

Trust and Charities Committee 30th May 2014

Title of paper:	Highfields Sports Ground, Development of a New Water Based Hockey Pitch.	
Director(s)/ Corporate Director(s):	John Kelly - Corporate Director of Communities Hugh White - Director of Sport Culture and Parks	Wards affected: Wollaton East & Lenton Abbey. Arboretum, Dunkirk & Lenton, Radford & Park.
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Date of consultation with Portfolio Holder(s) (if relevant)	Cllr David Trimble Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture, 28 th April 2014	

Relevant Council Plan Strategic Priority:

Cutting unemployment by a quarter	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cut crime and anti-social behaviour	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Ensure more school leavers get a job, training or further education than any other City	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Your neighbourhood as clean as the City Centre	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Help keep your energy bills down	<input type="checkbox"/>
Good access to public transport	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham has a good mix of housing	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nottingham is a good place to do business, invest and create jobs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Nottingham offers a wide range of leisure activities, parks and sporting events	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Support early intervention activities	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Deliver effective, value for money services to our citizens	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Summary of issues (including benefits to citizens/service users):	
This report presents proposals and seeks approval to develop a new Water Based Hockey Pitch at Highfields Sports Ground.	
Recommendation(s):	
1	That the Committee approves the Partnership with the University of Nottingham (UON) and the creation of the new Water Based Hockey Pitch as detailed in section 1.
2	That the Committee approves the principle of the creation of a 99 year lease to the UON subject to the acquisition of any necessary planning consent or consent of other regulatory bodies.
3	The committee approves and delegates authority to the Director of Sport, Culture and Parks to continue the preparation of the detailed community use agreements.
4	That committee approves and delegates authority to the Director of Sport, Culture and Parks in conjunction with the Director of Strategic Asset and Property Management to agree the format and terms of the lease.

1. **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations are being sought in order to improve the range of facilities and to create the opportunity to develop the best hockey facility in the UK. The proposal will help to drive forward sporting participation and sporting excellence in Nottingham and will also provide the infrastructure needed to attract and host major national and international hockey tournaments.

2. **BACKGROUND (INCLUDING OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION)**

2.1 Highfields Sports Ground is one of the most popular and well used facilities / sports grounds within the City. The sports ground contains a wide range of grass football pitches and provides space for both lacrosse in the winter and baseball in the summer. In addition the area is also used to support a number of Events e.g. the annual Christmas Club event in December and events at the neighbouring Tennis Centre e.g. the Nottingham Open.

2.2 In addition to the grass areas within the sports ground the area is also home to the Highfields Hockey Centre (HHC). HHC has for many years been the home of Beeston Hockey Club, who hold the premises by way of a lease. The centre has developed and improved the hockey facilities, which currently include two sand based artificial pitches and one state of the art water based pitch. The hockey pitches are also supported by a clubhouse that provides changing and meeting rooms, and a fully licenced bar and restaurant. The quality of the facilities and coaching provided at the centre have helped to attract support from the governing body, England Hockey, and on a number of occasion during last 5years the site has been chosen to host major national events. It is no coincidence that developing / improving the range and quality of the existing facilities has attracted a wide pool talented hockey players which has led to national success for Beeston Hockey Club (BHC) England Champions for 3 times out of 4 seasons.

2.3 As part of the growth of the sport and the success of BHC, Highfields Hockey Centre (HHC) has developed plans to expand and further improve facilities at the sports ground. For many years an additional full sized water based pitch has been the long term goal. However funding for a new facility of this type has always proved difficult to secure and to date the new pitch has remained an unachievable and frustrating aspiration.

2.4 Proposal - New Water Based Hockey Pitch (WBHP)

Over the last year Parks and Sports Development Teams have been working closely with colleagues at the University of Nottingham and Beeston Hockey Club to develop a partnership that could fully fund and deliver a new Water Based Hockey Pitch on the Highfields Sports Ground.

Appendix 1 includes a plan of the proposed new Water Based Hockey Pitch as produced by the UoN.

The conditions of the partnership will include (Subject to full planning approval):

- UoN investing circa £1million to create and develop a new Water Based Hockey Pitch.
- UoN signing a 99 year full repairing and insuring lease with Nottingham City Council (as Trustee).
- UoN paying an annual rent to the Council at a rate to be agreed (subject to 5 yearly review) which will be credited to the Highfields Park Leisure Trust.
- UoN Entering in to a Community Use Agreement with Beeston Hockey Club and Nottingham City Council to ensure that community access is guaranteed to the new facilities.
- Releasing 70% of the usable pitch time for BHC to develop and provide a wide range of community outreach / coaching programmes with schools and community groups.

2.5 The Benefits to the Highfields Park Leisure Trust, the City and HHC

- Recognising the advantages of improving the facilities alongside the existing Highfields Sports Ground, and the adjacent Tennis Centre and University managed sports ground. UON are keen to support the opportunity to “hot house” the sporting talent and create a Unique National Quality Sports Corridor / Hub in the City.
- UON will fully fund, create and develop the new Water Based Hockey Pitch. This will improve the facilities and help BHC deliver a wider programme of events and training opportunities from the HHC.
- The new Water Based Hockey Pitch will create a world class facility - The proposed project would transform the site in to one of the best hockey centres in the country cementing Nottingham’s place on the sporting map.
- The project will create the opportunity to host more National and International events which would allow more Nottingham people to attend the events.
- The proposal will lead to more sport being played on Highfields land and more sporting opportunities for the people of Nottingham.
- The current HHC facility is at full capacity during peak school times. The new pitch will enable the expansion of the ‘Hockey in the Community’ schools league.
- The new pitch will help to grow participation numbers of existing Clubs and potentially bring new clubs to Highfields.

2.6 Public Consultation

Beeston Hockey Club fully support the proposal and are active partners in the project.

Existing football clubs will need to be moved around the site to accommodate the new facility. Discussions have already taken place with the main home club who are happy with the proposal subject to confirmation that they will have confirmed alternative pitch provision within the site.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED IN MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS

Without full endorsement and approval of this project and the partnership with UON it is unlikely that the new Water Based Hockey Pitch will be delivered by any other funds.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING VALUE FOR MONEY/VAT)

The proposed new lease is to be let on 99 year full repair and maintenance lease and does not add any additional financial risk to the City Council.

The annual rent of the new lease is to be agreed and will help to reduce the annual cost of maintaining the trust.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES (INCLUDING LEGAL IMPLICATIONS AND CRIME AND DISORDER ACT IMPLICATIONS)

5.1 Legal Implications

The proposal to grant a lease to UON will require detailed legal involvement to ensure that it can be granted in a way that satisfies the charitable objectives.

5.2 Property Implications

The proposal to grant a lease is supported, subject to satisfactory terms being agreed. The Beeston Hockey Club has long held a desire to create a second water based pitch, and their new lease (due to be completed shortly), contains an option allowing them to explore an extension of land for a new pitch in this same location. BHC have always struggled to source funding for this project, so by allowing the UoN to take a lease and entering in to a partnership agreement that sets out usage timetables, appears to be a sensible alternative.

The proposed area is approximately 1 hectare (2.4 acres) in size. An appropriate annual rent will be agreed with the UoN and will reflect the market rent, taking in to consideration the high level of Community Use proposed and the investment in the site that the UoN are proposing.

The risk of the UoN ceasing to operate the facility is considered very low.

5.3 Risk and Opportunity Management

The main risk at this point is if the proposal does not receive planning approval. In order to reduce this risk a realistic project proposal has been designed and early discussions have will be held with the planning department.

5.4 Performance Management

The delivery of the capital project will be fully coordinated by UON and it will not impact negatively on the rest of the Parks & Open Spaces Service. Colleagues in Property Services are already involved in the lease discussions and therefore the final agreement of the lease terms will not create any further unexpected demands on Property Services.

5.5 Communications

There will be several key stages through the project to link to a communications plan:

- Ongoing public consultation on the project make-up and to demonstrate support and need for the project.
- Construction on site will include a detailed communication plan to cover all the key stages of the build phase and help to inform sports ground users regarding localised closures during the works.

5.6 Crime and Disorder Act Implication

The project will help to improve use of the facility and help to engage a wide range of users in positive sporting diversion activities. In addition the increased site based staff presence and increased sports user will all help to provide a friendly reassurance and remove any low level fear of crime and disorder.

5.7 Health and Wellbeing Implications

The project will help to improve the sports facilities within the Sports Ground including a new state of the art water based pitch and seating. These improvements will encourage more and provide new opportunities for currently non sports users to participate in a wide range of programmed physical activity.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An EIA has been updated and is attached in **Appendix 2**.

This project has the potential to provide a number of opportunities to promote equality, for example, by making facilities more accessible; through diverse representation on the project steering group; by promoting the participation and involvement of service users and the wider community in the development of the new facility and through the consideration of equality issues in the design and delivery stages of the project.

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS OTHER THAN PUBLISHED WORKS OR THOSE DISCLOSING CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT INFORMATION

None

8. PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

None

Appendix 1 contains plan and details of the proposed New Water Based Hockey Pitch.

Appendix 2 contains a new EIA for the project