

14. LINLITHGOW 3RD GENERATION SYNTHETIC PITCH PROJECT

The Council Executive considered a report (copies of which had been circulated) by the Head of Area Services seeking approval for the submission of a £300,000 Cashback for Communities funding application, to the Scottish Government, for a full-size 3rd generation synthetic turf pitch at Linlithgow Leisure Centre.

The report advised that an opportunity had arisen to apply to the Cashback for Communities scheme administered via the Scottish Government, Sportscotland, Scottish Football Association (SFA) and the Scottish Rugby Union (SRU) for £300,000 toward a full-size, fenced and floodlit 3rd Generation synthetic turf pitch which would accommodate football training, matches and full-contact rugby.

Initial discussions with the SFA and SRU led to the recommendation that Linlithgow was the preferred locality to receive a submission to the fund due to the strength of the football and rugby clubs in the town and the number of active participants the clubs supported.

The Head of Area Services recommended that West Lothian Leisure manage the proposed facility given its expertise in leisure management and facility operation. This would require an amendment to the West Lothian Leisure lease to include the site of the proposed project which the Head of Finance and Estates would progress.

The total budget requirement for this project was estimated to be £650,000 as detailed on page 8 of Appendix 1 to the report.

- West Lothian Council £200,000
- Cashback for Communities £300,000
- Scottish Football Partnership £ 50,000
- **Total £550,000**

Further discussion was being progressed with the Scottish FA and Sportscotland over the projected funding deficit and sources to address that. In addition, West Lothian Leisure had advised that an allocation to the project would be considered in a paper to be presented to the West Lothian Leisure Board for consideration on 24 April 2014.

The £200,000 West Lothian capital funding would be sourced from an existing, approved project in the Open Space Capital programme (the Doomsdale Park Project). The project aimed to deliver a full-size natural grass pitch on the Doomsdale Park site. Feasibility studies identified that ground conditions and topography at this site were unsuitable.

It was concluded that a £200,000 investment to achieve a £650,000 synthetic turf facility, which provided significantly more hours of use represented better value for money and a better facility for local people.

There would be no revenue consequence for this project, assuming Council Executive agree that West Lothian Leisure operated the facility under an amendment to the existing West Lothian Leisure Lease.

Decision

To approve the terms of the report.