football Stadia Improvement Fund, The Football Foundation, The Lottery Fund and Ride London. All potential funding opportunities will be explored and applications submitted where appropriate.

1.6.0 Legal Implications

1.6.1 Powers

Under s.19 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, MVDC has a general power to provide such recreational facilities inside (or outside) its area as it thinks fit, which includes (but is not limited to) outdoor facilities consisting of pitches for team games, premises for the use of clubs having athletic, social or recreational objects, and any facilities in connection with such recreational facilities as MVDC considers appropriate.

1.6.2 Procurement of, and form of, the construction contract

Whilst this report envisages using an industry-standard form of contract, given the capital value of the project, it is recommended that MVDC obtain specialist legal advice on the best way of securing its objectives for the site within the budget approved by the Executive and that budgetary provision is made for this advice.

In July 2014, the government published 'New Models of Construction Procurement' which sets out three alternative models designed to achieve cost certainty through 'early supplier engagement, transparency of cost, integrated team working and collaborative working'. These models may not deliver the cheapest construction project, but are designed to contribute to improved programme certainty, risk reduction and innovation and effective working relationships between client and the supply chain.

The construction procurement model adopted, such as design and build, may mean that any application for planning permission may need to be deferred, pending procurement of the construction contract.

Consideration will need to be given pre-procurement as to whether it is appropriate to require collateral warranties/third party agreements from the construction partner for the benefit of any potential operators or tenants of the facilities.

Although the estimated budget at £4mm is just below the EU-threshold of £4,332,012 for works contracts, if tendered as one contract, it is recommended that the construction contract is procured as though it were fully regulated by the Public Contract Regulations 2006 (or their successor, the Public Contract Regulations 2015). As part of the procurement strategy, consideration will need to be given to the Council's duty under the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 as to:

- (a) how what is proposed to be procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of its district, and
- (b) how, in conducting the process of procurement, it might act with a view to securing that improvement.

If at the time that the construction contract is advertised, the Public Contract Regulations 2015 have come into effect, consideration will need to be given as to whether the procurement should be divided into lots. If, having regard to the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and in particular securing SME access to public contracts, the decision is not to lot the development contract, a justification for not doing so, will need to be included in the contract notice.

Subject to the subject, timing and outcome of any grant funding application, the grant may impose further conditions on how grant funded works are procured, in addition to those imposed by procurement legislation. These will need to be taken into account when structuring the procurement, as failure to comply with such conditions gives rise to a claim for repayment of the grant funding.

1.6.3 On completion: Disposal of interests in land and operating contracts

On completion, any agreements granting interests in the football ground or the wellbeing centre will need to demonstrate that MVDC has complied with its s.123 Local Government Act 1972 duty to obtain best consideration when disposing of land. Consideration will need to be given to maintenance and repair/renewal provisions for the pitch, such as the establishment of a sinking fund, and the extent to which any pricing policy is consistent with generating sufficient income for repair/renewal to be self-funding.

Any agreements granting a right to exploit the café opportunity or to operate the 3G pitch will need to comply with either the general EU treaty principles applying to procurement of fairness, equal treatment, transparency and non-discrimination. If the EU Concessions Directive has come into effect, then such contracts may be subject to more detailed procurement legislation.

1.6.4 Equality Act 2010 s.149 Public Sector Equality Duty and s.29 Service Provision

By providing a second 3G pitch in the district, thereby widening opportunities for existing and new clubs to access this type of facility, including womens/girls and PAN disability and VI football, MVDC is complying with its public sector equality duty, under which it is required to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

A new build will need to ensure that MVDC achieves a design that is compatible with its anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments so that a disabled person is not put at a substantial disadvantage in accessing the services, be that the services offered by the well being centre or the facilities relating to the 3G pitch.

2.0 OPTIONS

The following options are open the Executive:

1. Agree to a basic refurbishment of the site in order to provide football only facilities as outlined in Option 1 (basic grass pitch) within this report.
2. Agree to a full refurbishment of the site which would include a 3G pitch artificial playing surface and multi-use Community Building as outlined in Option 2 (full) within this report.

3.0 CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Monitoring Officer Commentary

The Monitoring Officer is satisfied that all relevant legal implications have been taken into account in the report

S151 Officer Commentary

The s151 Officer confirms that all relevant financial risks and implications have been taken into account. The proposal to invest £4.1m is affordable within the forward plans for capital expenditure. It is also consistent with the principles set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/15 to 2020/21 in making use of the Council's capital assets to generate additional revenue income.

Risk Implications -

1. There is a risk that the already run down site will continue to deteriorate and become unsafe. Whilst the site has been made secure, there is an ever increasing Health and Safety risk to anyone entering the ground which can only be fully removed by the demolition of the existing buildings and the future redevelopment of the site.
2. Although the business model for the recommended option is felt to be robust, there is a small risk that the anticipated usage from schools, user groups and the public in general will not materialize. This would have an impact on the revenue stream and in turn affect the projects long term viability. We believe this risk can be minimized with further research in demand.
3. Whilst initial conversations with the Councils planning officers have been favorable, there is a risk of opposition from local residents once the plans go to public consultation.

Equalities Implications –

As part of the 'Equalities Implication Assessment', Section 2: (analysis and assessment) has been completed.

The recommended Option 2 (full option), will provide a new, modern design which will provide facilities in compliance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 (formally DDA)

The equalities implications for users of the new development will be fully considered as we further develop our operational use for the site.

Employment Issues –

There are no employment considerations arising from this report in terms of any of the stated options. However, at a future stage there will need to be an analysis of the different employment options required to run a larger community facility if Option Two is pursued.

Sustainability Issues –

We have consulted with mechanical and electrical engineers to ensure the design of the new facility will consider the latest building methodology in order to provide a low carbon footprint. All buildings will be newly constructed and meet the current levels of

sustainability under building regulations. The tender documents will stipulate that all materials will be sustainably sourced (where possible) in line with BREAM principles. Further to this we will consider the business case and financial viability for installing Photo Voltaic (PV) panels to the roof space as an energy saving solution.

There are opportunities to go beyond minimum building standards when starting with a new design and construction therefore, the new buildings will be more energy efficient than any existing buildings on the site. Mole Valley's planning policies would also require the Council to reduce the carbon emissions of the new build by at least 10% through the use of on-site renewables.

Communications –

There is likely to be considerable interest in the proposals for the Dorking Football Club site and therefore a robust communications and engagement plan will be drawn up by the communications team once the way forward has been approved and a timeline agreed.

The plan will include a range of options for communicating with all stakeholders and particularly the schools and clubs who will have an interest in using the facilities. Press releases will be used to keep the public informed regarding the opening of the well being facilities in order to ensue that there is a high level of interest from day one.

From initial research there is a good demand for an artificial 3G playing surface in the Dorking area. We have engaged with several appropriate local organizations who have confirmed their initial interest in the project. From our engagement to date, five key strategic reasons for the provision of a 3G pitch have emerged:

- Dorking FC does not currently have a home ground and has to ground share outside of the District.
- Dorking Wanderers needs to improve its facilities. This option 2 will enable the team to ground share for matches and training at Meadowbank. Meadowbank will effectively be the home venue for both of these adult teams
- Small sided games – The facility will have the capability to be split into smaller areas to cater for different age groups and number of players. This flexibility will maximize potential use allowing more than one user group to use the facility at the same time.
- Local Schools and community groups – we have considerable interest in using the facility from a number of local schools and community groups. We are hopeful that schools from close by will be able to use the pitch during the quiet periods during the school day
- Inclusion – With the introduction of the Inclusive Sport Fund, disability is a priority for Mole Valley District Council. PAN Disability and VI football have been identified as one of the most popular sports which residents

would like to participate in, and currently there is no access to this sport in the District.

We are fortunate to have a real sense of community in Dorking, and it has shown great support and enthusiasm for this project. We will continue to develop the discussions with clubs, schools and community groups ensuring that the facility is designed to accommodate these various parties, assessing the likely demand and ensuring it is fairly shared. Further research will be carried out to assess the suitability of the different management options available for the different parts of the facility. For example it is likely that the café will be leased to a specialist user. The other facilities will either be run and maintained by the Council or offered out via management contracts or leases to appropriately qualified leisure providers.

At the time of writing this report, plans are being drawn up to carry out a survey where both Mole Valley schools and other user groups will be consulted on potential use of the site.

MVDC recently conducted a survey where over 450 residents stepped forward to share their views on Meadowbank's future. MVDC welcomed a range of suggestions which included the provision of adult fitness facilities, children's play equipment, soft play and a climbing wall. In addition, over 85% of respondents thought a café at Meadowbank would make it more attractive to visitors.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

