


Report of: Head of City Works

To: Executive Board


Date: 17 March 2008


Item No:


Title of Report : All-Weather Pitch Provision




Summary and Recommendations




Purpose of report: To seek approval to grant a lease to enable the development of all-weather pitches at  Court Place Farm and North Oxford Sports Association and provide a brief update on the Blackbird Leys project.




Key Decision: No


Portfolio Holder: Councillor Caroline Van Zyl




Deputy Responsibility: Environment

Approved By: Jeremy Thomas, Legal
Andy Collett, Finance
Councillor Van Zyl, Portfolio Holder

Wards Affected: All



Policy Framework: Green Spaces Strategy



Recommendations: The Executive Board is recommended to:

- a. Approve the granting of a lease on the terms set out in the report for the Court Place Scheme
- b. Approve the granting of a lease on the terms set out in the report for the North Oxford Sports Association site.
- c. Note the position in respect of the Blackbird Leys area All-Weather Pitch Project

Background

1. The Green Spaces strategy identifies that there is an under provision of All-Weather Pitches in the city and therefore identified an action 'to



develop three centres of excellence, including All-Weather Pitches, in North, Central and South areas of the city'. The strategy also identified those options for development at Court Place Farm, Cowley Marsh, Horspath and Blackbird Leys Park be investigated.

2. Oxford City Football Club has submitted a proposal to install a full size All-Weather Pitch at Court Place Farm along with a proposal from the Oxfordshire Netball Association to install six hard court surfaces at the site.
3. North Oxford Sports Club has also submitted a proposal to the Parks Department to install a second All-Weather Pitch adjacent to the current All-Weather Pitch at Banbury Road North.
4. The Area Co-ordinator in conjunction with the Council's Parks Section and Property Section has produced plans to install an All-Weather Pitch adjacent to the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre. Included within this scheme is the relocation of the Blackbird Leys Football Club from their current location on the other side of the Park into the proposed associated changing facilities.

Court Place Farm- Oxford City Football Club/Oxfordshire Netball Association

5. A joint proposal has been submitted to the City Council to build the facility on land marked on the attached plan at Court Place Farm. The Interim Leisure and Cultural Services Business Unit Manager, Parks Manager and Asset Management Section have assessed this proposal. They advise that subject to conditions in respect of the lease the proposal should be supported, as it would meet a need identified in the Green Spaces Strategy and would also support sports development targets.
6. The Council's Asset Management Section has confirmed the land has a negligible market value in that it is recreational space. There are limited other uses for the site and therefore officers recommend that an 'Intention to Lease' should be agreed for a period of twenty-five years, at a rental of £1500 per annum for the first five years and after that period the rent would be 20% of the gross earnings. An 'Intention to Lease' would allow the clubs to secure external funding for the project. If funding was not secured or planning permission not agreed the lease would be terminated at that point. Both Oxford FC and Oxfordshire Netball Association have agreed to this approach and a draft Heads of Terms is being prepared subject to Executive Board approval.
7. It is expected that this proposal could progress without any further assistance from the City Council.

North Oxford Sports Club/Banbury Road North

8. North Oxford Sports Club have requested permission to provide another full size All-Weather Pitch adjacent to the current All-Weather Pitch. It is proposed that the Council grant approval of the lease subject to all funding and planning permission being obtained by the Club. This would enable the club to develop the hockey club and also form a partnership with Summertown Stars Football Club to develop what is already a fast growing club for 8-18 year olds.

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Blackbird Leys

10. The South East Area Committee (SEAC) has led the investigation into the development of an All-Weather Pitch at Spindleberry.

11. In September 2007 SEAC agreed to fund the production of a Football Development Plan (required by the Football Foundation). In addition officers met again with the Football Foundation who reiterated their support for a Blackbird Leys bid in particular.

12. In October 2007 SEAC approved the following:

- Section 106 expenditure of £30,000 on improvements to Spindleberry pitch
- To support a bid to the Football Foundation for an All-Weather Pitch and new changing accommodation at Blackbird Leys
- To support a capital bid of £250k in 2008/09 and 2009/10 for the project

13. Officers are now seeking to resurrect the original bid to the Football Foundation, and to involve Oxford United, the Blackbird Leys Football Club, the Oxford Cherwell Valley College and the Leisure Centre, and to take forward provision of some kind of improved pitch at Spindleberry.

14. Next steps include the following:

- establishing with potential partners the contributions they might make to the project, to include potential opportunities arising from the Oxford Cherwell Valley College's development of its Blackbird Leys site (for which it has outline planning consent)
- production of a football development plan for Blackbird Leys as required by the Football Foundation

- securing a capital bid to fund our contribution, noting that there is a section 106 contribution of £140,000 also available
- establishing with the Foundation a likely level of contribution and timescale for the project. A minimum of 50% can be assumed but a higher percentage may be possible given the deprivation in the area. The Foundation may also provide a revenue contribution to support a football development programme
- relocation of the Blackbird Leys Football Club in to the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre.

Financial Implications

15. Oxford City Football Club/ Oxfordshire Netball Association

A rental of £1500 per annum for the first five years would be applied and after that period the rent would be 20% of the gross earnings, whichever is the greater. The income being derived is expected to be at least equal to that from the grass pitches being lost.

No grant or other funding is being sort from the City Council.

16. North Oxford Sports Club/Banbury Road North

A rent of £1500 per annum applied for the first five years and 20% of the gross earnings, whichever the greater, be applied after that date.

No grant or other funding is being sort from the City Council.

17. Blackbird Leys

None associated with this report

Recommendations

The Executive Board is recommended to: -

- a. Approve the granting of a lease on the terms set out in the report for the Court Place Scheme
- b. Approve the granting of a lease on the terms set out in the report for the Court Place Scheme
- c. Note the position in respect of the Blackbird Leys area All-Weather Pitch Project

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