

## **Report to the Cabinet**

**Report reference:** C-015-2013/14

**Date of meeting:** 22 July 2013



**Epping Forest  
District Council**

**Portfolio:** Leisure and Well-being

**Subject:** Construction of Artificial Grass Sports Pitch (AGP) at Townmead, Waltham Abbey

**Responsible Officer:** James Warwick (01992 564350).

**Democratic Services Officer:** Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

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### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

(1) That the completion of the Third Generation AstroTurf Pitch at Townmead, Waltham Abbey and the final account figure of £512,900 be noted.

### **Executive Summary:**

In June 2011, Cabinet gave its approval as a result of pre-tender estimates, to commit up to £507,000 of Capital funding plus a sum of £6000 for preliminary works, towards the construction of an Artificial Grass Sports Pitch (AGP) at Townmead, Waltham Abbey, as a jointly managed venture with Waltham Abbey Town Council

A formal tender process was conducted for the project and the contract for construction of the Pitch was awarded to AMB Sports Ltd. who were one of the recommended contractors provided by Essex Football Association.

In the initial planning and development stage of the project a range of concerns were raised by the Environment Agency in regard to the proposed location of the pitch being a former landfill site and therefore the potential for leakage of hazardous substances, into the River Lea water course. The assessment of this risk continued for over a year and caused significant delays to the commencement of works, as the Environment Agency required detailed soil testing and exploratory works to be conducted.

Planning approval was finally granted in September 2012 and construction commenced in late October 2012, with an estimated completion date of February 2013. However, due to cold and wet weather conditions throughout the winter and spring the timetable for installation of groundworks was delayed and resulted in final completion in June 2013

### **Reasons for Proposed Decision:**

To report on the final account for the project.

### **Other Options for Action:**

It is the Council's Policy to report on the final account for major capital schemes and therefore there are no other option.

## Report:

1. In June 2011 Cabinet gave its approval to commit Capital funding towards the construction of a full-sized floodlit 3<sup>rd</sup> Generation Artificial pitch at Town Mead, Waltham Abbey, as a jointly managed venture with Waltham Abbey Town Council.
2. Following a formal tender process overseen by the Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder, the Construction Contract was awarded to AMB Sports Ltd for a sum of £492,900 which when added to fees for specialist client consultants of £20,000, i.e. a total cost of £512,900, was within the capital budget of £513,000 earmarked for the project.
3. In the initial planning and development stage of the project, a range of concerns were raised by the Environment Agency with regard to the proposed location of the pitch, being a former landfill site and therefore the potential for leakage of hazardous substances, into the River Lea water course.
4. A number of planning conditions were therefore imposed. These related to the need to carry out extensive ground investigation and exploratory works that would identify all potential pollutant linkages and contaminants. A qualitative Risk Assessment was undertaken in order to classify the risks and a site investigation strategy was put in place. This work continued over the period of a year, with the final results, thankfully, demonstrating no appreciable risk of contamination.
5. Full planning approval was finally granted in September 2012 and AMB Sports Ltd commenced construction in October 2012, with an estimated completion expected within 16 weeks. However, due to the icy and wet weather conditions experienced throughout the winter and spring, progression with construction of the facility was delayed on several occasions and the timetable slipped significantly, resulting in the final completion of works, in June 2013.
6. However, during this period the Council's Sports Development section undertook a range of very successful marketing initiatives in conjunction with the Town Council. As a result, high levels of bookings were taken for regular hire of the facility during evenings and weekends. This programme contains a mixture of community and commercial use including local junior clubs and a 5-a-side football league operator.
7. The pitch is now due to open to the public from July 2013 and a formal launch of the facility will take place in August 2013, organised by the Council.
8. As per the original Cabinet decision, the Council has entered into a joint management and financial agreement with Waltham Abbey Town Council, which includes a net income profit share, after deduction of a sinking fund for replacement of the pitch surface. It is anticipated that the Council's share of this profit will amount to approximately £19,000 per annum. This is in line with the policy of capital investment producing a revenue return.
9. The Council will additionally be providing a youth activity programme at the facility on a number of evenings per week and a range of courses and coaching sessions for children and young people, during school holiday periods.
10. The usage and management of the facility will be monitored on a quarterly basis by a steering group consisting of officers from Waltham Abbey Town Council and Epping Forest District Council. A Service Level Agreement has been agreed between the two parties which set out specific roles and responsibilities, in relation to the facility.

### **Resource Implications:**

The project has been completed within the budget approved by Cabinet in June 2011, which was for £513,000 including contingency. The final cost including consultants' fees was £512,900. As per the original Cabinet decision, the Council has entered into a joint management agreement with Waltham Abbey Town Council, which is based on a net profit share which is estimated to provide an income of around £19,000 per annum to the District Council.

### **Legal and Governance Implications:**

A formal procurement, tender and evaluation and award process was conducted for the construction contract for the Pitch in line with the Council's standing orders and procurement procedures.

### **Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:**

The development of an Artificial Grass Sports Pitch (AGP) at Townmead, Waltham Abbey will result in a wide range of benefits to the immediate local community. It is anticipated that the facility will increase sports participation by young people in particular, therefore providing diversionary activity and will additionally help to improve people's health and well-being through community involvement and volunteering associated with activity delivery.

### **Consultation Undertaken:**

A range of consultation was undertaken with Waltham Abbey Town Council, Essex FA, The Environment Agency, EFDC Planning and Sport England in respect of the development and this continued throughout the construction phase.

### **Background Papers:**

An overview of the pitch usage is attached.

Construction of Artificial Grass Sports Pitch (AGP) at Townmead, Waltham Abbey Cabinet Report June 2011.

Ongar Playing Fields Development/ Waltham Abbey Town Mead Cabinet Report February 2010.

### **Impact Assessments:**

#### Risk Management

The key risk of entering into a construction contract for an Artificial Grass Sports Pitch (AGP) at Townmead, Waltham Abbey was that the construction could exceed the stated contract price, due to unforeseen building requirements. However this risk has been minimised by the major surveys (including environmental survey and flood risk assessments) being undertaken prior to award of the construction contract.

#### Equality and Diversity:

*Did the initial assessment of the proposals contained in this report for relevance to the Council's general equality duties, reveal any potentially adverse equality implications?*

No

*Where equality implications were identified through the initial assessment process, has a formal Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken?* No

*What equality implications were identified through the Equality Impact Assessment process?*

It was determined that this development would have a very positive Equality Impact, in that the provision of a new community sports facility at Townmead, Waltham Abbey would enable the Council to reduce identified health inequalities within Waltham Abbey (JSNA 2011/12). This would be achieved through providing greater opportunities for people to take part in sport and physical activity through participation and volunteering. In addition, young people at risk of social exclusion or anti-social behaviour would specifically be supported in terms of their integration within the community and wider society and people with disabilities would have much improved access to a sports facility through design adjustments to meet with DDA.

*How have the equality implications identified through the Equality Impact Assessment been addressed in this report in order to avoid discrimination against any particular group?*

N/A.