



COUNCIL EXECUTIVE

WATSON PARK, NORTH STREET, ARMADALE

REPORT BY HEAD OF FINANCE AND PROPERTY SERVICES

A. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to consider alternative proposals for the development of sports facilities at Watson Park, North Street, Armadale.

B. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council Executive:

1. Notes the representations made by ACFC relating to an approved capital investment project planned at Watson Park, North Street, Armadale.
2. Agrees that officers should undertake a community consultation on proposals submitted by ACFC for the provision of a new synthetic 3G sports pitch and modular changing facilities at Watson Park, North Street, Armadale.
3. Agrees that officers should report the results of that community consultation to the Council Executive on 26 March 2019, along with any recommended alterations to the approved capital projects.

C. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

I	Council Values	Focusing on our customers' needs; Being honest, open and accountable; Making best use of our resources; Working in partnership.
II	Policy and Legal (including Strategic Environmental Assessment, Equality Issues, Health or Risk Assessment)	None.
III	Implications for Scheme of Delegations to Officers	None.
IV	Impact on performance and performance Indicators	None.
V	Relevance to Single Outcome Agreement	Outcome 1- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed; Outcome 4 – We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities; Outcome 7 – We live longer,

healthier lives and have reduced health inequalities; Outcome 8 – We make the most efficient and effective use of our resources by minimising our impact on the built and natural environment.

VI	Resources - (Financial, Staffing and Property)	Any amendments to the Watson Park capital investment project will be delivered via existing approved budgets.
VII	Consideration at PDSP	None.
VIII	Other consultations	NETs, Land and Countryside Services, Education (Sports Development). The local elected members have been provided with a copy of this report for their information.

D. TERMS OF REPORT

D.1 Background

The council's General Services Capital Investment Strategy 2018/19 to 2027/28 was approved at a meeting of the full West Lothian Council on 13 February 2018. Included in that Strategy is an approved budget of £947,000 for the provision of a new sports changing pavilion and drainage improvement works to the existing grass pitch at Watson Park, North Street, Armadale.

Armadale Community Football Club (ACFC) currently has a membership in excess of 400 boys, girls and adults, making it one of the largest football clubs in West Lothian. The club is a registered youth group through the council's accreditation scheme and it is also registered with the football governing bodies.

The project to deliver a new changing pavilion and improvements to the existing grass pitch at Watson Park was developed following a period of community consultation and it was progressed on the basis that ACFC would be the principal end user of these new facilities. ACFC were a key participant in that community consultation and they initially agreed that they would lease the new pavilion from the council and be responsible for its associated day-to-day management and running costs.

ACFC has now presented an alternative proposal that it considers will better serve the needs of its members and Armadale's wider sporting community going forward. The club has also confirmed that it is no longer willing to enter into a lease of the proposed new pavilion if that pavilion is merely intended to serve the existing 11-a-side grass pitch. ACFC's amended proposal can be summarised as follows.

D.2 Summary of Proposal

ACFC's use of the existing grass pitch at Watson Park is by necessity restricted in order to avoid damage arising from excessive-use. Adverse weather conditions also frequently render that pitch unplayable, in particular for prolonged periods during the winter months.

In addition to Watson Park, ACFC also make full use of the other existing football facilities within Armadale (including those at Armadale Academy, Woods Park and Avondale Park), however these are considered insufficient to meet the increasing demands arising from a growing local population. As a result, new members are currently being turned away and some existing ACFC teams are traveling to, training and playing their competitive matches at alternative facilities in neighbouring towns.

In light of the foregoing, ACFC has identified the need for a new 11-a-side, 3G synthetic pitch at Watson Park as a key priority.

Rather than spending the bulk of the allocated capital budget on a substantial new changing pavilion and the remainder on basic drainage improvement works to the existing grass pitch, ACFC have requested that the council instead uses these funds to deliver a new 11-a-side synthetic 3G pitch along with more modest, modular changing facilities.

In support of their proposals, ACFC have highlighted other similar facilities across central Scotland, which they state have been delivered for sums less than the existing approved budget for the Watson Park project. ACFC have also presented a business case that demonstrates how the income derived from a new 3G pitch at Watson Park could provide them with a source of revenue income sufficient to enable them to enter into a lease of the new changing pavilion whilst also paying for the maintenance, upkeep and eventual renewal of the proposed new 3G pitch. This revenue-neutral model replicates existing arrangements at a number of other council owned sports facilities across West Lothian, including Albyn Park in Broxburn and Murrayfield Park in Blackburn.

Officers from Property Management and Development, NETs, Land and Countryside Services and Education (Sports Development) have considered these proposals and are broadly supportive of them, subject to delivery within the existing allocated capital budget and evidence of support for the amended project from the wider Armadale community.

D.3 Proposed Community Consultation

In order to confirm support or otherwise for the amended project, it is proposed that council officers should undertake a brief period of public consultation during January and February 2019. A report on the consultation findings, along with any recommended amendments to the council's approved capital project would be submitted to Council Executive for consideration on 26 March 2019.

The consultation will be undertaken by colleagues experienced in the consideration, development and implementation of open space, sport and outdoor recreation activities to ensure that all aspects of the wider park are considered. Whilst the consultation will be comprehensive and will seek to engage as many stakeholders as possible, it will be suitably focused to ensure that conclusions can be presented within the timescales noted.

E. CONCLUSION

It is in the council's best interests that cognisance be taken of alternative proposals submitted by ACFC and that officers should consult with the wider Armadale community on the merits of those proposals. It is proposed that the results of that consultation and any proposed amendments to the approved capital project should be reported to Council Executive on 26 March 2019 for consideration.

F. BACKGROUND REFERENCES

Corporate Asset Management Strategy and General Services Ten Year Capital Investment Strategy 2018/19 to 2027/28 (page 57) – West Lothian Council 13 February 2018.

Appendices/Attachments: None.

Contact Person: Scott Hughes, Asset Manager, Finance and Property Services

Tel. (01506) 281825; Email – scott.hughes@westlothian.gov.uk

Donald Forrest, Head of Finance and Property Services

Date of meeting: 15 January 2019