

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET PLANNING AND PARKING PANEL – 10 SEPTEMBER 2020
REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (HOUSING AND COMMUNITIES)

REVIEW OF THE HATFIELD COMMUNITY SPORT FUND

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 In February 2016 Development Management Committee agreed to a variation to the Section 106 agreement attached to planning permission S6/2003/0150/FP dated 13 January 2006.
- 1.2 The previous agreement was for the University of Hertfordshire to replace sports pitches and facilities at Angerland Common, on the exercise of the planning permission. After lengthy negotiations between all key stakeholders, this obligation was replaced with a new obligation requiring the University to contribute the sum of £1.4 million, on completion of the deed of variation, into a designated bank account administered by Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council on behalf of a Hatfield Community Sports Fund (the Fund).
- 1.3 On 5 April 2016 Cabinet agreed how the Fund should be overseen and administered - consequently the Hatfield Community Sports Fund Board (HCSFB) was established through the Local Strategic Partnership (Welwyn Hatfield Alliance).
- 1.4 Further to consultation with both statutory and non-statutory partners, it was agreed that a proportion of the Fund be ring-fenced specifically for football and for rugby, with the remaining funds being made available, via a grants system administered by the HCSFB, to the wider sporting community of Hatfield.
- 1.5 Since April 2016 there has not been any allocation from the Fund for rugby or football; a limited amount of funds has been allocated from the general pot to Hatfield bowls, Hatfield boxing, football, wheelchair rugby, disability sport and to Hatfield Town Council.
- 1.6 The Fund has now been operational for three years and to date only £116,487 has been spent from the £1.4million. All of the expenditure has been from the wider community sport pot, no expenditure has been made from the ring-fenced football or rugby funds.
- 1.7 At their meeting on the 4 September 2019, the Fund's Board requested that consideration be given to a review of criteria associated to the Fund. Cabinet agreed to freeze the Fund in September 2019 whilst that review took place.
- 1.8 The review has now been concluded and associated recommendations and alterations are being proposed.

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To recommend that Cabinet agrees to the new criteria as proposed by the Hatfield Community Sport Fund Board (set out in Paragraphs 3.9 and 3.10 of this report and in Appendix three).
- 2.2 To recommend that Cabinet agrees the revised submissions process for applications to the Hatfield Community Sport Fund Board as set out in paragraph 3.9.4 of this report and allows applications to be submitted from January 2021.

3 Explanation

- 3.1 Background information around the Angerland Common site and the original Section 106 agreement is set out in Appendix Two.
- 3.2 Currently the allocation of the funds is split into a major grants fund, ring fenced for football (£800,000), and rugby (£200,000) and a general grants fund for community sport (originally £400,000). Neither the football nor the rugby funds have had any applications for funds prior to the review.
- 3.3 £116,487 has been spent to date from the general grants fund (community sport), which has been given to the following organisations:-

Hatfield Bowls, indoor facility improvements - £42,542

Hatfield Town Council, Hatfield Comet 70th Sports Week - £25,841

Hatfield Wheelchair Rugby Club, purchase of equipment and coaching - £22,000

Hatfield SPACE for SPORT, delivery of specialised disability sessions - £13,537

Hatfield Boxing, the BIG Hit project - £10, 640

Hatfield Comets Football, purchase of a goal - £1,500

- 3.4 The current Hatfield Community Sport Fund Board has six member organisations/groups; the organisations/groups represented on the Board are:

Herts Sports Partnership

Oaklands College (elected via the Alliance Board)

WelHat Sports

Hatfield Town Council (Member representative)

Herts County Council (Member representative)

Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (Member representative)

- 3.5 The University of Hertfordshire was invited to be involved in the review process, as the organisation with the original Section 106 obligation.
- 3.6 The Rugby Football Union and the Herts FA were both invited to provide comment during the initial stages of the review.
- 3.7 The review took a three stage process; firstly there was a survey sent to all Board members. This was then followed by the opportunity for a 121 meeting with officers. The final stage was a response to the proposed changes.

- 3.8 All six Board members plus the university representative provided feedback and engaged with the process. This included providing feedback on the final proposed changes to the criteria and application process.
- 3.9 Following the review, the Board members feedback propose the following changes to the general grant application process:-
- 3.9.1 All applicants for funding must demonstrate how their application provides sustainability to sport/ a sport in Hatfield.
- 3.9.2 Increase the minimum amount a funding request can be for from £5,000 to £10,000. *(Recommendation is made on the basis that some board members felt there are other alternative options available to local sports clubs and organisations to enable them to get funds below £10,000).*
- 3.9.3 Reduce the maximum applied for the small grant to £49,999 (from £150,000). *(Recommendation is made on the basis that some board members felt that this maximum would provide significant funding to local clubs and organisations whilst not spending a nearly half of the available funds on a single sport, club or organisation).*
- 3.9.4 Change the application process to three submission periods a year; each period will be followed by a Board meeting. Rather than the current process where applications are now being reviewed as and when they are submitted/finalised. The proposed new timings for applications will be as follows:-
- Applications open in September and close in November with a Board meeting in December.
 - Applications open in January and close March with a Board meeting in April.
 - Application open in May and close in July with a Board meeting in August.
- 3.9.5 Make it mandatory for applicants for funding to provide representation at a board meeting, to enable board members to ask questions and for the applicants to provide additional information as required to the board. This should increase the speed at which decisions are made.
- 3.9.6 Remove pilot projects and events from activities that will be funded. *(Recommendation is made on the basis that some board members felt that funding such projects and activities doesn't necessarily provide sustainable and long term investment into sport. In addition it was felt that there are other avenues of funding currently available that could assist with such projects and activities).*
- 3.9.7 Amend the criteria to make it more focused on capital projects and infrastructure into the sport.
- 3.9.8 All applications must clearly demonstrate why this project cannot be funded elsewhere.
- 3.9.9 All the applications must be discussed with one of the officers prior to submission.

3.10 There were also three proposed changes made to the major grants pot:-

- 3.10.1 Change the title and make it clearer this application process relates solely to ring-fenced funds associated to football and rugby, as such the fund will now be known as the Sport Specific Major Capital Grant.
 - 3.10.2 Provide ability for any applicant to come to the Board prior to submission to discuss the application for advice/guidance on what would be supported.
 - 3.10.3 Make it clear that any submission will require representation from the National Governing Body to support the project.
- 3.11 With regards to the split of the funds; the majority of the Board supported the original split of funds (£800,000 – football / £200,000 – rugby / £400,000 – community), with one Board member not in support of this approach especially with regards to the wider community pot of funding.
- 3.12 The majority of the Board were in support of the fund being re-opened to applications as soon as possible. There was one objection to this, the Board member felt that the funds should stay frozen until 'until HTC [Hatfield Town Council] has a scheme in place to use it.
- 3.13 Three Board members highlighted the need for greater dialogue and communication between the Hatfield Community Sport Fund and the Welwyn Hatfield Community Fund (managed by GLL). This would enable both funds to maximise their opportunity to provide support to community sports groups where most needed and reduce the possibility of double funding. Regular meetings will take place between Head of Policy and Culture as representative of the Welwyn Hatfield Community Fund and Community Partnership Manager to ensure that communications are maintained between the two funds.
- 3.14 It was also noted by two Board members that in the event that the borough council should decide to remove or stop the Welwyn Hatfield Small Grants scheme, then the Board should reconsider reducing minimum application back down to £5,000.

Implications

4 Legal Implication(s)

- 4.1 The variation to the Section 106 agreement (attached to planning permission S6/2003/0150/FP dated 13 January 2006), was authorised by Development Management Committee and complied with the legal tests for planning obligations set out under Regulation 122 of the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010. Should there be any proposed changes to either the funding area, funding split or the management of the fund these would have to be discussed via Development Management Committee and potentially discussed with the original applicant.
- 4.2 There are no legal implications arising from the proposed changes to the criteria or application process.

5 Financial Implication(s)

- 5.1 Use of this Section 106 money is expressly set out within the terms of the deed of variation agreed by the Development Management Committee on 4th February 2016 and it cannot be used for any other purpose.
- 5.2 The review will be carried out using internal resources and from existing budgets.

6 Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 Reputational Risk
- 6.2 There were concerns raised by board members with regards to how the fund should be used as such the recommendations do not have unilateral support. As such agreeing to the criteria and application changes does hold some reputational risk. Likelihood Medium Impact Low

7 Security and Terrorism Implication(s)

- 7.1 There are no security and terrorism implications associated to this report.

8 Procurement Implication(s)

- 8.1 There are no procurement implications associated to this report.

9 Climate Change Implication(s)

- 9.1 There are no climate change implications associated to this report.

10 Human Resources Implication(s)

- 10.1 There are no Human Resources implications arising from this report.

11 Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)

- 11.1 Should the fund re-open this will provide the opportunity for local Hatfield sport groups and clubs to apply for funding enabling them to improve and enhance sport and physical activity in and around Hatfield, which will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of local residents.

12 Communication and Engagement Implication(s)

- 12.1 Once formally agreed there will be extensive marketing and publicity that the fund is now back open and that there is a new application criteria and process to follow.

13 Link to Corporate Priorities

- 13.1 The subject of this report is linked to the council's Corporate Priority Our Community and specifically to the achievement of 'supporting local sport and leisure'

14 Equality and Diversity

An Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.

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Background papers to be listed (if applicable)

Appendices

Appendix One – Geographical Map of where funding can be spent

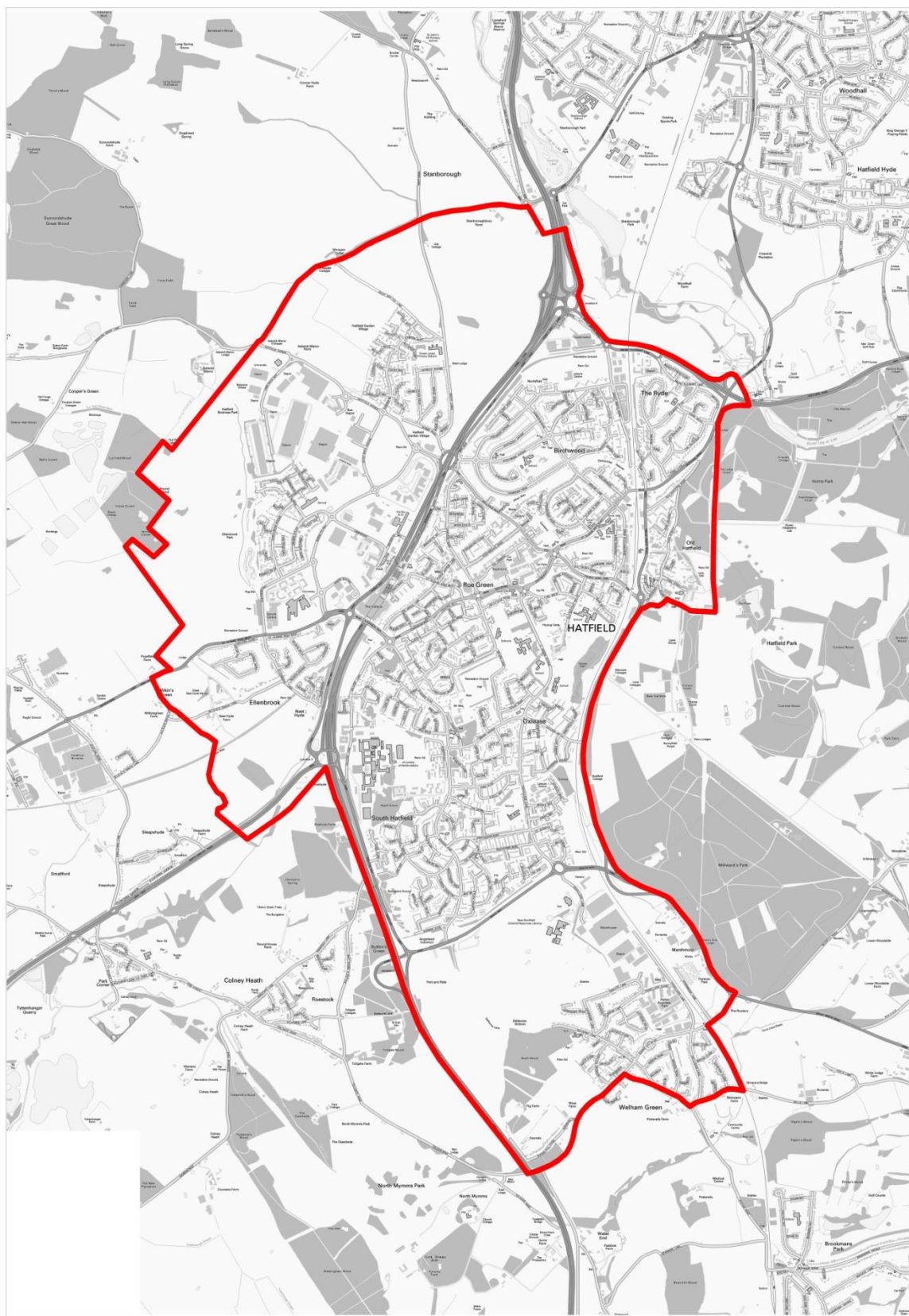
Appendix Two – Background on Angerland Common

Appendix Three – Tabled amendments to both criteria documents

Appendix One

Area for Funding

Applications will be accepted by those organisations within the red line.



Appendix Two

Background

Site Description

Angerland Common is an area of land of approximately 14ha, located on the south side of the A1001 South Way. The Council's Lawn Cemetery lies to the east, while the site borders the A1 (M) to the west. The site is largely flat and bounded by trees and hedgerow, with vehicular access onto South Way. The northern part of the site is enclosed by fencing, is hard-surfaced, and is laid out as the 'park and ride' for the University of Hertfordshire, whilst the southern part of the site is open grassland.

Background

From the 1970s until 2003 the whole of the Angerland site was used for the provision of sports pitches, together with a small changing facility and car park. The facilities were used by Hatfield Polytechnic and subsequently the University as well as by local clubs booking through this Council.

In 2003 the University submitted a planning application (S6/2003/0150/FP) for the construction of a park and ride on the northern part of the site as part of plans to alleviate parking congestion on the University College Lane Campus and in surrounding residential areas of southern Hatfield. This was to be accompanied, subject to public consultation, by the introduction of controlled parking zones in southern Hatfield, the initial cost of which would be met by the University.

In preparation for the construction of the park and ride, the existing sports pitches at Angerland were closed in 2003. The University's sports users transferred largely to new facilities at the de Havilland Campus, which opened that same year, whilst local sports clubs had to find alternative arrangements elsewhere. The Angerland site remained vacant between 2003 and the grant of the park and ride planning permission in 2006.

The planning permission granted in January 2006 was subject to a Section 106 agreement requiring a) the construction and operation of the park and ride in accordance with agreed details, b) the payment of financial contributions towards the design, consultation and implementation stages of parking control schemes in southern Hatfield, and c) the replacement of the sports pitches and changing facilities lost due to the development, on the remaining southern part of the site.

During 2005 a planning application (S6/2005/1137/FP) had been submitted by Sport Hatfield to provide the replacement sports facilities and in addition, to provide an enhanced standard of playing pitch, floodlighting, grandstand and clubhouse facilities for the use of Hatfield Town Football Club. The submission of this application fulfilled the relevant requirement of the Section 106 Agreement but unfortunately, although permission was granted, the scheme was never implemented as the necessary funding could not be found. The permission subsequently lapsed.

Between the lapse of the above permission in 2011 and 2014, discussions took place between the Council, the University and local sports clubs (principally Hatfield Town FC and Hatfield QE II RFC, under the combined title of the Hatfield Sports Association) with a view to putting together a new set of proposals for the replacement facilities at Angerland which would enable the University to fulfil its obligations under the Section 106 whilst providing sustainable sports facilities at that location.

Although these discussions culminated in a planning application (S6/2013/1261/MA) being submitted and approved, again it proved impossible to raise the necessary funding to top-up the University's financial contribution and complete the development to a standard which would make the facilities sustainable in the longer term. Concerns were also expressed by some of the potential funding bodies, that Angerland was not the most suitable location for sustainable sports facilities to serve the wider community of Hatfield.

In the light of the above, discussion between the parties turned to a possible alternative means of mitigating the effect which the construction of the park and ride has had on sports facilities serving Hatfield. This entails the University making an appropriate financial contribution towards the provision and enhancement of sports facilities in Hatfield, without this contribution being tied to provision at the Angerland site. The total contribution proposed by the University, and now agreed by the Council, is £1.4 million.

To adopt such an alternative solution in place of the reinstatement of pitches at Angerland requires a formal variation to the legally-binding Section 106 agreement from 2006. A report to Development Management Committee was written to seek the decision of the Council as local planning authority as to whether it supported the alternative solution. The Committee agreed this solution on 4th February 2016.

Appendix Three

Item	Current Scheme	Proposed Change
Small Grant Community Fund		All applicants for funding must demonstrate how their application provides sustainability to sport/ a sport in Hatfield.
Small Grant Community Fund	Minimum fund application is £5,000	Minimum fund application £10,000
Small Grant Community Fund	Maximum that can be applied for £150,000	Reduce the maximum applied for the small grant to £49,999
Small Grant Community Fund	Applications submitted whenever and the board meets once application has been submitted and reviewed by officers	Application process set over three submission periods a year; each period will be followed by a Board meeting.
Small Grant Community Fund	Currently no requirement nor invitation for applicants to be present at board meetings	Mandatory for applicants to provide representation at a board meeting to discuss application
Small Grant Community Fund	Pilot projects and events are currently accepted as part of what could be funded	Remove pilot projects and events from activities that will be funded.
Small Grant Community Fund	Currently there are several different priorities for the fund	Capital projects and infrastructure into the sport is the priority for applicants
Small Grant Community Fund	There is currently no need to provide this information or state why it cannot be funded elsewhere	All applications must clearly demonstrate why this project cannot be funded elsewhere
Small Grant Community Fund	Currently applications can be submitted without officers being aware they are being worked on	All the applications must be discussed with one of the officers prior to submission
Major project fund	Currently named the major project fund	Change the name of the fund to be clear it is just for Rugby and Football, to the Sport Specific Major Capital Grant
Major project fund	Currently no provision for potential applicants to discuss or liaise with the Board prior to submission	Provide ability for any applicant to come to the Board prior to submission to discuss the application for advice/guidance on what would be supported
Major project fund	Currently only advisory that National Governing Body of sport supports the applications	Make it clear that any submission will require representation from the National Governing Body to support the project