

Committee(s):	Date(s):
Epping Forest & Commons	4 July 2016
Subject: Expression of Interest in Parklife Football Hubs Programme - London	Public
Report of: Superintendent of Epping Forest SEF 25/16	For Decision
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Summary

The Parklife Football Hubs programme is a new grassroots football funding scheme supported by The Football Association (FA), Premier League, Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), Sport England, the Mayor of London (MOL) and the Football Foundation. Building on a pilot scheme in Sheffield the scheme aims to create a number of football 'hubs' across London before the programme is rolled out nationwide.

The Football hubs aim to be financially sustainable sites catering for football that will encourage more people to play more regularly or become more active.

In return for capital investment of up to 60% and advice on a tested business model the Parklife programme is seeking consortia partners to deliver the programme on the ground.

Recommendation(s)

Members are asked to:

- Approve the Expression of Interest submission, on behalf of the City of London and London Borough of Redbridge consortium, to the Football Foundation's Parklife Football Hubs Programme - London.

Background

1. The Football Association (FA) report 'The FA Chairman's England Commission Report (2014) found in order to sustain grassroots football in the long term there would need to be;
 - a) Reduced reliance on declining local authority subsidies and
 - b) Building of significantly more AGPs (artificial grass pitches)
 - c) Improvements in existing grass pitch and changing room provision

2. As a result the, FA, Premier League, Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and Sport England with additional funding from the Mayor of London (MOL) have created a new £230 Million investment model focused on strategic area-wide plans for football. Football 'Hubs' consisting of combinations of artificial grass; and fully drained grass pitches; extensive changing room, coaching and social facilities. Delivery by cross-borough partnerships is positively encouraged and there is the expectation that bids will include representation from local football clubs, professional clubs, education partners and others.
3. Consortia bids must commit to raising partnership funding of 40% of capital costs. Bids must have high level political/ board support and be willing to establish a dedicated trust structure to manage the facility on a long-term lease.
4. Each hub site must contain a minimum of two, ideally three or more, artificial grass pitches with linked changing accommodation. The first three hubs will be launched later this year at part of a £9.6 Million pilot investment by the Football Association in Sheffield, based on similar successful artificial grass schemes in England, France and Holland.

Proposal

5. The award of Football Foundation funding is by a three stage process. At this stage the Parklife Football Hub Programme is requesting that Expressions of Interest (EOI) are received from potential bidders by 15th July 2016. EOIs that best meet the programme's principles will be invited to progress to stage 2 of the process in September.
6. Completing the Expression of Interest is not a commitment to the programme and can be withdrawn.

Expression of Interest

7. The EOI requires:
 - Identified capital partnership funding
 - HR and project management arrangements
 - Annual operating budget
 - Current level of subsidy to football
 - Playing Pitch Strategy

Implications

8. **Financial:** Capital costs for this type of project are in the region of £3-4 million. Bidders are expected to meet 40% of this capital funding, representing £1.2 - £1.6million contribution from the consortium. LBR may be able to access capital funding from planning levies but this is yet to be tested.

9. The Parklife programme requires the 40% as an aggregate from across the various bids and the FF have suggested that this requirement may have room for negotiation as well as the ability to capitalise some of our revenue contributions. Nevertheless once figures are more established a further report will be made to your committee outlining more detail on revenue and capital costs before any commitments to the programme are made.
10. The City of London facilities at Wanstead Flats deliver over 3,000 games of football across 45 pitches each season. Some 44% of playing facilities for London Borough of Redbridge (LBR) are provided through Wanstead Flats according to their unpublished Playing Pitch Strategy (PPS). Consequently, LBR are also confident they will be able to resource a substantial part of the partnership capital funding through their capital receipts.
11. By working as a consortia with LBR and other local partners the City will be better able to resource the revenue costs of project management. Funding models developed by the FA suggest that the durability associated with artificial grass substantially increase opportunities for use providing an improved income stream that may eliminate the need for a continuing subsidy (£102,716 in 2015/16) that has been a source of concern for Members.
12. Should the EOI be successful in progressing to stage two it is envisaged that the Consortium will need to recruit a project manager which could be hosted by The City of London. The City will need to commit to £24,440 in revenue funding of a 0.5 FTE post over 2 years to project manage the application.
13. The location of the hub could be on Wanstead Flats, subject to legal and planning approval processes. Completion of the EOI does not however commit to this site and the hub could be delivered elsewhere in the area such as on LBR land.
14. **Legal** – Football play and facilities at Wanstead Flats are provided by virtue of Section 33(1)(xiii) of the Epping Forest Act 1878, which provides the Conservators with the power to “set apart in each or any of the Forest parishes, such parts as they think fit, for the use of the inhabitants to play at cricket and other sports, and to lay out, form and maintain, cricket grounds and grounds for other sports, and, for the better use and enjoyment of the parts so set apart, to enter into agreements with, and confer special privileges on, particular clubs or schools”.
15. Section 76(1) (b) of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907, as applied to Epping Forest, also allows the Conservators to set apart areas for the purpose of cricket, football, or any other game or recreation. Under section 56(5) of the Public Health Act 1925 the Conservators may charge reasonable sums for the use thereof.
16. The provision of sports pitches helps the Open Spaces Department achieve one of its Departmental objectives; to ‘improve the health and well-being of the community through access to green space and recreation’. It also delivers the Corporation’s Key Policy Priority KPP5 of ‘increasing the outreach impact of the

City's cultural, heritage and leisure contribution to the life of London and the nation.

Conclusion

17. Members are encouraged to support an initial EOI by the City of London and LBR for a Parklife Football hub at Wanstead Flats in order to support FA objectives to both improve grassroots football and reduce the necessity of providing a subsidy to match Local authority support for the maintenance of grass pitches and changing room facilities.

Background Papers

Dykes, G. 'Chairman's Report into English Football' (2014) Football Association

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