

The background of the slide features a large, light blue watermark of the Coat of Arms of the City of Edinburgh. The crest includes a crown with four thistles, a shield divided into four quarters (top-left: saltire, top-right: stag's head, bottom-left: ship, bottom-right: eagle), and a motto scroll at the bottom.

Agenda Item 15

Synthetic Sports Pitches

Falkirk Council

Title: Synthetic Sports Pitches
Meeting: Executive
Date: 16 October 2018
Submitted By: Director of Corporate & Housing Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the arrangements to create two synthetic sports pitches at Bo'ness and Denny.

2. Recommendations

2.1 The Executive is asked to:-

- (1) note the position on the synthetic pitches at Newtown Park and Westfield Park and that any significant changes or issues will be reported through the Capital Programme.**
- (2) agree that, further to the interest of Camelon Juniors in developing a synthetic pitch, appropriate advice and support will be provided in relation to the sourcing of external funding.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Executive of the 20 October 2015 agreed that bids from Newtown Park (Bo'ness) and Westfield Park (Denny) to develop synthetic pitches be taken forward, with the level of Council funding for each applicant being £370,000, including £10,000 per Club for developing their bids.
- 3.2 Each applicant still faced a considerable challenge in obtaining the total funding required and any award of grant made by the Council did not guarantee that the pitches would be provided.
- 3.3 In November 2016 the Executive agreed that the Council would become joint applicants with the clubs for **sportscotland** funding of £250,000 for each pitch. It was also agreed a further report would be brought back to the Executive if there were any significant changes or issues.

4. Considerations

- 4.1 The Council, in partnership with both Clubs, submitted funding bids to **sportscotland** in August 2017. These funding bids were subsequently approved and both applications were awarded £250,000 by **sportscotland** in January 2018.
- 4.2 In order for the projects to commence, considerable effort was required to complete all the necessary agreements between the Council, the Clubs, **sportscotland** and Hubco, the procurement provider engaged by the Council to deliver the two pitches.
- 4.3 On conclusion of the relevant agreements, work on the Westfield site at Denny commenced in June and the new synthetic pitch was delivered in September. The total cost is expected to be within the total funding package of £620,000.
- 4.4 Regrettably, the pitch at Newtown Park will be delayed until 2019. The necessary site investigations revealed a mine shaft in the vicinity of the pitch. Remedial works will require to be undertaken to the shaft prior to works being able to commence on the pitch. The timing involved in these remedial works has been discussed with the Club who consider it best to delay the overall works start until spring 2019. This will mean that there will be significantly less disruption to matches during the upcoming season and pitch works will not require to be carried out over the winter months.
- 4.5 It is now intended to undertake the remedial work next March, with the pitch being in place for August/September 2019. The costs of the remedial works and the subsequent delay are still within the overall funding package of £620,000. If there are any significant variations or changes this will be reported through the Capital Programme. It has also been confirmed with **sportscotland** that the delay will not impact on the funding awarded.
- 4.6 Following completion of these projects, two of the three former junior clubs in the Falkirk area will have 3G pitches. Camelon Juniors have recently expressed a desire for developing a 3G surface. However, the Council has no approved funding for any further development of 3G pitches. The Executive report in October 2015 also noted that the unsuccessful parties from the bidding process back in 2015 will be notified of any opportunity to bid if further funding was made available. At this stage, the interest of Camelon Juniors is noted and, if asked, Council Officers will provide appropriate advice and support in relation to obtaining external funding.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The relevant local members as well as the portfolio holder have been consulted on the arrangements.
- 5.2 Falkirk Community Trust, **sportscotland** and the two clubs have also been kept fully informed on the arrangements.

6. Implications

Financial

- 6.1 The financial implications remain the same for the Council. The total cost of each pitch is c£620,000 and this is within the funding available. Progress will be monitored through the Council's Capital Programme.
- 6.2 As noted in the report of 29 November 2016, the Council has signed up to **sportscotland**'s terms and conditions, increasing the level of financial risk in the future, particularly if either Club was unable to meet its obligations. In the worst case scenario of a club failing, the Council could find itself responsible for repaying the balance of the **sportscotland** grant funding.

Resources

- 6.4 Council Officers have had to spend significantly more time than was originally anticipated from solely being a grant funder for the project to a joint applicant, particularly in terms of dealing with the numerous agreements required to enable the work to commence
- 6.5 The continued support of Council Officers and Falkirk Community Trust will also be required to assist with the actual operation of the pitches going forward to ensure the overall community and social objectives of the project are delivered.

Legal

- 6.6 The arrangements will involve monitoring of the necessary agreements in place between the Council, the Clubs, **sportscotland** and Hubco.

Risk

- 6.7 There is the ongoing risk of managing and delivering the project within the budgeted costs and expected timescales, particularly given the delay to the pitch at Bo'ness.
- 6.8 Once the pitches are operational, there is an ongoing risk that either Club will be unable to meet its obligations as noted at para. 6.2

Equalities

- 6.9 The proposal maintains or enhances opportunities to the community and sports groups, therefore, a full assessment is not required.

Sustainability/Environmental Impact

- 6.10 None

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The successful award of sportscotland funding has enabled both projects at Newtown Park and Westfield Park to move forward. The pitch at Westfield Park has been delivered and Newtown Park will be available by August/September 2019.
- 7.2 On completion of the pitch works, arrangements will be agreed with both Clubs to ensure the ongoing delivery of the social and community benefits of the projects.

Director of Corporate & Housing Services

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Date: 3 October 2018

Appendices

None

List of Background Papers:

The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:

- Corporate and Housing Services Files