

**CLASSIFICATION:** PUBLIC  
**DISTRIBUTION:** RESOURCES, OPERATIONS AND ESTATE MANAGEMENT GROUP  
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## FOOTBALL GROUND AND OTHER SPORT FACILITY CONSULTATION

### 1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 There is currently funding available from the Sports Specific Major Capital Fund, held by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, to support sport development in Hatfield. Over several years a number of ideas and suggestion have been considered but no formal proposal has be made by Hatfield Town Council.
- 1.2 Ahead of a decision on whether to submit a proposal, Hatfield Town Council undertook a consultation to assess the need and appetite of Hatfield residents and existing and potential users of sports facilities in the Hatfield area.
- 1.3 The consultation results (Annex A) suggest that the community would like to see the development of both grass and 3G facilities, as well as investment in rugby, hockey, tennis and netball in addition to the development in football.

### 2 Recommendation

- a) That the Resources, Operations and Estate Management Committee recommend to Full Council that they **AGREE** to set up a Task and Finish Group with the specific intention of designing a proposal that is likely to be successful in bidding for funding from the Sports Specific Major Capital Fund .
- b) That the Task and Finish Group be time limited, with a deadline to submit a final proposal (or a recommendation not to proceed) to Full Council by its meeting in March 2023, or earlier.
- c) That the Task and Finish Group be directed to develop a proposal which focuses on providing a facility which would allow the growth in both male and female senior football and rugby, as well as support participation in all age ranges for football, rugby, hockey, tennis and netball.

## 3 Background and Explanation

### **Funding opportunity and criteria**

- 3.1 A condition on the planning permission granted for the park and ride facility at Angerland Common was for a fund to be established to support new sport facilities in the Hatfield area. This Hatfield Community Sports Fund is open to applications under either the Sports Specific Major Capital Fund or the Small Grants Project and Equipment Fund.
- 3.2 The criteria for funding applications can be found on the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council website, and are attached at Annex B. Successful applicants are expected to demonstrate community need and support for new sports facility. In particular applicants are expected to demonstrate how their proposals would provide sustainable sport in Hatfield and support one of the three stated strategic objectives;
- I) Creating new opportunities for your people to play sport
  - II) The development of an existing sport in Hatfield
  - III) Getting under-represented groups from Hatfield involved in sport, in Hatfield.
- 3.3 Previous ideas and proposals have included plans for housing and retail units. These plans can be investigated further separately should the Town Council wish to pursue those options. However it is recommended that they do not form part of the proposal to the Sports Specific Major Capital Fund.

### **Consultation, methodology and results**

- 3.4 In spring 2022 the Town Council launched a consultation to seek the views of residents and organisations which currently use the sports facilities in the Hatfield area. The Town Council contracted specialists to undertake this exercise to ensure decision makers and stakeholders could be confident in the consultation results.
- 3.5 Over 500 individual responses were received, which was judged to be successful for a consultation of this nature. Furthermore an analysis of the data set shows that the response aligns with the underlying population of Hatfield, providing a confidence level of 80% in the trends shown by the consultation results.
- 3.6 Using a ranking system, the results indicate very similar support for a grass football pitch with seating stand and a 3G artificial football pitch with a seating stand. The results also showed strong support for supporting developing facilities

for rugby, hockey, tennis and netball. A number of other sports were referenced in the “other” category but not one stood out in particular.

- 3.7 These results would suggest that the residents and organisations in Hatfield would like to see the development of both grass and 3G facilities, with strong support for multi-sport facilities.

#### **4 Impacts**

##### **Legal**

- 4.1 There are no legal requirements or obligations for Hatfield Town Council to develop a proposal for submission to the Sports Specific Major Capital Fund. In fact the Town Council would need to satisfy itself that any land used for such a proposal would result in an overall benefit to the community, residents and businesses.
- 4.2 However the Town Council should recognise its general responsibility to promote and provide sport and recreational facilities in the area.

##### **Finance**

- 4.3 Costs for establishing the Task and Finish Group and producing a proposal will be subsumed into the currently agreed budget, with any additional spend to be approved by Full Council, the Resources, Operations and Estate Management Committee or as otherwise delegated by those bodies.

##### **Risk**

- 4.4 There are no significant risks associated with establishing a Task and Finish Group. However expectations have not been managed and there is substantial confusion over the process required to secure funding. It is therefore likely that whatever position the Town Council should take will attract criticism. It is therefore even more crucial that the Task and Finish Group’s deliberations and recommendations are evidence led to ensure any proposal put before the Town Council is credible and has a high chance of succeeding.