

## RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

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Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 16<sup>th</sup> MAY, 2017  
title: FOOTBALL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL  
submitted by: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES  
principal author: MARK BEVERIDGE

### 1 PURPOSE

1.1 To provide information on a proposal from Clitheroe Wolves Football Club (CWFC) to work in partnership with Council to develop a football specific facility at Roefield Playing Pitches. As part of this report, representatives from the Club will attend to give a short presentation to the committee on the project.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives – To sustain a strong and prosperous Ribble Valley
- Corporate Priorities - To help make people's lives safer and healthier
- Other Considerations – To develop, with relevant partners, measures to support the visitor economy

### 2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council owns and manages the grass and artificial football pitches at Roefield alongside and behind the Tennis centre, (the centre is operated privately under a lease agreement). These pitches are provided for clubs and groups to hire, for which there are an annual set of charges fixed by Council.

2.2 CWFC is one of the largest football clubs in the Borough running a variety of teams for males and females from juniors through to seniors. This season they have 36 teams, which includes nearly 500 registered young people aged 4-18.

2.3 The club hire facilities from a number of providers due to the number of teams they have to accommodate. These include; Council pitches, Bowland School and the Grammar School. During the winter players travel to Darwen Academy, Blackburn Soccerdome, St Bedes High School Blackburn, Prairie Sports Village and Burnley College to use artificial indoor and outdoor areas. This means that a lot of the teams operate in isolation to the rest of the club geographically, because of the need to play and train throughout the Clitheroe area and further afield.

### 3 ISSUES

3.1 CWFC has approached this Council with a proposal for a project to develop the football facilities at Roefield playing pitches. This does not require the Council to invest a capital sum in the project, over and above that already committed to annual maintenance. The project would require the Council agreeing to lease some of the land adjacent to the outdoor tennis courts to the Club, so they could apply for planning permission to build an indoor Football Centre incorporating a new artificial 3G pitch area. This would facilitate indoor training during winter months and provide

a year round facility as well for football and rugby teams. The centre would be subject to the normal planning permission process for any building. In addition the current outdoor tennis area would be resurfaced with a 3G artificial surface that would be football specific (3g is the term describing artificial surfaces which have a rubber style infill between the grass filaments, this aligns with the FA National Game Strategy for Participation and Development). Tennis would cease to be offered on this area and only the indoor courts would be available for casual use. There is already a sum in the Council's current capital programme for the lights to be upgraded around the artificial surfaces we have there.

3.2 Funding for this total project, which is expected to be in excess of £1m, would be from the club itself and the Lancaster Foundation.

3.3 At this stage the project is a proposal and details such as charges which the club would pay for a lease, programming and ongoing maintenance liabilities have not been discussed. They would form part of further discussions if Committee approves in principle the idea being proposed in the report for the partnership which CWFC are seeking with the Council for this project. It would if approved and a lease was granted, operate in a similar way to the indoor tennis centre, where the land is leased and the Council receives an annual rent.

#### 4 RISK ASSESSMENT

The approval of this report may have the following implications

- Resources – The Council is not currently able to invest in the upgrade to the tennis court surface refurbishment and the proposal for an indoor facility is beyond the scope of the current capital programme. Therefore the provision of external capital offers a tremendous opportunity to enhance the recreational offer for the community in the area, but one which require further exploration to see what the actual implications could be for the Council.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – An agreement would need to be reached with the club on what they would pay for using the facilities if built. The Football Centre development would be subject to the normal planning application process and may not be approved.
- Reputation – The capital investment being proposed from the club is substantial and with low risk for the Council. However, it will be necessary to ensure openness and that any deal is brought before Councillors before an agreement is entered into between the club and the Council on a development.

#### 5 RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

5.1 Approves the project in principle and authorises the Director of Community Services to enter into formal negotiations with CWFC regarding the scheme.

5.2 If 5.1 is approved, a report on the agreement be brought to Committee for final consideration.

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HEAD OF CULTURAL AND LEISURE SERVICES

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