

Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet member for communities, campuses, area boards and broadband – Jon Thomson

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REPORT ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WOOLMORE FARM DEVELOPMENT

Purpose of Report

1. To seek authority to award the contracts for the Woolmore Farm development.

Relevance to the Council's Business Plan

2. This project will help to deliver the council's vision; to create stronger and more resilient communities. The new sporting facilities will be community operated and will provide a high-quality and inclusive environment. The additional coaching and volunteering opportunities that will be created will enable people to achieve their sports potential and live healthier more active lives.

Background

3. In December 2011 cabinet approved the business case for the first three campuses in Corsham, Melksham and Salisbury. The enhanced (part 2) business case for Melksham included provision for the relocation of Melksham Rugby and Football clubs.
4. The Woolmore Farm development will be funded from the capital budget approved by cabinet for Melksham Campus. Funding for the relocation of the rugby and football teams was approved, along with the Melksham Campus Business case, in Dec 2011.
5. The proposed facilities, which received planning consent in August 2014, includes 12 football pitches, 4 rugby pitches, changing rooms, viewing galleries and social facilities. (Proposed Plans - Appendix B)
6. The teams are currently located at Melksham House; the council bought the Melksham House site in order to develop Melksham Community Campus. The development of Melksham Campus is due to commence in July 2016. In order to develop this site the clubs need to relocate.
7. Preferred contractors have been identified following a competitive tender in spring 2014. The preferred contractor for the construction of the clubhouse is Beard; the preferred contractor for ground modelling is Kestrel.

8. The development has been supported by the Football Association (FA). The FA is providing £600,000 in funding based on the business plan submitted by the clubs and the council.

Main considerations for the council

9. The current club facilities adjacent to Melksham House at Conigre Farm have not had any investment since the business case for a campus was approved in 2011. The existing facilities are no-longer fit for purpose and do not meet the requirements of the club based on its recent promotion. The new development at Woolmore Farm will provide state-of-the-art facilities and will help to secure the future of the clubs.
10. The new facilities will enable the clubs to grow their current membership. Improved ancillary provision will enable both clubs to develop female teams and the provision of coaching and volunteering opportunities for the local community. The site will allow the clubs to offer football and rugby for all ages and abilities at one location improving development and progression. The new purpose-built facilities will help inspire a new generation of players through access to high quality pitches and environment.
11. The enhanced facilities will allow the clubs to extend the range of services they offer to the local community; a vibrant community hub to facilitate interaction and community cohesion. The new facilities will enable the clubs to create their own opportunities in the future
12. The location next to the school will help to develop their involvement in the community; it will allow them the opportunity to offer competitive sport within their curriculum. The council's Community Engagement Manager in Melksham will assist the clubs to ensure that the facility is successful and vibrant.
13. The improved social facilities will allow the teams to become more sustainable; the new facilities will be conducive to attracting sponsorship and income from social events. The improved catering and spectator accommodation will also help to increase revenue streams. These improvements will allow the clubs to provide improved facilities for the community now and into the future.
14. The football team has just finished at the top of their current league. These new facilities have been future proofed and will enable the club to progress through the National League System, something the club cannot do in their current facility. The success of the club is also likely to generate wider opportunities for the local community.

15. The council's Development Plan Document identified a deficit in pitch provision. The Woolmore Farm development will provide the required provision.
16. The specifications and locations of the campus proposals set out in this paper have been developed by the community supported by the area board. The purpose of this paper is therefore the consideration of a plan that has primarily been developed locally.

Safeguarding Considerations

17. There are no safeguarding implications.

Public Health Implications

18. This programme of work supports the ambition of the first joint Health and Well Being Strategy approved by the Health and Wellbeing Board in September 2013 for people to 'get enough exercise; and have access to a range of opportunities for physical activity, including outdoors.
19. The project also supports the priorities set out in the draft Public Health Service Delivery Plan 2015/16. This project will help people make informed choices and live healthier lifestyles by providing the community with fit for purpose facilities. The clubs, empowered by the improved facilities, will be able to develop and inspire people of all ages to participate in physical activity and achieve their full potential. Greater links with the community will improve participation levels. Improved ancillary provision will also allow the clubs to develop female teams. The site will also offer more opportunity for coaching and volunteering opportunities.

Environmental Impact of the Proposal

20. In terms of campus design the council has committed to achieving BREEAM 'very good', ensuring that we follow best practice in sustainable building design, construction and operation. It aims to significantly reduce overall carbon emissions, by up to 40%, by using high quality construction standards.
21. There will be conservation areas on the site that the clubs will be required to maintain as part of the lease arrangements. The project team has worked closely with Natural England to protect and relocate the Great Crested Newt population.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

22. An equality risk assessment has been completed for the campus project which demonstrates that the campus development programme and the approach to developing the proposals fully promotes equality and opportunity. Services and operational estate will be designed to meet immediate local need and improvements will mean improved, fully accessible services and facilities for all sections of the community, something the council cannot currently offer in these three community areas.

Financial Implications

23. The contract for Woolmore Farm is for £6.5 million. The breakdown of cost is shown in Appendix C. Cabinet originally approved 1.5 million for this project but following detailed capture of the user requirements and the procurement process it was recognised that the initial figure would need to be revised and would take into account the contribution from the FA and the need to relocate the rugby club following the sale of the Shurnhold asset and the adjoin playing fields which housed the rugby club. Additional funds are not being requested; the Melksham budget will be reprofiled with the Woolmore Farm costs deducted from the current approved budget.
24. The Woolmore Farm development will enable the relocation of the clubs and the start of construction of the Melksham Community Campus; allowing the council to rationalise its estate within the Melksham Community Area. The business case, approved by cabinet, demonstrates that the campus proposal over the 25 year project life cycle is more cost effective than maintaining the existing facilities in Melksham.
25. The revenue costs associated with running Woolmore Farm will be the responsibility of the clubs. The clubs will have long-term leases for the site and will be charged an annual peppercorn rent.

Legal Implications

26. The proposal set out in this paper is subject to various legalities. Any risk to the council will be minimised as the project develops with the use of specific external legal advice where appropriate and effective monitoring and advice from the council's legal team.

Options Considered

27. The council considered relocating the rugby club to Dunch Lane. However, the area was reclassified by the Environment Agency as functional flood plain; as such it was not considered viable to develop the site. The Flood Risk Assessment indicated that there would be significant risk of flooding. Other sites were considered, however these were discounted on the basis that we could achieve greater economies of scale would be achieved by creating a single building to accommodate both football and rugby at Woolmore Farm.
28. The council has considered the do nothing option. This would halt the development of Melksham Campus. This does not allow for the local decisions to be taken forward. The current leisure centre is not fit for purpose and not sustainable. This option has therefore been discounted.

Reason for Proposal

29. In order to deliver Melksham Community Campus at Melksham House, vacant possession from both clubs will be required at the end of the 2015/16 season. Awarding the contract now will ensure that the Woolmore Farm facilities are available for the 2016/17 rugby and football seasons.

30. Approving the proposal will deliver improved sports facilities for the Melksham Community Area. It will enable the community to do more by making them stronger and more resilient.

Proposal

31. The original business case for Melksham would have provided outdoor pitch provision.
32. The revised proposal will also provide catering, viewing and social facilities that will allow the clubs to secure additional funding to ensure they remain sustainable in the future.
33. The specification of the outdoor change facilities has also been reviewed and increased reflecting the success of Melksham Town Football; the club have progressed through the league system and therefore require additional auxiliary facilities. The FA prescribes specific requirements for clubs to progress through the leagues. The proposed facility will be future proofed so that the club is able to progress further. This investment by Wiltshire Council supports the future growth of the club and ensures enhanced facilities are available for the wider community.
34. The proposed facilities, which received planning consent in August 2014, includes 12 football pitches, 4 rugby pitches, changing rooms and social facilities. Plans Appendix B.

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this Report:

None