



Member Report: Loftus Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation Sports Facility

Report to: Cabinet
Report from: Executive Director – Growth Enterprise & Environment
Portfolio: Economic Growth
Report Date: 17th September 2024
Decision Type: Key - Budget
Council Priority: Prosper and Flourish
REF GEE0048

HEADLINE POSITION

1.0 Summary of report

- 1.1 The report is to seek approval to progress a partnership between RCBC and Middlesbrough Football Club Foundation (MFCF) to build a community sports building, 54 space car park, and a 3G sports pitch on the Council owned Ben Scott's Field off Westfield Way in Loftus.
- 1.2 The partnership is at the request of MFCF, and the Council is supportive for them to develop a sports facility by using the Council's expertise in project development and the management of the necessary construction tender. The scheme is fully reliant upon external funding grants required by MFCF to build the facility.
- 1.3 It is the intention to secure significant external capital grants from the national Football Foundation (FF) (Football Association & Premier League grass roots funds); and from the MFCF.
- 1.4 This report will detail the agreed project timeline between the Council and MFCF to submit a funding bid to the FF in December 2024, with an aim to start building the sports facility from May 2025 onwards. This will be a key facility for the East Cleveland area and drive sports participation with major positive health and wellbeing benefits for the community.

2.0 Recommendation

2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

1. Approve the Council's support of the scheme as set out in the report and use of relevant delegated powers to implement the necessary arrangements.
2. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Growth and Enterprise, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Finance Director, to undertake any necessary action to implement the scheme which is

not specifically covered by the scheme of delegation, including appropriate project amendments and any necessary changes to the external funding profiles to deliver the project to timescales and budget.

DETAILED PROPOSALS

3.0 What are the objectives of the report and how do they link to the Council's priorities.

- 3.1 Since 2019 MFCF has been working from various sites within East Cleveland hosting several sports programmes across of youth, health, and employment. Two years ago, they identified a pot of their own grant funding to spend specifically within the East Cleveland area on sports activities. The Council has helped MFCF appraise five potential locations in Loftus to use this capital grant to build a sports facility for the community. The preferred location is a sports field owned by the Council on Ben Scott's Field at the northern tip of Loftus. The predominant reasons being that the site is close to nearby schools; the Loftus Ward is in an area of higher deprivation which will benefit from the facility; and Loftus being the central hub for East Cleveland. The Council leadership has supported this scheme as there is major potential for local people to prosper and flourish by using a new major sports facility alongside MFCF sports training programmes, promoting lifestyles, improving wellbeing, and improving fitness within the East Cleveland area.
- 3.2 The FF is in full support of the building of the new facility and will be providing a funding contribution from their national capital grants scheme. They identified a gap in 3G pitch provision within the area and have provisionally allocated funding on condition of an application date deadline of January 2025. The Council's Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sport Strategy (2024) also identified a lack of 3G sports pitch provision within East Cleveland. To inform the funding bid, a competitive construction tender managed by the Council is required by December 2024 in support of the project.
- 3.3 **The MFCF grant and the FF grant cover all of the costs for the scheme including supporting Council officer time via Funding and Collaboration agreements, that will be in place by the time of construction contract awards.** The Council will continue to own the freehold of the land but lease it to MFCF on a long-term arrangement (25 years with an option to renewal) for a peppercorn rent in support of this major development for the community. The expected cost of the scheme will be in excess of £3M. This links to the Council's corporate priorities to make the local area prosper and flourish, via an opportunity to improve local people's lives in a positive way by the building of this sports facility.

4.0 Background and detail

- 4.1 In 2023, MFCF submitted via agents a planning application for the new facility which was granted approval in July of that year. The funding bid that is now required to be submitted to the FF requires further detailed RIBA Stage 4 designs and to be costed via a competitive construction tender run by the Council and its frameworks. MFCF are reliant upon using the Council's procurement frameworks and the Council's project management expertise under the governance of the partnership arrangement.

The Appended images illustrate the site which is currently used for casual recreation and dog walking, alongside the new facility designs that were approved through the planning process in 2023. These designs will be improved upon through the detailed design stages, as Council officers manage the process and the MFCF are covering the cost of the design stage.

- 4.2 The piece of land has an original 1940's – 1950's landfill tip beneath it and the project will implement a remediation strategy in the build phase, in order to install gas wells and/or gas monitoring equipment as advised by the specialist advice already received.
- 4.3 The project will deliver a new centre for staff and participants, and the identified location is well established to accommodate a state-of-the-art, environmentally sustainable facility to inspire the local communities across East Cleveland in particular.
- 4.4 The Council's Place Development and Investment Team will be managing the project through development and delivery, acting as client project managers for the scheme. In this way, MFCF benefits from the Council's in-house team of project managers with the capability of seeing through the design and construction phases. The Funding and Collaboration Agreements will ensure that the cost reimbursement of Council officer time is covered by the external grants provided by the MFCF and the FF.
- 4.5 **FINANCIAL IMPACT: To provide further assurance, the external FF and MFCF grants will bear ALL the financial costs and risks to the project, as stipulated within the legal agreements to be signed between parties. The Council is not liable for any of the costs of the scheme at all. The initial building works, then the maintenance, and any future repair costs for the facility all fall upon MFCF. If there are any cost or time over runs associated with the building of the facility, then due to the legal agreements signed MFCF is obligated to cover any over costs. For example, if there are time delays costs submitted by the Principal Contractors due to anomalies found on site that were not picked up by surveys, then the charge increase will be covered by increasing the MFCF grant funds. The Council is solely leasing the land for 25 years on a peppercorn rent with an option for MFCF to renewal in the future.**
- 4.6 MFCF approached the Council specifically for a suitable 3G sports facility location within East Cleveland. The resources it brings and the specialist experience that MFCF offers enables a unique opportunity to bring a high-quality facility to East Cleveland, which is considered best value. Therefore, MFCF has been given support to progress their application to the FF, and the Council can offer the site location to them without wider tender due to the specific and specialist nature of the future use of the site.
- 4.7 The Council will sign two building contracts with 1) The Principal Contractor for the building and the car park works following a competitive tender exercise using it's appropriate procurement frameworks, and 2) the pitch construction Principal Contractor procured via the Football Foundation's Artificial Pitch Framework. The Council's project team will act as Client under both contracts for Construction Design Management regulations.
- 4.8 Outputs, outcomes, and impacts that the MFCF and Council partnership will

deliver as agreed in the funding bid to the FF:

- 4.8.1. The facility includes an indoor social use room, office, kitchenette, changing rooms, and toilets, including disabled access. Externally, there will be a fully floodlit 3G pitch for multiple sports, a 54-space car park, and the retention of perimeter dog walking routes for the community.
- 4.8.2. This is a one-off opportunity to build a new sports facility in Loftus, to support the continuation of MFCF's East Cleveland work supporting the demand for growth of football in the area.
- 4.8.3. The facility will allow for the relocation of the MFCF East Cleveland Office from Hunley Hall to the new Loftus facility, with five additional jobs required to manage the centre.
- 4.8.4. The provision of a new facility will allow MFCF to better serve existing beneficiaries from the community through higher quality facilities including providing further football and sports activities.
- 4.8.5. Addition of an indoor multi-use room will allow MFCF to accommodate further provision for the community related to education, employability, and, health and wellbeing themes.
- 4.8.6. MFCF aim to support the reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour and increase physical activity by offering accessibility to modern sports and training facilities in East Cleveland; and by working with Cleveland Police and the Crime Commissioner's office via an effective outreach programme.
- 4.8.7. The scheme will deliver a range of provision within education, targeted youth work and employability sectors.
- 4.8.8. MFCF will utilise the Middlesbrough FC and MFCF brands effectively to gain participation by engaging those who may not connect with mainstream services and offer work placements, accreditations, and sport, in order to support people to be more 'work ready'.
- 4.8.9. The MFCF programme offers one-to-one mentoring as well as small group work for young people on the verge of exclusion and facing other risk factors that could lead to poor education attainment.
- 4.8.10. With Hummersea Primary School being situated next to the facility, the MFCF will prioritise engaging with them through their PL Primary Stars programme and any other activity they can identify with them, and possible options include using the 3G pitch for delivery of their PE lessons.
- 4.8.11. With the facility being so close to the Loftus Job Centre, their provision and relationship with them could be expanded, alongside the new employment opportunities in the centre where they will require at least five Business Support roles. These roles undertake the setup, cleaning and closing facilities.
- 4.8.12. The MFCF has an EFL Trust and University of South Wales foundation degree programme for beneficiaries to gain a degree in community sports coaching. This would complement and provide additional education opportunities for beneficiaries alongside their Coach Core apprenticeship offered.
- 4.8.13. Having a Loftus facility will allow the MFCF to have another base to deliver all programmes, attracting local people from across East Cleveland. Currently c.10,000 people access the MFCF Herlingshaw Centre each year, and MFCF believe that they can attract c.5,000 people p.a. to the Loftus facility once built.
- 4.8.14. Premier League Kicks ('PL Kicks') is a national programme delivered on an evening to provide diversionary activities for young people to reduce crime

and anti-social behaviour and improve physical and mental wellbeing and community cohesion. In wards such as Loftus and Skelton, PL Kicks will provide a platform to support Cleveland Police and Cleveland Fire Brigade in delivering positive activities, build trusted relationships and reduce crime.

4.8.15. The new facilities will allow the MFCF to expand the PL Kicks programme to be delivered every weeknight with the possibility of some weekend provision.

4.8.16. Using the Loftus facility as a base MFCF can deliver a wider range of activities to adults who need support with mental health via daytime and evening football, and other activities to support.

4.8.17. The multi-use room will be available for physical activity such as yoga, Pilates, fitness classes etc, as well as some of the non-sports programmes such as knit and knatter, education workshops, coffee mornings, and operating as a function room for the community to use for events. It enables the MFCF to widen its delivery to include arts and cultural activities as well as physical activity.

4.8.18. With the allotment next to it there are many opportunities which could be considered linked to environmental sustainability etc. Apprenticeships and traineeships linked to groundwork and outdoor activities shall be delivered by the MFCF employability team.

4.9 Progress and Timeline:

ACTIVITY:	TARGET DATES:
Heads of Terms for a 25-year long lease on peppercorn rent of the Council site have been agreed.	May 2024
The detailed designs for the facility will be completed by EDable Architecture, and the construction tender is currently on track to be returned by December 2024 to inform the funding bid.	December 2024
The FF respond with their funding application response.	March 2025
Funding and Collaboration Agreements will be signed, meaning that external capital grants cover the cost for the scheme to go into the construction phase.	March 2025
The lease will be signed ahead of site works commencing, anticipated in May 2025.	May 2025
If all the funding has been identified as available via the FF and the MFCF grant funds, then the Council will start works with the Principal Contractors on the site. The FF to provide the detailed design and contractor for the 3G sports pitch element of the scheme, but the whole facility will be built out at the same period.*	May 2025
The new sports facility will be operational and open to the public.	May - June 2026

**If the funding bid to the FF is unsuccessful then the facility build will be unlikely to proceed as the MFCF*

will be unable to fund the whole cost themselves. However, feedback from the FF is very favourable due to the strong case presented so far.

5.0 Appendices and Background Papers

The MFCF Planning Statement submitted with their planning application that was approved in July 2023 provided background information.

Council's Playing Pitch & Outdoor Sport Strategy 2024.

6.0 Impact Assessment

6.1 The impact assessment level 1 identified all questions as no to negative impact at the preliminary screening stage. Please see the completed assessment within the Appendix.

7.0 Contact Officer

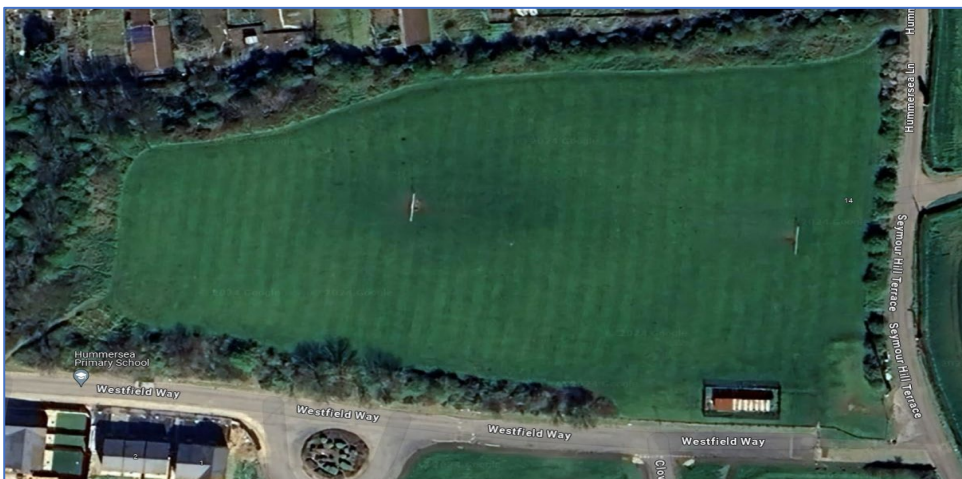
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6.4 Telephone Number: 07890564743

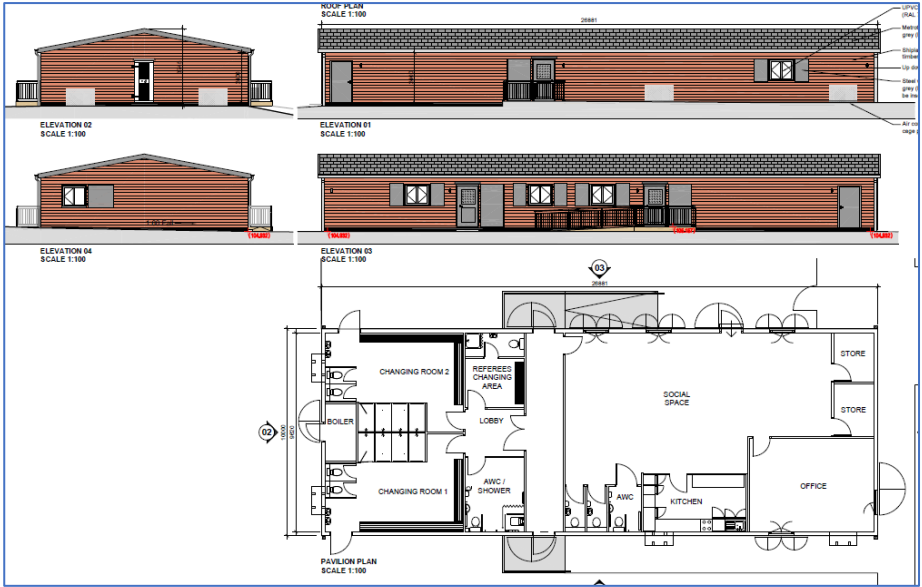
APPENDIX



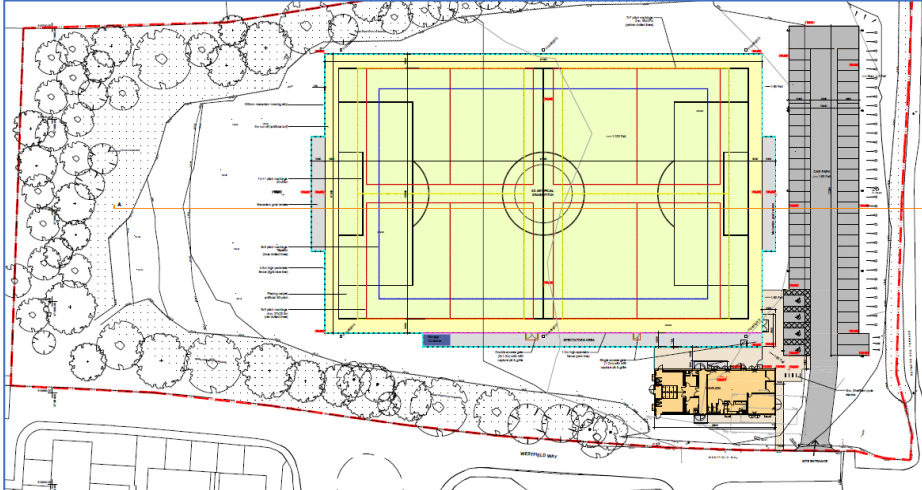
Existing Council Sports Field Birds Eye View – “Ben Scott’s Field”



Existing Council Sports Field Road View – “Ben Scott’s Field”



Proposed Community Sports Building Image and Layout Plan



Proposed Overall Site Layout Plan