



ADUR & WORTHING  
COUNCILS

Joint Strategic Committee  
4 December 2018  
Agenda Item 10

Key Decision: No

Ward(s) Affected: Castle

**Palatine Park - 3G Pitch Development**

**Report by the Director for Communities and the Director for the Economy  
Executive Summary**

**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 This report seeks authority to submit a planning application for an artificial football pitch (3G) on Palatine Park. The report sets out the project in detail and, in particular, the opportunity for working in partnership with Worthing Town Football Club to secure Football Foundation (FF) funding. Any shortfall in funding would come from S106 funding from the West Durrington development (subject to the S106 Agreement being amended).
- 1.2 The report indicates that the application would need to address potential planning issues such as light and noise pollution and car parking. The report also sets out the options for the future maintenance of the pitch and how the community would be able to hire the facility.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee gives delegated authority to the Head of Environmental Services to:
  - (i) Submit a planning application for an artificial 3G football pitch, floodlighting and car park at Palatine Park, Worthing;

- (ii) Submit a funding bid to the Football Foundation to secure up to £500k funding;
- (iii) subject to the agreement being amended, use up to £340,000 of S106 funding from the West Durrington development to address any funding shortfall, and;
- (iv) award a contract to build out the facility in accordance with the Councils procurement policies, subject to the grant of planning permission and funding being secured.

2.2 It is recommended that the Joint Strategic Committee recommends to Worthing Borough Council to add the scheme to the 2019/20 capital programme with a budget of £840,000 funded by external funding and S106 receipts.

### **3. Background**

- 3.1 Worthing Town FC is a large successful Club based at Palatine Park. The Club currently has 41 teams and is in the Sussex County League (Step 6 of the Football Pyramid). The Club is Worthing's only FA Charter Standard Community Club and has boys and girls teams across all ranges. The Club currently has nearly 500 players and over 90 volunteers.
- 3.2 In 2012, the Club moved into a new Clubhouse on Palatine Park. The Clubhouse was secured with a £1.1 million funding award from the Football Foundation (FF). The Club has a 25 year lease (commencing in 2012) with the Council and this lease allows the Club to have first use of the various adult and junior pitches on Palatine Park. The Clubhouse has a kitchen and large function room at first floor level with changing rooms, stores etc on the ground floor.
- 3.3 The Club has been keen to have a 3G facility on Palatine Park for some years. The grass pitches are prone to flooding and as the number of teams have increased, the level of wear and tear on the existing pitches has increased.
- 3.4 The Football Foundation has been keen to assist the development of the Club given its size and its FA Charter status and its commitment to the development of the game in the local community. The Football Foundation also recognises that Worthing has a lack of 3G pitches in the Town. This proposal also supports the commitments contained within the Councils

strategy 'Platforms for Our Places' to support the development of a Sports and Activity Strategy, whilst promoting and enabling the health and wellbeing of our populations.

- 3.5 Worthing Town has already invested in preparing plans for the site and, following recent meetings with the Football Foundation, a bid is being prepared for the FA Facilities Fund which has to be submitted in January next year. One of the requirements of the bid is that planning permission needs to be in place at the time that the bids are assessed in April 2019.

#### **4. Proposal**

- 4.1 The proposal is to build a 3G pitch on land directly to the north of the existing Clubhouse. An indicative plan is attached as Appendix 1.
- 4.2 Although, the 3G pitch would result in the loss of a grass pitch, it would allow for greater use and provide a better training and match facility for the Club and local community. The Club lacks winter training facilities and is currently trying to book a 3G facility outside of the Borough.
- 4.3 The Councils Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study identifies the lack of 3G facilities in the Borough. Whilst a new facility was provided at Durrington High School, this is a sand based surface more suited to hockey. The only 3G facility in the Town is at Worthing Football Club but this has more limited community use. The provision of a number of smaller 5-a-side pitches at the Leisure Centre has been very successful but it did result in the loss of a full size pitch for adult matches.
- 4.4 The intention is for the Council to construct the facility and any income from its use would cover maintenance costs and provide a 'sinking fund' for the replacement of the pitch, lighting and fencing when required. The booking of the facility could be dealt with remotely through a keypad system. This approach would ensure that the pitch remains a publicly owned facility and would not require any disposal of open space by entering into a lease with a third party.
- 4.5 There are other options that are being investigated for the future maintenance of the facility (possibly Worthing Town FC or South Downs Leisure Trust) but at this stage these have not been resolved and would not need to be finalised for the funding bid to be submitted to the Football Foundation.

## **5. Issues for consideration**

- 5.1 The Committee is asked to agree the principle of constructing a 3G pitch on Palatine Park, to support a funding bid to the Football Foundation and the submission of a planning application for the new pitch. The offer of funding support from the Football Foundation is a great opportunity to improve facilities for the Borough's largest Football Club as well as provide for improved community facilities. The Football Foundation has indicated that up to £500k may be available and it has also offered £10,000 to progress the funding bid.
- 5.2 It is estimated that a 3G facility would cost approximately £700k although additional funding would be required to provide additional car parking at the site. A 3G facility at Sir Robert Woodard Academy has recently been completed for £700k (funded from s106 secured from the development of the new Brighton and Hove Albion FC First Team and Training Academy in Lancing).
- 5.3 The West Durrington development included a requirement within the S106 to pay, prior to the completion of the 500th dwelling, a sum of £340k towards the provision of an off site artificial pitch. The development is progressing at pace and the Consortium are now close to the 500th dwelling trigger point. Once the development proceeds past the 500th dwelling the sum payable reduces by half. However, the Consortium has agreed, in principle, to a Deed of Variation which would provide more time to progress a site for a new 3G facility. A new trigger point is being discussed allowing full payment prior to the completion of the 700th dwelling. Once the Deed of Variation has been signed this would ensure that the new 3G facility is fully funded. The s106 requires the funding to be spent at Worthing Leisure Centre, Palatine Park or Field Place.
- 5.4 The provision of 3G floodlit pitches within built up areas can be controversial given residents' concerns about increased noise and disturbance, floodlighting and car parking issues. This is primarily because of the increased level of use that these pitches generate, particularly in the evenings. However, Palatine Park has a number of advantages in that it is a large area of open space with significant tree screening on the northern boundary and a public house on the western boundary.
- 5.5 There are a number of residential properties along Palatine Road and Coniston Road that overlook the Park on the southern boundary but by

locating the pitch to the north of the clubhouse the pitch would be approximately 40 metres away from these properties. Nevertheless, the planning application would need to be supported with the necessary floodlighting and acoustic reports to demonstrate that the proposal would not give rise to an unacceptable level of nuisance. These reports and consultation with Public Health and Protection would need to agree appropriate hours of use to protect the amenities of adjoining residents.

- 5.6 The existing clubhouse has a car park to the rear of properties in Palatine Road and there is also an overflow car park that is used on match days. Included with the application there would be a need to look at a larger car park to accommodate any predicted increase in the level of use with the 3G facility. The application would need to be accompanied with a transport statement to address any increased traffic or parking impacts of the proposal.
- 5.7 Any fencing of public open space does raise issues for other users of the park but there is still plenty of scope to retain dog walking circuits whilst not impinging on the use of the Park as a sports facility. Members will recall the concerns raised about this issue with the Manor Sports Ground.
- 5.8 A pre-application consultation exercise is encouraged in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and this would enable these issues to be raised with the local community prior to the submission of the planning application.
- 5.9 Whilst, other locations were considered for providing a 3G pitch, Palatine Park has less constraints than other sites considered and, of course, there are the considerable benefits of enabling improved facilities to be available for Worthing Town FC.

## **6. Engagement and Communication**

- 6.1 There has been ongoing engagement with the Football Club and the Football Foundation as described above. As indicated previously consultation with the local community would form part of the usual planning process.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The opportunity for external funding together with the use of s106 funding would enable this project to proceed on a cost neutral basis. The costs of

submitting the planning application would, if funding is secured, be covered by the Football Foundation grant funding.

- 7.2 The 3G pitch and car parking improvements are estimated to cost £0.84m. At present it is expected that this will be funded by £0.5m from the Football Foundation and £0.34m from unallocated S106 receipts. This proposed scheme will need to be added to the 2019/20 capital investment programme.
- 7.3 If the funding bid is unsuccessful then project will need to be revisited to see if the cost of any associated borrowing can be recouped from the income raised on the new facility.

## **8. Legal Implications**

- 8.1 Section 111 Local Government Act 1972 provides that the Council shall have the power to do anything (whether or not involving expenditure or the acquisition of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of their functions.
- 8.2 Section 1 Localism Act 2011 provides the Council with a general power of competence and empowers the Council to do anything which individuals generally may do, including a power to do it for a commercial purpose or without charge, and the power to do it for the benefit of the area and those resident or present in the area.
- 8.3 Section 123 of The Local Government Act provides that a Council shall not dispose of land forming part of an open space unless they advertise the disposal for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper circulated in the area in which the land is situated, specifying the land in question and identifying its extent. The Council is under an obligation to consider any objections that are received to the proposed disposal. A disposal would include entering into a lease for this land. However, if the land or part of it was fenced this would not count as a disposal for the purposes of section 123 of The Local Government Act.
- 8.4 Paragraph B16 of the Financial Procedure Rules provides that Executive Member approval is required for the release of the budget for any capital project of more than £250,000.

## **Background Papers**

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2014.

The FA Guide to 3G football turf pitch design principles and layouts.

Planning Application Reference AWDM/1883/15 - Construction of Floodlit Artificial Multi-Games Pitch, Sir Robert Woodard Academy.

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## **Sustainability & Risk Assessment**

### **1. Economic**

- The proposal supports the sustainability of the club, whilst improving facilities for those wishing to engage in football at all levels within the Town.

### **2. Social**

#### **2.1 Social Value**

- The proposal support the development of the sports and activity strategy, specifically to provide suitable facilities to increase engagement in sporty, whilst increasing the opportunities for all to get active.

#### **2.2 Equality Issues**

- The proposal increases the potential for participation at all levels

#### **2.3 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)**

- There are no issues at this time that suggest this proposal will result in increased anti-social behaviour or a negative impact on community safety. The development of suitable floodlight facilities, could be argued to have the opposite affect and support a reduction in such risks.

#### **2.4 Human Rights Issues**

- Considered no issues at present
- The planning process would consider any impacts on Human Rights Issues

### **3. Environmental**

- The proposal will allow for the suitable management of the facility

### **4. Governance**

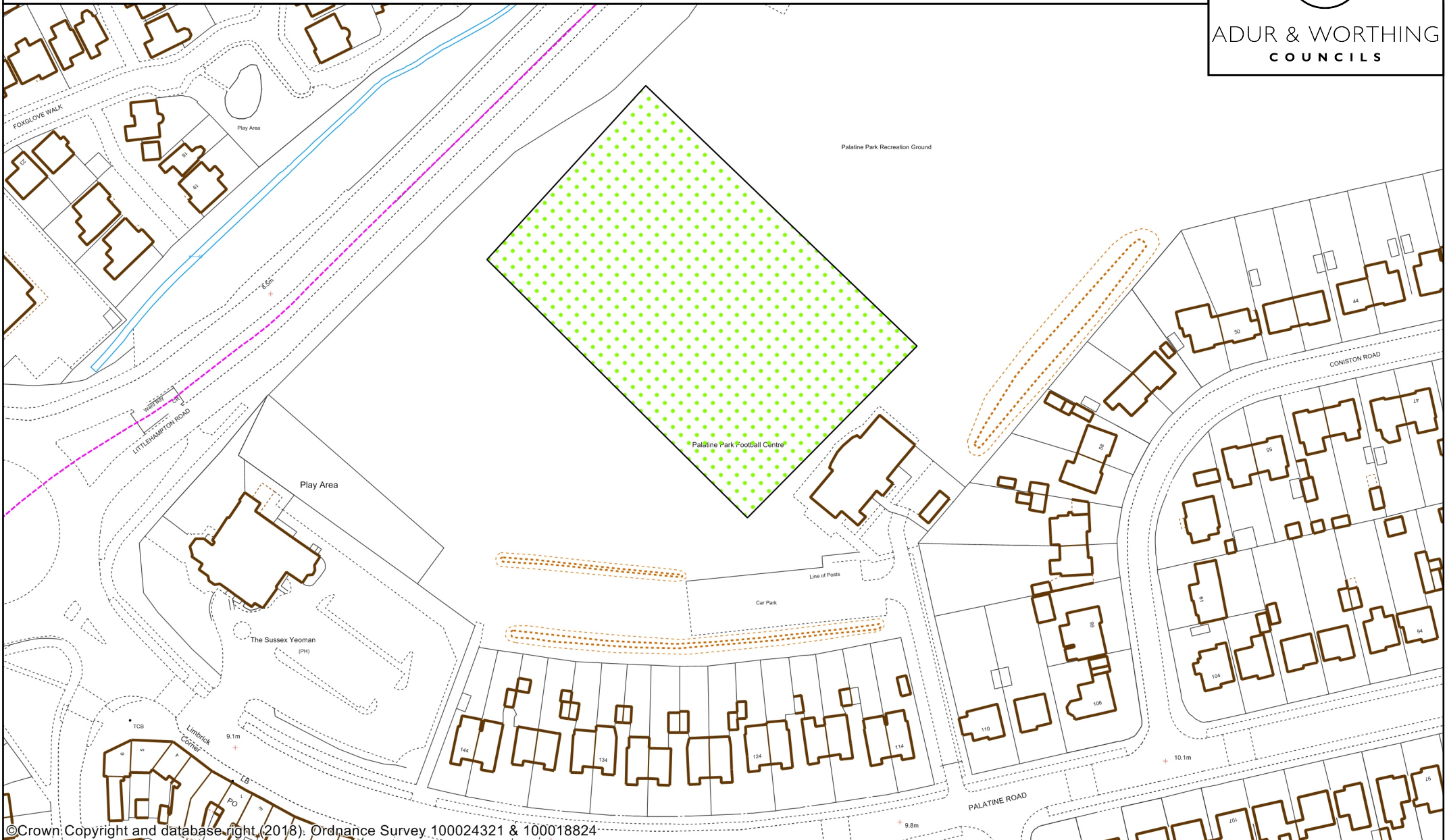
- The proposal supports the Councils stated intent to develop a sports and activity strategy, and improve access to activities that promote the health and wellbeing of our communities



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