

## STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

### Cabinet

4<sup>th</sup> August 2020

<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>Request for match funding to support Leek Town FC 3G Pitch Conversion Project</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>Councillor Mark Deaville - Deputy Leader &amp; Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Sports</b>
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Gareth Knapper – Project Officer</b>
<b>WARDS INVOLVED:</b>	<b>Leek</b>

### Appendix 1 – Leek Town FC Football Development Plan

#### 1. Reason for the Report

- 1.1 To seek approval from Cabinet for capital funds to support Leek Town FC to convert their current natural grass pitch to a 3G all weather pitch.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the allocation of £100,000 capital funding to Leek Town FC providing match funding towards converting their current natural grass pitch to a 3G all weather pitch.

#### 3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Staffordshire Moorlands does not have any full sized 3G artificial turf football pitches. Both the Staffordshire Moorlands Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) and the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP), identify that there is demand for three full sized 3G pitches across the district and recommends that one of these should be located in Leek.
- 3.2 Leek Town FC is a long-established FA Chartered community club who are currently playing in the Northern Premier League Division One South East and provide a wide range of opportunities for players of all ages to enjoy the physical and social benefits of football. They currently have fifteen junior teams for girls and boys, support disabled players, as well as their academy and both ladies' and men's first teams.
- 3.3 Whilst the existing natural turf pitch at Harrison Park is of good quality, there is no scope for extensive use throughout the week and at weekends. By virtue of this, usage is limited and, as there is no full sized 3G facility nearby, teams are required to travel to use facilities outside the Moorlands for training and

matches which adds cost to participants, takes extra time and increased carbon footprint for travel.

- 3.4 A partnership board involving the club, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, Staffordshire FA and the Football Foundation has been working for the last two years to develop a feasible project for conversion of the grass pitch at their Harrison Park ground to a 3G all weather pitch, which will be available for a wide range of community uses.
- 3.5 'Towards an Active Staffordshire Moorlands' is the physical activity & sport strategy for Staffordshire Moorlands, and sets out how the Council and partners aim to improve physical activity levels of residents. Within the strategy, key priority groups and geographical places are highlighted and the delivery of this project will contribute significantly to help achieve the aims of the strategy due to its location to one of the priority places named within the strategy.
- 3.6 In 2018, utilising a previous grant of approximately £12,000 from SMDC, Leek Town FC with the help of the partners as highlighted in 3.4, commissioned a feasibility study to assess the potential costs involved with constructing the proposed facility using an official 3G framework provided by the Football Foundation.
- 3.7 The estimated cost to complete the project is c.£665k and it is anticipated that c.£540k of this total will be obtained via a funding application to the Football Foundation which is currently being prepared ahead of submission in October 2020. The remaining amount of c.£25k will be secured through fundraising efforts led by Leek Town FC and supported by its partners. Should Cabinet approve a financial contribution, as recommended in this report, the funding jigsaw will be complete and the project will be able to proceed as outlined below.
- 3.8 Should this report receive approval, the project would continue to progress through the Football Foundation framework process which would result in the project being delivered to coincide with the beginning of the 2021/22 football season:
  - Submission of Football Foundation application: October 2020
  - Football Foundation funding assessment panel decision: January 2021
  - Further tender and construction phases: Summer of 2021
  - Anticipated opening date: September 2021
- 3.9 Due to the nature of the project, increased usage and extended use of floodlights across the week, planning permission was required and this was granted by the Council on 15th July 2020.
- 3.10 Should Cabinet choose not to approve this report then the shortfall of c.£100k would need to be secured from alternative sources. In preparing this report, officers have undertaken an extensive review of external funding opportunities which may be appropriate for this project and at the present time there are not any funding bodies which would support this project to the level required. This

would mean that there would be a delay in completing the project whilst the shortfall is secured and this could put at risk the funding application to Football Foundation.

- 3.11 Should match funding be provided, the partnership board will remain in place to oversee the next steps outlined in 3.8 and once construction of the facility is complete, it will ensure that a robust and holistic approach is taken to the ongoing and sustainable management of the facility. Successful delivery of a project development plan will ensure that the project contributes to delivery of the priorities within the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy.

#### 4. **How this report links to Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1 This report links to Aim 1: To help create a safer and healthier environment for our communities to live and work. The key objective for this aim is via the provision of sports facilities and leisure opportunities focused upon improving health.

#### 5. **Alternative Options**

- 5.1 There are three options in regards to this report:

1. Provide £100,000 capital funding to support the provision of a full sized 3G FTP which is a number one priority in the Local Football Facilities Plan (LFFP) for Staffordshire Moorlands, which was adopted in 2018. The need is additionally highlighted in the Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS) which was adopted in 2017. **(Recommended)**.
2. To explore the possibility to develop a 3G facility at another location in Leek. The cost to install a 3G without any existing infrastructure in place would be significantly more and in addition, there would be the requirement for an organisation to take on the management and ongoing maintenance the new facility which is currently not in place. (Not recommended).
3. Do nothing (Not recommended)

#### 6. **Implications**

##### 6.1 Community Safety - (Crime and Disorder Act 1998)

The new facility will provide a fantastic resource for Leek and the wider Moorlands area, which will help to combat numerous local community safety issues. The pitches will be open for hire by the community every day and, most importantly, in the evenings. Leek Town FC are committed to working with the Council to help deliver on our Physical Activity & Sport Strategy aims, which will target the most deprived areas of Leek. Another important strand will be to work alongside local police, PCSO's, community leaders, schools and community organisations as well as our own officers.

## 6.2 Workforce

There are no workforce implications.

## 6.3 Equality and Diversity/Equality Impact Assessment

Leek Town FC is a FA Chartered club who have an Equality & Diversity Policy and which will be implemented in the running of this facility.

A community use agreement will ensure all key demographic groups are included and have equal access.

## 6.4 Financial Considerations

The cost implications to the Council of the proposals set out in the report are as follows:-

Capital: Additional investment of £100,000 – the project is not currently allocated in the latest approved Capital Programme.

Revenue: Increased annual revenue costs of £2,300 resulting from additional borrowing costs.

The above additional financial requirements will be addressed within the next update of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan.

## 6.5 Legal

No specific legal implications.

## 6.6 Climate Change

No climate change implications directly arising from the recommendations in the report.

## 6.7 Consultation

Local Football Facilities Plan – consultation with many local clubs and teams was carried out and highlighted a need for a full-sized 3G pitch in Leek.

The Football Foundation grant requires on-going community consultation to continually ensure the delivery programme is achieving the targets agreed in the funding agreement.

## 6.8 Risk Assessment

The project risks sit with Leek Town Football Club in the main. It is LTFC who are responsible for managing the project both through the construction and operational phases with technical support

provided via the Football Foundation and associated framework/contractors. LTFC will also be responsible for meeting the targets set out in the development plan, albeit with continued support and partnership working from SMDC, Staffs FA and Football Foundation who are members of the project board.

The financial contribution from Staffordshire Moorlands District Council although significant is the main risk. If the project were to not be completed or not achieve the set goals it could be seen as a risk to have agreed the contribution.

The financial contribution is conditional to all other funding being secured for the project to proceed.

Mark Trillo  
**Executive Director (People)**

#### **Web Links and**

#### **Background Papers**

Local Football Facilities Plan

Playing Pitch Strategy & Action Plan

[Physical Activity & Sport Strategy](#)

#### **Contact details**

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## **7. Detail**

- 7.1 Leek Town FC is proposing to convert the current grass pitch at their home ground, Harrison Park, to a full size 3G all weather pitch. Staffordshire Moorlands District Council has been working in partnership with Leek Town FC, Staffordshire FA and the Football Foundation for a number of years investigating the potential of having a full sized 3G pitch in Leek.
- 7.2 Staffordshire Moorlands does not currently have any full sized 3G pitches. There is demand for three full sized 3G pitches in the Moorlands area according to the most recent Playing Pitch Strategy (2017). It states, *“the FA model suggests that to meet training demand there is a need for three full size community available 3G pitches to accommodate both current and future demand. As such, there is a clear need for such pitches to be developed. First and foremost, the priority location for this should be the Leek Area given that it services the highest number of teams and is currently without any sort of formal 3G provision”*
- 7.3 Staffordshire Moorlands Local Football Facilities Plan was agreed in December 2018. Following from the PPS the highest priority project is a new full sized 3G FTP at Harrison Park, home of Leek Town FC
- 7.4 Whilst the existing natural turf pitch at Harrison Park is of good quality, there is

no scope for extensive use throughout the week and at weekends. By virtue of this, usage is limited and as there is no full sized 3G facility elsewhere in Leek, teams are required to travel to use facilities outside the Moorlands for training and matches which adds cost to participants, extra time and increased carbon footprint for travel.

7.5 Leek Town FC currently have the following teams who would all benefit from the facility:

- Leek Town FC (first team) & Ladies (first team)
- Leek Town Academy & Ladies Reserve team
- Leek Town FC under 18's
- Leek Town FC under 7 & 8 boys and girls teams
- Disabled and over 50's teams
- Leek Town FC Junior Teams (8 boys teams and 7 girls teams) approx. 280 children
- Leek Town FC coaching sessions for under 7's

7.6 There is also high demand for a 3G facility from local amateur football teams of all age groups who require access to good quality training facilities, which can be used especially during the evenings in midweek.

7.7 Further demand will come from the informal recreation game, such as groups of friends, work colleagues and other social groups who may hire the facility for recreational football.

7.8 'Towards an Active Staffordshire Moorlands' is the physical activity & sport strategy for the Staffordshire Moorlands, which sets out how the Council and its partners is aiming to improve the physical activity level of residents. Within the strategy key groups and a number of geographical places are highlighted. These include:

- Women and girls,
- People with a limiting illness or disability,
- Over 55's,
- Those in lower social grades
- Children and young people aged 5 to 18.
- Leek North

7.9 The strategy sets out a placed based approach to addressing physical activity levels and identifies areas which have the lowest levels of participation and deprivation. Working with a trusted network of local community organisations and individuals, the Council will engage these communities and shape an offer which works for their circumstances.

7.10 Within Leek, the Leek North ward is identified as the area with highest deprivation and lowest levels of activity. Haregate Community Centre provides a range of projects and programmes which will link into to the project to ensure new opportunities that are created are done so in partnership with the community rather than developed without their input. The facility coordinator role for the 3G will work with workers from the community centre and a wide

range of other local partners to understand the needs of local people and co-design opportunities which are accessible and sustainable in the long term.

- 7.11 It should be noted that the Council made a previous capital contribution (£42,779) to Leek Town FC in 2015, towards refurbishment of the existing grass pitch.

## 8. Project detail

- 8.1 In 2018, and utilising a previous grant of approximately £12,000 from SMDC, Leek Town FC with the help of the partners commissioned a feasibility study to assess the potential costs involved with constructing the proposed facility using an official 3G framework provided by Football Foundation.

Project milestone	Target date	Complete (yes/no)
Initial site meetings and assessment	April 2019	Yes
Project designs and full, detailed costing	July 2019	Yes
Planning application submission	February 2020	Yes
SMDC report to Cabinet	August 2020	Yes
Football Foundation funding application submission	October 2020	No
Football Foundation review panel	January 2021	No
Construction	June, July, August 2021	No
Completion of works	September 2021	No

- 8.2 The estimated costs to convert the existing natural grass pitch into a 3G all weather facility is circa £665,000. The table below sets out how this will be achieved.

Possible Funding Source	Amount (£)
Football Foundation – New Stadia 3G FTP fund	540,000
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council – capital fund	100,000
Leek Town FC – fund raising & donations	25,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>665,000</b>

- 8.3 Should the new facility be developed, it will provide a high quality resource in Leek which will heavily contribute to the Council's aims and ambitions to improve physical activity level of residents. The facility will also have wider impact on the community in terms of mental wellbeing, social / community development and local economic development.

- 8.4 The partnership board will remain in place once construction of the facility is completed to ensure a robust and holistic approach is taken to the ongoing and sustainable management of the facility, successful delivery of the development plan and to ensure that the project contributes to delivering the priorities within the Physical Activity and Sport Strategy.
- 8.5 Members of the project board have connections to local charities, GP practices and statutory organisations which will help identify opportunities and potential new partnerships that could help develop a diverse programme of use and consider what support services could also link in to tackle issues such as unemployment, poor mental health, and lower attainment/education.

Type of benefit	Examples	Action
Physical wellbeing	Diverse programme of use for children, over 50's, disabled/life limited illness, women and girls	Development plan for use of the facility. Work with local community organisations.
Mental wellbeing	Getting those who do not currently participate in physical activity will give the biggest benefit in mental wellbeing	Engage with the broader demographic groups in the target areas of high social-economic deprivation
Social / community development	The new facility will bring people together from different local communities to take part in sport and physical activity	Diverse programming, enabling people to interact, creating a safe, fun environment and a sense of belonging
Economic development	The club will be more sustainable and the wider community will benefit such as local shops, petrol stations, pubs and restaurants.	The facility will be open 7 days a week, 52 weeks of the year rather than just on match day.

- 8.6 Overall, the strategic need for this facility is clearly identified in the various strategies and plans which have been highlighted in this report.
- 8.7 The opportunity to deliver this priority project will attract a significant amount of external funding into the Moorlands and will deliver against the Council's physical activity and sport strategy, presenting an exciting opportunity to increase participation in physical activity and wider health and economic benefits.