

Report to, Andrew Edwards, Assistant Director (Property and Assets)

February 2024

Award of contract for construction of an All Weather Pitch at The Forest School, Horsham

Report by Philippa Hind, Head of Development

Electoral division: Horsham East

Summary

The County Council has a statutory duty to provide sufficient primary and secondary school places for all children who need a place. As part of the secondary school curriculum, Physical Education is a core subject and suitable provision is required to ensure a wide range of sport can be offered.

The Forest School in Horsham accommodates over 1000 pupils aged 11-16 and has a mix of indoor PE provision (sports hall, activity hall) and external provision (grass pitches and multi-use games area). The neighbouring Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee School has recently been expanded with the additional accommodation partly located on the playing field of The Forest School. To mitigate the loss of playing field space an all-weather pitch is proposed to be constructed at The Forest School.

In August 2021 the then Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills approved the allocation of £1.080m of received S106 funds and the commencement of a procurement process to provide an all-weather pitch at the school (decision [LS05\(21.22\)](#) refers). The Cabinet Member also delegated authority to the Director of Property and Assets to award the contract. Since that time delays to the project and subsequent inflationary pressures have required an uplift to the project budget, in line with approved capital governance procedures; this is set out in the report.

A procurement process has been undertaken and the Assistant Director (Property and Assets) is asked to approve the award of contract for the construction of an all-weather pitch at The Forest School, Horsham.

Recommendation

The Assistant Director (Property and Assets) is asked to approve the award of the construction contract to deliver an all- weather pitch at The Forest School, Horsham to Velocity Sports Limited for the construction sum of £972,535.95.

Proposal

1 Background and context

- 1.1 As part of the secondary school curriculum, Physical Education is a core subject and suitable provision is required to ensure a wide range of sport can be offered.
- 1.2 The Forest School in Horsham accommodates over 1000 pupils aged 11 to 16 and has a mix of indoor PE provision (sports hall, activity hall) and external provision (grass pitches and multi-use games area). The Forest School is one of very few Secondary Schools in West Sussex without an all-weather pitch. This can compromise the delivery of the PE curriculum in the winter months when the grass pitches may be flooded and also during exam periods when the Sports Hall is used for examinations.
- 1.3 In July 2020 the then Cabinet Member for Education and Skills [approved the capital budget](#) required to facilitate an expansion of the neighbouring Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee (QE2) School in Horsham. This additional accommodation has been sited on some of the existing playing fields at The Forest School ([decision ES02\(20/21\)](#) refers). To mitigate the loss of playing field, it was proposed that an all-weather pitch (AWP) was provided to enhance the sporting facilities available to The Forest School.
- 1.4 In August 2021 the allocation of £1.080m of received S106 funding was approved for enabling the delivery of the AWP via key decision LS05(21/22). Work was then able to progress on obtaining cost estimates for the project.
- 1.5 The project has subsequently been delayed due to the need to address planning requirements and undertake a water neutrality assessment. On conclusion of the assessment, it indicated that the anticipated increase in water consumption due to the creation of the proposed pitch and the increased use of changing facilities by additional pitch users, could be offset by upgrading the existing water fittings with Industry Leading Fittings which would create the required water savings.
- 1.6 Following planning permission being granted, the project was re-started, the cost estimate refreshed to allow for inflationary increases, and the project tendered.
- 1.7 In March 2022 a change request for £26,000 was approved, in accordance with capital governance processes which accounted for increased costs through the design stage and Health & Safety changes. Subsequently in September 2023 a further change request of £309,000 was approved to uplift the current approved budget of £1.216m to £1.525m to cover increased estimated costs resulting from the delay in planning consent.

2 Proposal details

- 2.1 A compliant and competitive procurement exercise has been undertaken by the County Council's MDC.
- 2.2 Following conclusion of the evaluation and moderation process Velocity Sports Limited was assessed as being the most economically advantageous supplier for construction of The Forest school AWP and therefore recommended for the award of contract for the value of £972,535.95.

- 2.3 Construction of the AWP is anticipated to commence on site during Spring 2024 and complete in late Summer 2024
- 2.4 Provision of the all-weather pitch will enable pupils to undertake outside sport activities all year round whilst also providing the school the ability to generate additional income through lettings to community organisations.

3 Other options considered (and reasons for not proposing)

- 3.1 One option is to not undertake the proposed works, this would result in the school not being able to expand to accommodate increased pupil numbers in the future, the school does not have adequate space for physical education activities, especially considering the potential demands of GCSE-level PE classes.

4 Consultation, engagement and advice

- 4.1 The Headteacher, Business manager and Governors have all been fully involved in the design and they will continue to be involved as the project progresses through the construction stage and into hand over stage.
- 4.2 The Education Programme Board (part of the County Council's internal governance process for capital projects) guides completion of the works programme, representing all the necessary disciplines and stakeholders, and ensuring adequate resourcing and supervision is present throughout delivery of this project.
- 4.3 Planning consent has been granted for the provision of the all-weather pitch at The Forest School.
- 4.4 The outcome of this tender process was scrutinised at Commercial Panel (the County Council's internal governance process for reviewing procurement proposals) at the meeting on 16th January 2024. The purpose of this was to provide assurance that the proposal delivers the planned benefits and that any risks are fully managed.
- 4.5 The Capital and Assets Board (internal governance) has considered and supports the proposal, and no material changes have since been made to the proposal or the recommendations.

5 Finance

5.1 Revenue consequences

There are no revenue consequences to this decision to award the contract for the delivery of the all-weather pitch for The Forest school, Horsham.

5.2 Capital consequences

The total approved budget for the delivery of the AWP for The Forest school is £1.525m and includes construction costs, professional fees and contingency. The £0.973m for the award of the construction contract is within the construction element of the approved £1.525m budget.

5.3 The effect of the proposal:

(a) **How the cost represents good value**

This project has been tendered competitively; the tender recommended for approval is therefore the one that represent the best value for money. Among the bids returned, the highest quality scoring bid and best priced bid was successful.

(b) **Future savings/efficiencies being delivered**

Not applicable.

(c) **Human Resources, IT and Assets Impact**

Not applicable.

6 **Risk implications and mitigations**

Risk	Mitigating Action (in place or planned)
Cost overruns in a volatile construction market	<p>Proactive cost management will be undertaken throughout the construction phase of the delivery programme, in line with WSCC governance processes.</p> <p>The total construction value associated with the recommended contract award is within the approved project budget and includes construction contingency sums appropriate for the size and type of project.</p> <p>The Client Contingency element contained within the approved budget is appropriate for this stage of the project and can be used to mitigate any fluctuations due to market volatility and/or inflation.</p>

7 **Policy alignment and compliance**

7.1 Our Council Plan –

This proposal aligns with Our Council Plan, helping create a sustainable and prosperous place, helping people and communities to fulfil their potential and making the best use of resources. All-weather pitches are designed to be durable, requiring less maintenance and replacement compared to natural grass fields. This reduces the need for mowing, promoting sustainability and cost efficiency in the long run. It encourages physical fitness and sports participation, which contributes to the well-being and overall prosperity of individuals and the community.

7.2 Legal implications –

The value of the proposed contracts is below the relevant UK Thresholds as referred to in the Public Contract Regulation 2015 (PCR) of £5,372,609 for Works Contracts. The resulting construction contract has been procured compliantly by the County Council's MDC and will be awarded in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders on Procurement and Contracts and Legal Services has been instructed in the usual manner.

The works to be carried out in accordance with the planning conditions within the planning permission. Any pre-commencement conditions within the planning consent to be discharged before commencement of works. If building regulations approval is required for the works then the building regulations approval full plans approval to be obtained before works commence, and the works to be carried out in accordance with building regulations approval. The installation of the new all weather pitch requires completion of a drainage agreement with Southern Water for making the connection to the drainage to the existing surface water system. An initial part 1 application has been made, the application is to be finalised by the appointed contractor Velocity sports Ltd. at the outset.

The floodlighting installation is to be connected to existing site supplies which require no further approvals.

7.3 Equality duty and human rights assessment –

A general assessment of the approach to the delivery of the facility, its specification and how it will be used has been undertaken to ensure compliance with the Council's public sector equality duty.

7.4 Climate change –

This project is located within the Water Neutrality Zone and as such the anticipated additional water usage created by the project will be offset by implementing water saving measures. This will be achieved by upgrading the existing taps and fitting them with faucet aerators within the main school building which can reduce water use by 20% or more without reducing water pressure. In addition, measures have been included within the project to mitigate biodiversity loss consequent to the installation of artificial turf. An environmental impact assessment has been carried out before the installation of artificial turf to identify potential disruptions of habitats, changes in water management, and effects on wildlife populations. Tree planting will be carried out to the eastern and southern boundary to supplement the existing mature trees and create a natural succession. A soil bund is also proposed to improve the rooting environment for an area where the existing trees have their roots constrained by hard surface and the highway.

Crime and disorder –

Not applicable

7.5 Public health –

Not applicable

7.6 Social value

The contractor appointment reflects the County Council's duty under the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 following the successful, compliant tender exercise. The contractor's proposals to deliver social value as part of this project has been written into the contract.

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Appendices - None
Background papers - None