

<b>Acceptance of Grant - 3G Pitch Trap Lane Fakenham</b>	
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<p>North Norfolk District Council submitted a bid under round 2 of the Governments Levelling Up programme which included the provision of a 3G pitch as part of the match funding required to meet the criteria for funding. The bid was successful and works are progressing associated with the swimming pool extension and upgrades to the existing sports centre.</p> <p>Officers have been working with the Football Foundation to prepare an application for funding towards the provision of the 3G pitch and have heard recently that the award has been approved.</p> <p>This report sets out the options around accepting the Football Foundation grant funding and recommends acceptance of the grant award.</p>
<b>Options considered</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept the Football Foundation grant funding and proceed with the 3G pitch provision at Trap Lane Fakenham</li> <li>• Reject the Football Foundation grant funding and proceed with the 3G pitch provision using the Councils own finances.</li> <li>• Reject the Football Foundation grant funding and do not proceed with the 3G pitch provision.</li> </ul>
<b>Consultation(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Football Foundation</li> <li>• Everyone Active</li> <li>• Fakenham Town Council</li> <li>• Portfolio Holder for Community, Leisure and Outreach.</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That Cabinet accept the Football Foundation grant funding and proceed with the provision of a 91m x 55m FIFA Quality 3G pitch at Trap Lane Fakenham.</li> <li>• That Cabinet authorise Officers to sign the relevant agreements with the Football Foundation to allow delivery of the 3G pitch provision.</li> </ul>
<b>Reasons for recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The provision of the 3G pitch was an integral part of the bid submission for Levelling Up funding and formed part of the match funding to the grant amount awarded in 2023.</li> <li>• The acceptance of the grant will enable the completion of the Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project as submitted Government and will meet the need identified in the Playing Pitch Strategy.</li> </ul>

<b>Background papers</b>	None
--------------------------	------

<b>Wards affected</b>	Fakenham North
<b>Cabinet member(s)</b>	Cllr Liz Withington Portfolio Holder for Community, Leisure and Outreach.
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Steve Hems, Director of Service Delivery <a href="mailto:steve.hems@north-norfolk.gov.uk">steve.hems@north-norfolk.gov.uk</a>

<b>Links to key documents:</b>	
Corporate Plan:	DEVELOPING OUR COMMUNITIES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing further the leisure facilities provided across the district.</li> </ul>
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	There is budget provision in the Capital Budget 2026/27 to support this work.
Council Policies & Strategies	

<b>Corporate Governance:</b>	
Is this a key decision	No
Has the public interest test been applied	Is the item exempt, if so, state why.
Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter	Full Council – 20.12.2023 Full Council – 27.3.2024 Cabinet – 8.9.2025

## 1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. This report sets out details of the recent award of grant funding from the Football Foundation towards the provision of a 3G pitch at Trap Lane Fakenham as part of the wide Fakenham Leisure and Sport Hub Project which arose following Levelling Up funding from the Government.
- 1.2. The report seeks Cabinet's authority to accept the grant funding and enter into the relevant agreements with the Football Foundation to deliver the 3G pitch at Trap Lane Fakenham

## 2. Introduction & Background

- 2.1. The Council submitted a bid under Round 2 of the Government's Levelling up programme. This bid was

- 2.2. The requirements of the bid process was that the ten percent match funding had to be allocated to the project from other sources. The Council included a match funding element which included the provision of a 3G pitch within the programme.
- 2.3. The lack of 3G pitch provision in the district was identified in the Playing Pitch Strategy and Fakenham was one of the sites identified as being in strategic need of such provision. The Council therefore included the 3G pitch in the Levelling Up bid with the intention of pursuing funding for the 3G pitch through Football Foundation.
- 2.4. The Football Foundation is a charity funded through the Premier League, The Football Association (the FA) and Government, via Sport England. Their aim is to get more people involved in football through championing fair access to quality facilities, regardless of age, gender, background or ability. They do this through the provision of grants to those who are able to meet the funding criteria and where the strategic need can be demonstrated.

### **3. Proposals and Options**

- 3.1. Officers with the Leisure and Locality Services Team have been working with officers from the Football Foundation to submit a bid for funding for the 3G pitch at Trap Lane Fakenham.
- 3.2. As part of the application process a planning application has been submitted to the Local Planning Authority for the 3G pitch.
- 3.3. The application has been considered by the Football Foundation, and the Council was informed on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2026, that a capital grant for a new 91m x 55m FIFA quality 3G pitch had been approved.
- 3.4. The total project cost is £1,288,476 and the maximum Football Foundation Grant is £878,899. This means that the Council's contribution is £409,587. This equates to 68.21% grant. Typically, the Football Foundation awards reflect a 60% funding split with the applicant body.
- 3.5. If at any time the total expenditure for the Project exceeds the estimated amount stated in the Grant Offer Letter, there will be no corresponding increase in the Grant even if additional costs arise that were previously unforeseen. This would mean that the Council would need to bear any additional costs.
- 3.6. Should the cost of works be reduced from the pre-tender estimates that have been used in calculating the award then any such saving will benefit the Football Foundation and the Councils contribution will remain the same.
- 3.7. The Football Foundation work with a small number of pre-selected companies for the delivery of the 3G pitch provision. This means that those companies are very familiar with costing projects and so their pricing should reasonably reflect the costs on any particular site.
- 3.8. At Trap Lane Fakenham a number of ground surveys have been undertaken to reduce the likelihood of unforeseen works. The positioning of some of the water attenuation tanks for the swimming pool development are installed in a location

which does limit access to the 3G pitch site, but this has been reflected in the contractors pricing for the 3G pitch provision overall.

### 3.9. Options

- **Option 1:** The Council accept the grant offer and enter into the relevant agreement with the Football Foundation to enable the delivery of the 3G pitch provision at Trap Lane, Fakenham.
- **Option 2:** The Council reject the Football Foundation grant funding and proceed with the 3G pitch provision using the Councils own finances.
- **Option 3:** The Council reject the Football Foundation grant funding and do not proceed with the 3G pitch provision.

3.10. The provision of a 3G pitch at Fakenham has been on the strategic needs analysis for playing pitch provision for some time now. The grant award reduces the financial burden on the Council of meeting this provision need.

3.11. The 3G pitch provision formed part of the match funding element of the bid for Levelling Up Funding. If the 3G pitch is not provided, then the Government will still expect the 10% match funding to be made. Although the Council previously agreed to increase the budget for the FLASH project to reflect the impact of inflation in the construction industry that occurred between the submission of the bid and the confirmation of funding, this does not equate to the 10% contribution requirement. It is possible that the Government may reduce the amount of Levelling up fund grant if the full 10% match funding is not made.

3.12. It is therefore not recommended to not proceed with the 3G pitch provision as this may have consequential financial impacts on the Levelling up fund grant funding.

3.13. The Council could choose to not accept the grant and deliver the 3G pitch through its own resources. Whilst the Council undertook to take to underwrite up to £575,000 should the Football Foundation not agree to fund the 3G pitch, the overall cost of the project is significantly above this allowance. There is provision in the 2026/2027 Capital Budget of £800,000 for the provision of 3G pitch facilities for North Walsham and Fakenham. The total cost of making the 3G pitch provision at Fakenham, exceeds this and so further capital budget would need to be found, and not capital funding would be available for any future provision at North Walsham.

3.14. It is therefore recommended to accept the Football Foundation Grant award and enter into the necessary agreement with the Football Foundation to deliver the 3G pitch at Trap Lane Fakenham.

## 4. Corporate Priorities

4.1. This provision of 3G pitch at Trap Lane Fakenham links directly to the corporate priority relation to Developing Our Communities and more specifically to the objective of Developing further the leisure facilities provided across the District.

## 5. Financial and Resource Implications

- 5.1. The award of grant offsets the Council's costs in relation to the provision of a 3G pitch at Trap Lane, Fakenham significantly with an estimated 68.21% of the funding being provided through external funding.
- 5.2. The provision of 3G pitch at North Walsham and Fakenham is within the 2026/2027 Capital Budget which allows £800,000 allocated this budget line.
- 5.3. Section 106 agreement monies associated with the sports and play equipment are either in place, arising from developments within Fakenham, or will be put in place as part of the planned Fakenham Urban Extension development which borders close to the site of the 3G pitch. Previous reports authorising the submission of the bid to Government and the award of contract identified that funding could be used which would later be drawn down against these future Section 106 agreements if required.

### Comments from the S151 Officer:

*The S151 Officer (or member of the Finance team on their behalf) will complete this section.*

*This report recommends the acceptance of a government grant to support the Council's Capital Program. Once final costs are determined any necessary amendments to the capital budget will be submitted for Cabinet consideration.*

## 6. Legal Implications

- 6.1. The Council will be required, as part of the funding award, to enter into an agreement with the Football Foundation which sets out the responsibilities on the Council both now, before the full grant amount is paid and on an ongoing basis.
- 6.2. These Terms and Condition have been known about for some time and have been subject to discussions with colleagues from Legal.
- 6.3. They are not different from those relating to the 3G Pitch provision at Cromer Academy, Cromer.

### Comments from the Monitoring Officer

*The Monitoring Officer (or member of the Legal team on behalf of the MO) will complete this section. They will outline any legal advice provided.*

*This report proposes acceptance of grant funding for a 3G pitch within the Fakenham leisure project.*

## 7. Risks

- 7.1. The amount of grant awarded is fixed. Should the cost of the 3G pitch increase from the pre-tender estimate increase then any such additional costs will have

to be met by the Council. If the costs of works come in below the pre-tender estimate, then any saving will go to the Football Foundation.

- 7.2. To mitigate the risk of cost increases a number of site investigations have been undertaken by the Football Foundations framework supplier. These have not highlighted any issues with ground conditions on the site.
- 7.3. The water attenuation tanks for the main sports centre building are located on the access point that was planned for plant and machinery access for the 3G pitch development. The nature of these tanks construction, limits the weight load that can be placed on them. The supplier has factored this into their pricing by allowing for smaller vehicles to be used but alternative site access is being investigated which if resolved as hoped will allow for normal vehicular access and therefore reduce costs.

## **8. Net Zero Target**

- 8.1. There are limited ongoing carbon impacts associated with the report which have not previously been discussed and considered by both Cabinet and Full Council.
- 8.2. The specific carbon issues with the 3G pitch relate to the construction and manufacture of materials used in the construction.
- 8.3. The lighting of the facility will result in increased energy use although the design of the lighting will utilise low energy LED lighting systems. The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme works that are being implemented on the site will seek to reduce the carbon impact of the overall project as much as possible.

## **9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

- 9.1. Equality, Diversity and inclusion is at the heart of the Football Foundation's ethos around increasing access to football and physical activity.
- 9.2. Strong consideration has been given to these factors as part of the bid for funding and therefore they are not considered to be any adverse issues associated with this report.

## **10. Community Safety issues**

- 10.1. The facility will be managed through the current arrangements with Everyone Active as the Council's Leisure provider, who will comply with the Football Foundation requirements on booking and management.
- 10.2. There are no adverse community safety issues identified associated with this report.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The award of a Capital Grant from the Football Foundation of £878,899 is very welcome and represents a significant amount of work in order to submit a successful bid on the part of those officers involved in the process.

This funding limits the Councils' costs of providing a much needed 3G all-weather pitch in Fakenham and contributes to the 10% match funding requirement of the Levelling Up funded Fakenham Leisure and Sports Hub project at Trap Lane Fakenham.

It is Recommended:

- That Cabinet accepts the Football Foundation grant funding and proceed with the provision of a 91m x 55m FIFA Quality 3G pitch at Trap Lane Fakenham.
- That Cabinet authorises Officers to sign the relevant agreements with the Football Foundation to allow delivery of the 3G pitch provision.