



3G Pitch Funding - Matched Funding Contribution

Report Author

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Purpose of Report

To consider a request from the Deeping Sports and Social Club for a contribution of £200k to support a bid to the Football Foundation to provide a 3G pitch in the Deepings.

Recommendations

Cabinet is asked to:

- 1. Approve the allocation of £200k to support a funding application by Deeping Sports and Social Club to the Football Foundation to provide a 3G pitch in the Deepings.**
- 2. Approve the funding of the £200k from the following reserves:**
 - Leisure and Community Reserve £100k;**
 - Local Priorities Reserve £100k**
- 3. Confirm the funding allocation is subject to the following conditions:**
 - confirmation of sufficient funding from other sources to meet the total project costs**
 - a successful application to the Football Foundation**
 - an agreed programme of use with a fair and balanced allocation of hours to both Deeping Rangers and Deeping United football clubs**
- 4. Delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer, in consultation with the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture, to authorise the release of funds when the above criteria have been met.**

Decision Information	
Is this a Key Decision?	Yes
Does the report contain any exempt or confidential information not for publication?	No
What are the relevant corporate priorities?	Connecting Communities
Which wards are impacted?	Deeping St James; Market & West Deeping

1. Implications

Taking into consideration implications relating to finance and procurement, legal and governance, risk and mitigation, health and safety, diversity and inclusion, safeguarding, staffing, community safety, mental health and wellbeing and the impact on the Council's declaration of a climate change emergency, the following implications have been identified:

Finance and Procurement

- 1.1 As per the Council's financial regulations Cabinet and the s151 Officer have the authority to approve the allocation of the funds as set out in the report. The Leisure and Community Reserve was established in order to contribute towards leisure community initiatives. The balance of the proposed funding will be allocated from the Local Priorities Reserve.

Completed by: Richard Wyles, Deputy Chief Executive and s151 Officer

Legal and Governance

- 1.2 There are no legal and governance issues arising from this report.

Completed by: James Wellbourn, Democratic Services Manager

2. Background to the Report

- 2.1. The Council's Corporate Plan has a key priority of Connecting Communities which is underpinned by an ambition to invest in a sustainable leisure and cultural offer.
- 2.2. Currently there is no all-weather training provision in the Deepings. Previously an all-weather pitch was located on the Linchfield Road Playing Fields and was well used by local teams. However, this facility was closed in January 2020 due to the age and deterioration of the pitch, and the resulting health and safety concerns.
- 2.3. The lack of available leisure facilities in the Deepings was exacerbated in July 2021 when the Deepings Leisure Centre was closed and subsequently handed back to Lincolnshire County Council.
- 2.4. A Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP) for South Kesteven has been developed by the Football Foundation with support from partners including the County Football Association and Sport England. The purpose of the plan is to identify projects for potential investment in the district to support and maintain grass roots and club football. The projects identified are rated in terms of priority, considering a range of factors including investment outcomes, quality, inclusivity, sustainability, engagement and potential usage.
- 2.5. The LFFP acknowledges that local authorities are a key stakeholder in helping to deliver the plan.
- 2.6. The current LFFP has identified the Deepings as the number one priority for investment in a 3G pitch facility within South Kesteven. Currently there are 3G pitches in each of the other three urban areas within South Kesteven as follows:
 - Meres Leisure Centre, Grantham
 - Borderville Sports Centre, Stamford
 - Elsea Park, Bourne

Deeping Sports and Social Club Application

- 2.7. The Football Foundation are working with Deeping Sports and Social Club, who are based in Market Deeping, to bring forward an application for a 3G pitch. It is envisaged that the application will be ready for submission in December 2025.
- 2.8. The Football Foundation require a lease of more than 20 years to be in place to safeguard any investment. Deeping Sports and Social Club has successfully

negotiated a long-term lease from Deeping St James United Charities to enable a funding application to proceed.

- 2.9. For the application to be considered, Deeping Sports and Social Club will need to satisfy a range of criteria including: a successful planning application; and evidence of sufficient matched funding required. The Football Foundation will be responsible for the necessary planning application if and when the funding application is successful and a final design is available.
- 2.10. Typically, the costs involved are approximately £1.1 million. The Football Foundation, subject to an assessment of the application, will provide up to 70% of the costs. Therefore, Deeping Sports and Social Club will need to provide evidence that circa £330k matched funding is available.
- 2.11. Deeping Sports and Social Club has approached the Council for a £200k contribution towards the matched funding requirement. They are also approaching other local organisations and undertaking fund raising activities to cover the remaining financial shortfall.
- 2.12. As part of the application, in addition to confirming the availability of the matched funding and planning matters, Deeping Sports and Social Club will need to provide an acceptable programme of use for the 3G pitch. This will need to detail the proposed allocation of hours usage of the pitch for Deeping Rangers (who are based at Deeping Sports and Social Club), Deepings United, other partner organisations, and the local community.
- 2.13. Deeping United are another significant football club in the Deepings who are also under pressure to find suitable sites for training and matches. The Football Foundation and the Lincolnshire Football Association (Lincs FA) have indicated that it is imperative that both of the two local established clubs are able to benefit from the proposed investment into a 3G pitch.
- 2.14. As a partner club, at the request of the Lincs FA, Deeping United have submitted their requests in terms of training days and times to representatives of Deeping Sports and Social Club for inclusion into the proposed programme of use.
- 2.15. The programme of use will be assessed by both the Lincolnshire Football Association and Football Foundation prior to finalising the application for funding. If it has not been possible to accommodate all the requests, it is proposed a meeting takes place with the chairman of each of the two main football clubs in the Deepings, a representative from the Council, and Sir Jonathan Van-Tam in his role as Chairman of the Lincs FA. The aim of the meeting would be to reach an agreement

to ensure both local clubs benefit from the investment and have an appropriate time allocation on the new pitch.

- 2.16. Should the application for funding be successful there will be a range of outputs monitored by the Football Foundation on an ongoing basis. These will include adherence to the programme of use submitted as part of the funding application.
- 2.17. It will also be necessary for Deeping Sports and Social Club to invest a prescribed amount into a sinking fund for a period of 10 years. This fund will be used for major repairs, refurbishment or replacement when required. The Football Foundation insist on this provision to protect their investment long term.

3. Key Considerations

- 3.1. The development of a 3G pitch in the Deepings would be a significant step to improve local leisure and sporting facilities. 3G pitches are already available in Grantham, Bourne and Stamford, and this is why the Football Foundation has identified the Deepings as the priority area for the development of a 3G pitch in South Kesteven.

4. Other Options Considered

- 4.1. Cabinet could decide not to support the request for a funding contribution. This would put the project at risk because it would be very difficult for Deeping Sports and Social Club to secure the necessary matched funding from other sponsorship and funding raising activity.

5. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 5.1. The Council has received a request from Deeping Sports and Social Club for £200k matched funding to support an application to the Football Foundation to provide a 3G pitch. The Deepings has been identified as the priority area for a pitch to be developed in South Kesteven.
- 5.2. There are a significant number of teams which require training facilities within the Deepings area. The Football Foundation and the Lincs FA have identified that it is key for both Deeping Rangers and Deeping United to benefit from any investment. Consequently, it is recommended that any contribution by the Council to the matched funding required is conditional on both Deeping Rangers and Deeping United securing an appropriate amount of time on the programme of use. Evidence of this should be required prior to the release of funding.

6. Background Papers

6.1. South Kesteven Local Football Facilities Plan