

Board/Committee:	POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD
Date of meeting:	30 NOVEMBER 2022
Title:	FLEETLANDS FOOTBALL CLUB – REQUEST FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE
Author:	BOROUGH TREASURER & SECTION 151 OFFICER/HEAD OF PLANNING & REGENERATION & ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Status:	FOR DECISION

Purpose

To consider a request for financial assistance from Fleetlands Football Club towards the installation of a new on site spectator stand incorporating 100 seats.

Recommendation

That the Board approves a contribution of £20,000 towards the stand and seating to be provided at Fleetlands Football Club subject to the completion of proper financial due diligence to the satisfaction of the Council's Section 151 Officer and agreement on the timeframe for implementation of the works.

1.0	Background
1.1	Having been promoted to the Wessex League, there is a requirement for the Club to provide improved facilities. The Club will be demoted if these improvements are not in place (or committed to, at least), by the end of March 2023. In addition to adult use, the Club currently runs ten youth teams (increasing to fourteen next year) and provides facilities for varied community uses, including children's parties.
1.2	A previous Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) grant for £27k was received by the club from the Council in 2019, linked to leveraging in other external funding, including £100k from the Football Foundation to provide a new pavilion.
1.3	Planning permission was granted (ref 20/00061/FULL) in April 2020 to demolish the existing pavilion and erect a single storey replacement pavilion with associated changing rooms together with six new floodlight columns.
1.4	Progress has been made towards implementing the facilities, the subject of these earlier awards and the above permission. Floodlighting has been delivered whilst the plans were being progressed for the permanent changing provision and new pavilion. The installation of the floodlights means that the pavilion remains capable of implementation under the existing planning permission.

1.5	The project ran into difficulties during the pandemic due to unforeseen complications with utility connections and ground conditions which have caused delay and increased costs. To avoid losing the £100k, temporary changing facilities were constructed in the interim with the timetable for providing the new pavilion extended by two years.
1.6	The temporary changing facilities do not have the benefit of separate planning permission, however, the Council's Development Manager does not consider that formal enforcement action is expedient as the structure is not considered to cause harm.
1.7	In addition to the above, the Club are also now required to provide a stand containing 100 seats. This is estimated to cost £35-£40k, depending on options chosen and including the cost of installation and associated pathways. The club estimate that they can raise around £15k towards these works.
1.8	The new stand will require planning permission and there will be a lead in time of 6-8 weeks between order and delivery, therefore, noting the March deadline, the Club have requested assistance from the Council in the form of a £20k contribution in order that it can demonstrate to the League that the required facilities will be in place.
1.9	The Club are also in discussions with other organisations with regard financial assistance for the pavilion and the Ministry of Defence with regard securing the ownership of the land on which they are located.
2.0	Report
2.1	The Neighbourhood element of the Community Infrastructure Levy is intended for use for capital expenditure on the improvement of community facilities and there is £62,990 currently available in the Neighbourhood CIL Fund which is sufficient to provide the level of financial support requested.
2.2	The general responsibilities of Councils and their S.151 Officers is to ensure the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs and the safeguarding of public funds. This requires the Council to have proper processes in place to ensure that the use of public funds are legal (in accordance with the Council's duties and powers) and that decisions are made in the wider public interest and can demonstrate value for money.
2.3	<p>For any financial awards, the Council will have a responsibility to undertake proper due diligence to provide assurance that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is a need for the Council to make an allocation (i.e. otherwise those public funds could have been used for an alternative public good) 2. The expenditure is legal and is in accordance with the Council's powers 3. That the recipient of the award has ongoing viability (i.e. otherwise the organisation will fail and the funding will be wasted and not achieve its

	objective) 4. The grant funding fits with the Council's overall priorities and objectives.
2.4	The due diligence above can generally be achieved through the review of an organisations Business Plan, Financial Statements and Future Cash Flow forecasts.
2.5	Any decision must consider the 4 points above as part of good financial governance and to demonstrate the rationality of the decision itself. Any decision made prior to the consideration of the 4 points above can only be a decision in principle and subject to the completion of proper financial due diligence that is satisfactory to the Council's Section 151 Officer.
2.6	The Council is currently considering the formation of a Grants Sub Board (to be considered by the Policy & Organisation Board on 30 November). Subject to the formation of the Grants Sub Board being approved, the Council will proceed to develop a process for considering future requests for financial support to community organisations.
3.0	Risk Assessment
3.1	The award of financial assistance outside of a competitive/approved grant award process could result in criticism from other community groups.
3.2	The stand will require (separate) planning permission from the Council as Local Planning Authority.
4.0	Conclusion
	The additional financial support requested from the CIL Neighbourhood Fund will enable to Club to meet League requirements and contribute towards maintaining and developing this community facility for the benefit of the residents of the Borough.

Financial Services comments:	<i>Contained within the report?</i>
Legal Services comments:	Contained within the report.
Equality and Diversity:	In principle financial decision only at this stage.
Climate Change implications:	None
Crime and Disorder:	In principle financial decision only at this stage.
Service Improvement Plan implications:	Nil
Corporate Plan:	The proposal will enhance an existing community facility.
Risk Assessment:	The stand requires planning permission from the Council as Local Planning Authority, separate from any award of financial assistance by the Policy & Organisation Board

Background Papers:	Report on the Formation of a Grants Sub Board to be considered by Policy & Organisation Board on 30 November 2022.
Appendices:	Nil
Report Author/Lead Officer:	Chris Ward/Debbie Gore