

# Cabinet Report

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Wards affected: Faringdon

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To: CABINET

Date: 23 June 2017

## **New Artificial Turf Pitch and Car Park for Faringdon Leisure Centre**

### **Recommendations**

- (a) That Cabinet approves the virement of £75,000 from existing capital budgets into the artificial turf pitch and car park budget to allow completion of the project.
- (b) That Cabinet approves the appointment of O'Brien's as the main contractor to build the new artificial turf pitch and car park at Faringdon Leisure Centre.

### **Purpose of Report**

1. From the playing pitch study in 2014/15 the western Vale area is, from the modelling, to be deficient of a 3G pitch space. The options for artificial grass pitch provision in Faringdon have been explored during the study period, both in terms of real levels of need and in terms of location. In relation to the site options, Faringdon Community College was previously identified as the preferred site, but as the college needs to expand, there may not be sufficient space for a large size artificial grass pitch. The college's preferred surface type is a multi-use surface suitable for both school hockey and football. The provision of the pitch will allow the college to grow their curriculum by not only making provision for football but also provide a pitch that will allow for hockey up to practice level but not competitive level.

### **Corporate Objectives**

2. Deliver high performing services with particular emphasis on achieving excellent levels of recycling, keeping streets and public spaces clean and attractive and ensuring good quality sports and leisure provision

## Background

3. In its tender for the leisure contract in 2014 Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL) proposed that an artificial grass pitch would fulfil a gap in the market which existed and was supported by the playing pitch study undertaken by the council and supported by the final document signed on 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2015. A capital budget was provided by the council in 2014 in return for an enhanced contract management fee for the project.
4. Since the award of the management contract a project team has formed between the council, representatives from GLL and Martin Arnold who are project managers for the artificial grass pitch scheme. This team have developed a specification and tender pack and liaised with Faringdon Community College to develop the scheme.
5. There is currently no hockey provision at the college and so they were keen to be able to provide a new sport to their curriculum and there is no hockey club in and around Faringdon and the pitch could provide a catalyst for that development to take place.
6. GLL have developed a business plan which focusses on football predominantly which will provide the income streams to maintain and operate the pitch. This community aspect of the scheme also supports the use of the Faringdon Community College which will provide the land as their contribution.
7. The council has undertaken an open tender process in conjunction with its colleagues in the legal team and Capita procurement to find a suitable contractor to build the facility. O'Brien's have been selected as the most suitably qualified and competent contractor to undertake the works. They have a long history of installing pitches and car parking and use the best products in the market.
8. The £750,000 budget available to undertake the works will not provide the facility in the current market and GLL requested that another budget containing £75,000 they had to develop other yet undefined works at Faringdon Leisure Centre was used to support the pitch development. Officers have no objection to this request as there was no practical defined works associated with this budget.
9. At the point where the planning application was to be submitted, it was identified that high voltage cables were located under the area where the pitch and car park were to be located. The wayleaves and other controls provided to the power supplier to have access to these cables mean that permanent structures cannot be positioned over those cables. Therefore they will either have to be moved or a design solution found to overcome this difficulty. It is felt that a solution can be found from a design aspect and that the increased budget should cabinet agree to the transfer of the £75,000 will cover that cost.
10. As the pitch and car park are being provided on existing school fields, not currently used for sports, it is mandatory to consult with Sport England. These meetings are progressing and the outlook is positive with virtually all of the requirements that Sport England would need already in place or in development.

## Options

11. Should the decision be made not to build the new artificial grass pitch and car park, the project team is of opinion that we will miss out on improving the growth of the college and the community it is intended for. The council would be at risk of still providing a facility of this type in the area but in a much poorer location making it more costly to maintain and operate.
12. Building the new artificial grass pitch and car park on the proposed site eliminates the need to find alternative space in the area to build the above. With the existing infrastructure in place, managing the service will benefit both the council and GLL as far as maintenance and upkeep is concerned. There will be sufficient staff on site to manage the service and who will respond to any service/ operational related problems that may arise. Building the artificial grass pitch and car park supports our corporate plan to achieve excellent leisure provision.

## Financial Implications

13. As part of its tender submission Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) proposed a number of projects which would provide an increased management fee for the council. One of these projects was the provision of an artificial grass pitch at Faringdon Leisure Centre. The council agreed to provide the capital budget to achieve this project in return for an increased management fee. A budget of £750,000 was approved in 2014/15 for this project in Faringdon. To appoint O'Briens it is imperative therefore that the virement of the additional £75 000.00 from existing capital budgets into the artificial turf pitch budget is approved.

## Legal Implications

14. There are currently two leases of the existing leisure centre and swimming pool.
15. Oxfordshire County Council own the freehold of the entire site and the part of the site which is not let to the college is let to the Council. Therefore the county council will need to vary the lease to Faringdon Community College to allow them to sublet the site to provide the pitch and car park to the district council.
16. The lease to the school requires written consent from the county council for the proposed works relating to the construction of a new artificial pitch and car park to proceed.
17. Therefore a new lease for the area covered by the pitch and carpark is required from Faringdon Community College as well as a heads of terms which will control the use and responsibilities between the council and Faringdon Community College. Work to finalise these two documents is underway.
18. A variation to the college's lease will be required which will allow the use of the artificial pitch for all the necessary sporting purposes, including the commercial purposes of the council and of GLL. Agreeing the variation to the lease may delay construction.

## Risks

19. See Legal Implications

## **Other implications**

20. As mentioned above, by way of the deed dated 9 December 1990, Southern Electric have the right to have constant access to high voltage cables crossing the proposed pitch and car park site. Oxfordshire County Council has given covenants in favour of Southern Electric that no structure will be constructed over the lines nor any soil etc. disturbed. Therefore there needs to be a legal agreement with Southern Electric that existing power cables can be moved and the costs of such can be contained within the existing budget.

## **Conclusion**

21. With the above options considered, officers therefore request that Cabinet approves the virement of £75,000 from existing capital budgets into the artificial turf pitch and car park budget to allow completion of the project and also approve the appointment of O'Briens as the preferred contractor for the building of the new artificial pitch and car park.