

## The Highland Council

Resources Committee – 24 February 2016

Agenda Item	23
Report No	RES/20/16

### Capital Discretionary Fund - Highland Football Academy

#### Report by Director of Care and Learning

##### Summary

This report sets out a request to the Capital Discretionary Fund, for a sum of £75,000 to replace the indoor synthetic playing surface at the Highland Football Academy, Dingwall.

## 1. Background

1.1 The Highland Football Academy Trust (HFAT) was established in 2002. HFAT has three members:

- The Highland Council (THC)
- Ross County Football Club (RCFC)
- Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club (ICTFC)

1.2 The stated purpose of HFAT is:

- i. Provision of infrastructure facilities both indoor and outdoor for carrying out sporting activity;
- ii. Provision of qualified coaches for the teaching of games and providing support at all levels within the sport;
- iii. Provision of work related training of professional footballers and other sports as appropriate, sporting coaches and referees;
- iv. Provision of further education through the Scottish Qualifications Authority, via the Scottish Vocational system.

1.3 HFAT has entered into a Management Agreement with High Life Highland (HLH) to deliver many of the activities within its stated purpose. However HFAT retains responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the Academy building at the Dingwall campus, including the indoor synthetic playing surface. The surface is now 14 years old and beginning to fail. The cost of replacement is £75,000 plus VAT.

## 2. Proposal

2.1 As a member of HFAT, the Council is asked to provide the funds required to replace the synthetic surface to ensure the continued provision of the facility for the next 15 years.

- 2.2 While the Council is being asked to meet the full cost of the capital pitch replacement, the other two members of HFAT currently provide the ongoing revenue funds required for the maintenance of the outdoor grass pitches at both the Dingwall and Charleston campuses.
- 2.3 In addition, RCFC provided the revenue required to refurbish the gym, physiotherapy suite and reception areas of the Dingwall campus at the beginning of 2015.
- 2.4 Both RCFC and ICTFC continue to pay fees for the hire of all training and playing facilities to ensure that the operation of HFA are cost neutral to THC.
- 2.5 There is no scope for Sportscotland funding, as they would not provide funding for a replacement pitch surface.

### **3. Implications**

- 3.1 Resource - £75,000 capital contribution from the Council is sought. The current uncommitted balance on the Capital Discretionary Fund is £1.040m. The capital contribution will incur an associated borrowing cost of c£7,000pa which is budgeted for within the Loans Fund budget.
- 3.2 Equalities – the pitch replacement will allow continued access to the pitch for a period of up to 15 years.
- 3.3 Climate Change/Carbon Clever – nothing to highlight. The impact should be neutral, being direct replacement of the existing pitch surface.
- 3.4 There are no specific Legal, Risk, Gaelic or Rural implications to highlight.

#### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Members approve the £75,000 funding from the Capital Discretionary Fund, to replace the synthetic surface within Highland Football Academy.

Designation: Director of Care and Learning

Date: 19 February 2016

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