

Record of decision taken under delegated powers by a council officer



Title:	YOUR FUND SURREY APPLICATION – ASHFORD TOWN (MIDDLESEX) FOOTBALL CLUB CF386
Divisions Affected:	Stanwell and Stanwell Moor Division
Key Decision:	No Note: This record relates to a decision which impacts solely on one division as set out above.
Decision taken under delegation by virtue of:	Cabinet/ Committee decision Cabinet 21st July 2020 Min Ref: 112/20 COMMUNITY PROJECTS FUND [Item 10] Link

Summary

This decision record sets out the key information for publication on the decision by the Executive Director for Customer, Digital and Transformation to approve expenditure for a Your Fund Surrey project located in Spelthorne. The agreed recommendations are set out below and details of the project are set out in a decision report attached as an annex to this record.

Decisions made

It was AGREED to:

Fund project CF386 for the full amount requested of £99,999 comprised of:

- **£99,999 of capital funding towards the development of a new 3G football pitch in Ashford, Spelthorne, to be paid in staged payments, on evidence of spend.**
- **Including 5% to be held by SCC until final evidence of income and expenditure.**

Reasons for Decisions:

These decisions are to enable expenditure from the Your Fund Surrey to be awarded to a project which have been the subject of a rigorous assessment process by officers, as set out in Annex 1.

Officers consider the project to meet the aims and published criteria of the fund, has been considered by the Your Fund Advisory Panel and to satisfy the requirements to award funding.

The project aims to develop a new full size floodlit 3rd generation (3G) artificial community football pitch to expand existing provision and form new teams. The project will also facilitate a wide range of activities aimed at underrepresented groups including women and girls, people with disabilities, young people and the elderly.

Decisions taken by:

Michael Coughlin – Interim Chief Executive

Decisions taken on:	30/05/2024
To be implemented on:	31/05/2024

Alternative options considered

N/A

Summary of any financial implications

This project that has been approved for funding and has been through the due diligence and agreed governance process.

Cabinet agreed in July 2020 the funding for these projects will be drawn from capital funding allocated to Your Fund Surrey within the Capital Programme.

Cabinet agreed in July 2020 to establish a core team to manage the delivery of the fund and risks associated with it, funded from the Corporate Feasibility budget.

Declarations of conflicts of interest

None

Consultation/Process Followed

Decision taken in consultation with Cllr Denise Turner, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Customer and Communities following Your Fund Surrey Advisory panel review.

Background Documents

Exempt:

Annex 1 – Your Fund Surrey Decision Report CF363

No

Your Fund Surrey - Delegated Officer Decision Report

DATE: 24TH MAY 2024
SUBJECT: YOUR FUND SURREY APPLICATION – ASHFORD TOWN (MIDDLESEX) FOOTBALL CLUB
PROJECT NAME: ASHFORD TOWN COMMUNITY 3G PITCH
CF REFERENCE: CF386

Purpose of the Report:

This report sets out the key information on the shortlisted **Ashford Town (Middlesex) Football Club Community 3G Pitch** Your Fund Surrey (YFS) Application for the consideration of the YFS Advisory Panel.

The vision of YFS is to bring community-led and place-making projects to life, with a focus on wider community benefit that leaves a real legacy.

The role of the YFS Advisory Panel is to review shortlisted applications following the assessment and scoring of bids by Officers, and to advise and inform the final officer recommendations to the appropriate decision-maker on the proposed funding awards to be made.

Recommendations:

It is recommended to fund the full amount requested of £99,999 comprised of:

- **£99,999 of capital funding towards the development of a new 3G football pitch in Ashford, Spelthorne, to be paid in staged payments, on evidence of spend.**
- **Including 5% to be held by SCC until final evidence of income and expenditure.**

Reason for Recommendations

This application has been the subject of a rigorous assessment process by officers, as set out in the body of this report. Officers consider the project to meet the aims and published criteria of the fund and to satisfy the requirements to award funding.

The project aims to develop a new full size floodlit 3rd generation (3G) artificial community football pitch to expand existing provision and form new teams. The project will also facilitate a wide range of activities aimed at underrepresented groups including women and girls, people with disabilities, young people and the elderly.

Executive Summary

1. Ashford Town Football Club (ATFC) was founded in 1964 and the football club has rapidly advanced through the leagues over the years. ATFC lease the land from Spelthorne Borough Council (SBC) and request investment towards a 3G community pitch. The project has received considerable support with a number of other funders contributing to the wider project, including the Football Foundation (primary funder), Premier League Club Development Fund, Spelthorne Borough Council (SBC) through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the football club themselves.

2. Spelthorne Borough Council's Local Football Facilities Plan identified the need for a new 3G community pitch due to a shortfall of two football pitches in the borough, as per the Football Association's training model. The Plan also highlighted that for more under-represented groups to be able to participate in football and other sports, more facilities were required.
3. The new 3G community pitch would enable new programmes and activities to be offered to benefit all age groups, but particularly focusing on under-represented groups and those who are unable to currently access football. There is also a focus on providing a new facility for young people, to try and address and combat anti-social behaviour in the surrounding area which is a current problem.

Project Summary

4. ATFC is located in Stanwell, Spelthorne. The site is located near Stanwell North, an identified Surrey County Council key neighbourhood. In addition to a well-connected road network, there are bus stops within 200 metres of the site. Ashford station is approximately two miles from the site, and Heathrow Terminal 4 station is approximately 1.9 miles away. Furthermore, Stanwell and large parts of Ashford and nearby Staines are easily accessible by foot.
5. The project proposal is to replace an existing grass pitch with a new 3G pitch. The new facility will provide various community-focused programs, initiatives and opportunities in association with the club.
6. The 3G pitch will also enable the club to be flexible with how it can be utilised, including splitting the pitch into 4 smaller pitches for training. The pitch will allow for games of 5v5 for junior football programs as well as 7v7, 9v9 and the full size 11v11.
7. The borough-wide project will benefit many Ashford teams, with partners including Sunbury and Brentford Football Club Community Sports Trust (BFCCST) who will deliver numerous initiatives from participants and community organisations all over Spelthorne. Middlesex County Football Association (MCFA) will also be working in partnership with the club to deliver some aspects of the project.
8. ATFC currently provides football activities for a range of genders, abilities and ages. As part of ATFC's needs assessment and community consultation, they identified demand for additional programmes and initiatives that will increase the numbers of local residents participating in physical activity. Groups who will benefit include:
 - **Women and girls** - the club seeks to inspire younger females to participate, improve, and play for their first team. A low number of girls have historically been a challenge for the club's girls' section. At present, the club is operating to full capacity and the new 3G pitch would provide increased match play opportunities. To encourage and promote female participation, slots will remain open for female-only sessions.
 - **People with disabilities** - BFCCST currently offers a disability programme which many have expressed interest in and are eager to deliver more sessions and expand wider in partnership with the County Football Association (CFA). ATFC will run these sessions and also launch its own disability-focused offering for juniors and seniors.
 - **Individuals with mental health challenges** - the club has consulted with local partners to offer mental health support sessions. This initiative is designed to encourage men who play football to establish a support network. The Football and Facility Manager will lead on this initiative with support from the Spelthorne Mental Health Association (SMHA) and CFA.

- **Socio-economic groups** - ATFC is also focused on those from low socio-economic backgrounds who may face financial barriers that prevent them from participating in football. The club will develop a boot bank initiative that will allow previously used boots to be re-used and given to those who need them. For those who find it difficult to pay the membership fees, sibling discounts, flexible payment plans, and possibly free use of the pitch will be available on a case-by-case basis.
 - **Asylum seekers and refugees** - CFA has formed a partnership with the Stanway Hotel to provide free use of the new 3G pitch to asylum seekers, refugees and other ethnic minority groups during designated off-peak hours.
 - **Children, young people and their families** - ATFC has also been working closely with Surrey Care Trust (SCT), a charity that supports disadvantaged young people and their families. The charity has expressed interest in using the new pitch and wider facilities. The club has allocated space free of charge to the charity every week.
 - **Elderly** – ATFC will continue to host the Forgot Me Not football club dementia project, which provides support and assistance to those living with dementia as well as their families. This initiative is led by the MCFA on site and has had positive impacts on health, well-being, and social inclusion.
9. ATFC has formed partnerships with other football clubs and sporting provisions within the Spelthorne area to assist with responding to local community demand to provide an additional pitch for activities to take place. Various local organisations and groups have expressed interest in using the pitch and there has also been interest in using the pitch from various charities and non-profit organisations.
 10. ATFC has been operating for the last 60 years and has been a long-standing tenant of SBC since 1965 with 22 years left to run on their current lease.
 11. Several environmental features have been incorporated into the design of the 3G pitch. As part of the pitch installation, shock pads will be added, reducing the amount of Styrene Butadene Rubber (SBR) required for infilling the pitch, ensuring the surface specification for International Federation of Association Football (FIFA) quality standards is met. These pads are an environmentally friendly alternative that can be fully recycled. Users are encouraged to cycle and walk to the site, and those with cars are encouraged to use car sharing whenever possible. LED floodlights will be used throughout the new pitch design.

Details

Description of project benefits

12. The benefits to the project include:
 - I. Improve physical and mental wellbeing of the community in Stanwell and across the borough of Spelthorne by providing an accessible and affordable facility
 - II. Meeting SCC ambition of ‘Nobody Left Behind’ by supporting a Key Neighbourhood
 - III. Offering a new community space to enhance social interaction and physical wellbeing

IV. Encouraging under-represented groups to play sports by providing accessible facilities

V. Aiming to tackle anti-social behaviour in the surrounding area by providing new activities

Project Timeframes

13. Project delivery is estimated to be approximately 4 months for the 3G pitch to be laid and be operationally ready.

Management of the project

14. Spelthorne Borough Council granted planning permission for the 3G pitch in April 2024.

15. ATFC is comprised of a chairman, a board of directors, and a steering committee in place to manage the project. The board of directors consists of a variety of individuals with appropriate skills and expertise. A site team is responsible for managing all the groundwork and a football and facilities manager is responsible for driving initiatives in conjunction with the steering group.

16. Middlesex County Football Association will also be involved, being responsible for the governance of football across the county. They will provide advice through a project steering committee to ensure the new facilities meet the strategic goals of the Football Association.

Project Lifespan

17. The pitch carpets are expected to last for at least ten years before replacement is needed. The ongoing maintenance procedures that the Club Management Team will undertake has the potential to extend the lifespan beyond this. A sinking fund will be created to cover a replacement carpet.

Financial and Value for Money Implications

18. YFS funding is requested to contribute towards the development of a new 3G pitch. The project has applied for £99,999 which equates to 9% of the overall project costs. The remaining monies needed for the project have been raised or are expected from various sources (see Table 1).

19. Table 1. Financial Summary details the £995,016 of other funding against the total project cost of £1,095,016. Table 2 details the total project cost breakdown.

Table 1. Financial summary

Amount applied for:	£99,999
Total project cost:	£1,095,016
Percentage of cost against total:	9%
Have other funding sources been secured?	Yes
Other funding:	<u>Funding Secured</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Football Foundation - £771,667• Spelthorne Community Infrastructure Levy - £43,349

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Premier League Club Development Fund - £150,000 • ATFC Fundraising - £30,000
	Total = £995,016
Volunteer contributions:	£16,120
Noncash contributions:	£0
Is there a commercial element to the project?	Yes
Amount suggested for funding:	£99,999

Table 2. Project Cost breakdown

Activity	Total Cost (Inc. VAT)	YFS Funding	Other Funding
106m x 70m floodlit 3G FTP			
Preliminaries	£20,711	£0	£43,349 Spelthorne CIL £150,000 Premier League Club Development Fund £30,000 Ashford Town Football Club Fundraising £771,667 Football Foundation
Site Clearance, Drainage and Groundwork's	£342,654	£99,999	
Hardstanding	£41,195	£0	
Artificial Grass Surface	£175,501	£0	
Fencing	£107,678	£0	
Infill mitigation measures	£35,747	£0	
Dugouts	£9,188	£0	
Sports Equipment & Site Furniture	£32,523	£0	
Floodlights	£76,353	£0	
Maintenance Equipment	£27,835	£0	
Reinstatement	£3,677	£0	
Contractor other items and adjustments	£198,565	£0	
Changing room upgrade and external toilets	£60,000	£0	
Professional fees	£10,000	£0	
Legal Charge	£3,500	£0	
Booking System Fee	£3,000	£0	
Non-recoverable VAT	£6,889	£0	
Total	£1,095,016	£99,999	£995,016

20. As with all applications, there is a risk that construction and purchase costs will increase between application and approval. The applicant has secured quotes that support their costing, and will ultimately be funded based on evidenced, actual spend, up to the amount awarded. In addition, the Football Foundation funding process requires costings from their Framework contractors based on a Guaranteed Maximum Price, so no contingency is required.

Expert Hub Review

21. Finance: The existing sports club are looking to expand their current facilities in the form of a 3G pitch. The funding is being sought from a variety of funders, with YFS being requested to fund 9% of the total project cost. This bears little risk as it is of relatively low value, and the project delivery also appears adequately planned. Previous years accounts have been provided and queries around prior year's losses have been answered and deemed reasonable. This project should therefore provide an additional asset to the site which can be maintained using the new income from pitch hire moving forward.

22. Commercial: Pitch hires should fund the pitch running costs in future years. Forecasted pitch hire income reflects the demand that ATFC have demonstrated, and this income exceeds forecast costs including a fund for future pitch replacement. ATFC have also reasonably forecast an increase in bar income due to increased footfall. ATFC submitted previous years' accounts which show a broadly neutral cashflow. This underlying cashflow should continue although it may be impacted by on-pitch performance.

Consultation

Summary of Support

23. Have your say, which featured the ATFC, received 162 comments. The application has also benefited from a significant number of supporting letters from residents.
24. Letters of support have been received from the following organisations, groups and individuals:
- Councillor Robert Evans
 - We Make Footballers
 - Football Foundation
 - Middlesex County Football Association
 - Brentford FC Community Sports Trust
 - Active Surrey
 - Middlesex Football Association
 - Councillor Sean Beatty
25. The Divisional Councillor Robert Evans fully supports the application and has commented as follows:
- "I fully support and endorse the application that was recently passed by Spelthorne's planning committee. My reason for support is there are significant public benefits for the community, especially those who live in the vicinity. The ward in which Ashford Town is situated is one of the most deprived in Surrey. There is a clear and identified need in the Borough of Spelthorne for this community facility. Spelthorne has the lowest proportion of physically active adults in Surrey. The need for an AGP is part of Spelthorne Councils ' playing pitch strategy', a policy adopted in 2019, covering the period to 2037."*

Advisory Panel Comments

26. The Advisory Panel review the project via email and were supportive of the application.

Risk Management and Implications:

27. The applicant has provided an overview of risks against the project in Table 3 below. Officers consider there to be adequate control measures in place.

Table 3. Summary Table of Risks and Key Mitigations

Risk description	RAG	Mitigation action/strategy
It is possible for project costs to increase.	Green	The contractors will cover the shortfall unless other funding sources are identified.
The duration of the project may lengthen, affecting future bookings.	Yellow	By lining up contractors as soon as possible, ATFC will mitigate this risk.
ATFC rely heavily on the income generated from the project to sustain the club and project going forward.	Yellow	ATFC has taken and will continue to take a very cautious approach. Once the project is complete, it is anticipated the club will gain an income which will gradually increase over time to cover any shortfalls and ensure it is sustainable in the long run.

What Happens Next:

- Following the advisory panel, a Decision Report will be produced for consideration by the Executive Director for Customers, Digital and Transformation, incorporating the comments of the Advisory Panel.
- Following approval of the funding, a notice of the records of decisions taken will be published within 3 days of the decision being made.
- Officers will prepare the relevant schedules and funding agreements to enable payment of funds and monitoring and evaluation of the project against its outcomes.
- The YFS Team Officers will then issue a provisional offer of funding to the applicant, including a copy of the Draft Funding Agreement incorporating any additional conditions.

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