

FACILITY AND SPORTS CLUB DEVELOPMENT

Feasibility Report

Relating to the long-term future of Holmes Park



Prepared for The Directors of Leicestershire and Rutland County Football Association

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1 INTRODUCTION

PROJECT REFERENCE: L&RCFAHOLEMES PARK FEASIBILITY

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2 INSTRUCTIONS AND TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

- 2.1.1 This report has been prepared following the appointment of FSCDS by Leicestershire and Rutland County Football Association (the clients) to identify the long-term future of Holmes Park – the County FA’s current headquarters.
- 2.1.2 FSCDS has been asked to provide a desktop study based on the principles of reviewing and assessing the proposed need and options for the future of Holmes Park as the County FA’s headquarters.
- 2.1.3 The client is seeking the following outcomes from the production of the Initial Feasibility Report:
- LRCFA owns the Holmes Park site which comprises a small floodlit 3G pitch, a full-size football stadia pitch, changing pavilion and clubhouse with meeting rooms and office space. The feasibility study will cover the following options:
- Redeveloping Holmes Park to make it more sustainable (building and pitch)
 - Relocating away from Holmes Park and selling or leasing Holmes Park
 - Identifying the requirement for both a County FA headquarters and a key footballing venue within the County.

This is a Desktop Based Study

3 PROJECT INTRODUCTION

3.1 CLIENTS BRIEF

LRCFA owns the Holmes Park site which comprises a small floodlit 3G pitch, a full-size football stadia pitch, changing pavilion and clubhouse with meeting rooms and office space. The feasibility study will cover the following options:

- Redeveloping Holmes Park to make it more sustainable (building and pitch)
- Relocating away from Holmes Park and selling or leasing Holmes Park
- Identifying the requirement for both a County FA headquarters and a key footballing venue within the County.

3.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 3.2.1 LRCFA is located just off the A426 road, approximately 4.1 miles from the M1, the main arterial route north and south of the area. It is located in the Blaby District Council boundary, approximately 6.4 miles south-west of Leicester and 25 miles north-east of Coventry.

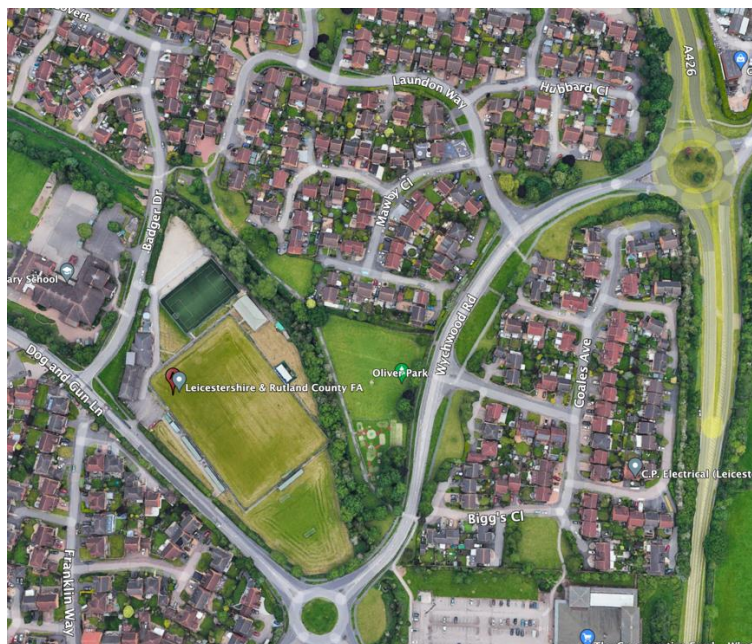


Figure 1: Holmes Park, Leicestershire & Rutland County FA (Source: Google Earth Pro)

3.2.2 REVIEW OF PREVIOUS WORK

A number of documents and reports exist from previous incarnations of activity and studies relating to the future of Holmes Park. This in conjunction with the significant time and human resource, both internal and external, that have provided an excellent foundation on

which this report can be built. They include investigative work on consultation, proposed reconfiguration of the site, relocation and refurbishment as well as potential sale and relocation to another site. Whilst these documents have provided background and context, it is the requirement and responsibility of this report, and its subsequent recommendations, to bring the process to a suitable conclusion.

3.3 REVIEW OF CURRENT FACILITIES

- 3.3.1 The Holmes Park site hosts a floodlit natural turf 11 v 11 pitch, with small stands and changing facilities. Separate to the changing facilities, LRCFA are housed in a large building comprising of a combination of office space, individual offices, meeting rooms and a large function room which historically has been a working bar with associated kitchen facilities. There is a small sided 3G FTP on site and parking for 50 cars. Access to the site can be made via two vehicle access points – one of which is mainly used for evening activities on either of the pitches.
- 3.3.2 Football and Fitness are an existing facility user on site. This includes usage of the 3G FTP and function room for club training and meetings as well as the 11 v 11 natural turf pitch for match play. The club are currently in discussions with LRFCA to utilise the facilities further, including potential usage of the bar/catering facilities.
- 3.3.3 In addition to Fitness and Football, a second partner, North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College, currently utilises on site facilities for delivery of their Level 3 Sports programme. This entails up to 18 hours of usage of the classroom facilities and 3G FTP – although currently is only used for 8-10 hours per week.
- 3.3.4 There is one existing full-sized (11 v 11) 3G FTP in Blaby at Brockington College which was funded by the Football Foundation in 2008. In addition, there are currently four small-sided 3G FTP centres: Blaby and Whetstone Youth Club (one 5v5 pitch, funded by the Football Foundation), Holmes Park (one 5v5 pitch, funded by the Football Foundation), Pavilion Leisure Centre (two 5v5 cages) & Saffron Dynamo Football Club (one 7v7 pitch, funded by the Football Foundation).
- 3.3.5 The Blaby 2019 LFFP (Local Football Facility Plan) indicates a shortfall of seven full size 3G FTPs. This is based on 306 teams and applies the FA training ratio model 1:38. The number of small sided 3G FTP facilities available locally does impact this number and as such the shortfall figure should be set at 6. Two projects have since been completed (Kirby Muxloe Sports Ground and The Winstanley School (7 v 7), resulting in the current shortfall being 4 full size 3G FTP's.

4 STRATEGIC CONTEXT

4.1 LOCAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Adopted in December 2020 Blaby District Council introduced a new type of plan; the Blaby District Local Plan Local Development Scheme which includes strategies, policies, and proposals to guide the use of land and new development throughout the District. It is part of the Core strategy and council's corporate vision.

Blaby District is a place where people are happy to live, work and visit. We want to build and maintain vibrant communities, where people are safe and healthy, businesses are successful and offering quality employment, and where opportunities exist to develop our local attractions for the benefit of all. (Blaby District Council)

- 4.1.1 The Development Plan includes the Local Plan, Minerals and Waste Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plans for the area. In Blaby District, this currently includes:

Blaby District Local Plan Core Strategy (2013);

Blaby District Local Plan Delivery Development Plan Document (DPD) (2019);

Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan up to 2031 (2019);

Blaby Neighbourhood Plan (2018)

- 4.1.2 The current Blaby Local Plan consists of the Core Strategy (2013) and the Delivery Development Plan Document (2019). The Core Strategy includes the vision, strategic objectives and core policies of the Local Plan. The Delivery DPD, was adopted in 2019 and includes site allocations and development management policies. The Local Plan is accompanied by a Policies Map which illustrates the policies and proposals of the Core Strategy and Delivery DPD.

- 4.1.3 The Minerals and Waste Local Plans are the responsibility of Leicestershire County Council. The Leicestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan up to 2031 was adopted in 2019.

- 4.1.4 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide additional information on policies and proposals in the Local Plan and are material considerations in the determination of planning applications. SPDs are not subject to independent examination and do not form part of the statutory development plan. The following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) are currently relevant for the District:

Planning Obligations and Developer Contributions SPD (February 2010)

Housing Mix and Affordable Housing SPD (July 2013)

- 4.1.5 Neighbourhood Plans were introduced by the Localism Act 2011. Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. Neighbourhood Plans form part of the development plan for the area.

- 4.1.6 At December 2020, the 'Blaby Neighbourhood Plan' was the only 'made' Neighbourhood Plan in the District of Blaby. Five other Neighbourhood Planning groups are currently

preparing Neighbourhood Plans in the District: the “Fosse Villages”, Elmesthorpe, Leicester Forest East, Cosby and Glenfield.

4.1.7 Blaby Local Plan Review

4.1.8 The Council is preparing a new Local Plan which will replace the current Local Plan Core Strategy and Delivery DPD. The existing Local Plan is being replaced for a number of reasons:

To ensure it is up to date and looks ahead at least 15 years;

To take account of new circumstances such as updated housing requirements as determined by the Government’s ‘Standard Method’;

To respond to cross boundary planning in the Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area, including the Strategic Growth Plan and a ‘Statement of Common Ground’ that seeks to agree a strategic approach to the delivery of development;

To take account of revised national planning policy and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Planning Practice Guidance (PPG).

4.1.9 Policy LPR1 ‘Local Plan Review’ of the adopted Local Plan Delivery DPD includes the circumstances where a Local Plan review is triggered including where housing requirements are updated or where a ‘Memorandum of Understanding’ is signed by HMA partners and where ‘Changes occur within the HMA to the objectively assessed need’.

4.1.10 The Local Plan should be up to date and must be reviewed at least every five years. It should be prepared in line with the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework (2019) and be accompanied by a Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal.

4.1.11 The Local Plan will be prepared in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The 2012 regulations set out the stages to be completed before a Local Plan can be adopted and become part of the development plan.

4.1.12 A number of other key documents are also relevant to the preparation of the new Local Plan:

Statement of Community Involvement – This sets out the District Council’s approach to involving the community and stakeholders when preparing Local Plans and in determining planning applications, amongst other matters.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) / Sustainability Appraisal (SA) – These assessments ensure that the social, economic and environmental effects of the spatial planning strategy and policies are taken into account at each stage in the preparation of the Local Plan. The requirements of the SEA will be integrated into the SA. A ‘Habitats Regulation Assessment’ is also required to assess the impact of the plan on internationally important designated sites.

Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) – A document published each year to assess whether Local Plan policies, targets and milestones have been achieved.

4.2 NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 4.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It was originally published in March 2012 and was revised in July 2018 and February 2019. The NPPF must be taken into account in the preparation of development plans including the Local Plan and is a material consideration in planning decisions. At the heart of the NPPF is a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which is central to both plan-making and decision taking.
- 4.2.2 The NPPF sets out three dimensions to sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental objectives for the planning system to deliver:
- 4.2.3 **An economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure.
- 4.2.4 **A social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- 4.2.5 **An environmental objective** – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 4.2.6 The Government states that these three components should be pursued in an integrated, mutually supportive way, looking at solutions which deliver multiple goals.
- 4.2.7 The LDF also conforms to the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).

4.3 BLABY DISTRICT PLAN (Adopted 2021)

The Role of the Local Plan

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission must be determined in accordance with The Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 4.3.1 The new plan will provide the policy framework for determining planning applications.
- 4.3.2 Planning law requires that planning applications must be determined in accordance with the statutory development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 4.3.3 Local Planning Authorities must prepare an up to date Local Plan for their area. In order to keep local communities and other stakeholders informed they must also prepare, maintain and publicise an up to date timetable for producing a Local Plan. This information is contained within the Local Development Scheme (LDS).

The LDS must specify, amongst other things:

- The documents that will be prepared to form the statutory development plan;

- What will be included in each document and the geographic area to which it relates;
- Whether the documents are to be prepared jointly with one or more other local planning authorities; and
- The timetable for the preparation and revision of documents.

The Local Development Scheme sets out the timetable for replacing the Local Plan Core Strategy and Delivery DPD.

4.4 The Blaby District Local Development Scheme

- 4.4.1 Local Planning Authorities must prepare an up to date Local Plan for their area and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS).
- 4.4.2 The LDS is a public statement of the Council's intentions in terms of preparing a new Local Plan. It helps local communities and other interested parties to keep track of progress.
- 4.4.3 This LDS covers the period up to 2023 and replaces the version approved in February 2019.
- 4.4.4 It is not necessary for the Council to include documents in its LDS which are not Development Plan Documents (DPDs) such as Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). This gives the Council greater flexibility to respond to changing circumstances. Also, the LDS does not include Neighbourhood Development Plans as the responsibility for preparing these rests with the local community.
- 4.4.5 The LDS will be subject to annual monitoring. The Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) will assess whether the milestones set out in the LDS are being met. This will inform whether any further review of the LDS is required.

5 STRATEGIC EVIDENCE

5.1 BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY (PPS)

- 5.1.1 In 2019 Blaby District Council commissioned Knight, Kavanagh and Page (KKP) to undertake a PPS, a supplementary strategy providing key stakeholders with an evidence base for outdoor sports and recreational facilities to support the Local Plan.
- 5.1.2 The adopted Strategy (November 2020) was developed from research and analysis of playing pitch provision and usage within Blaby and provides:
- ❖ A vision for the future improvement and prioritisation of playing pitches
 - ❖ A series of strategic recommendations which provide a strategic framework for the improvement, maintenance, development and, as appropriate, rationalisation of the playing pitch stock.
 - ❖ A series of sport by sport recommendations which provide a strategic framework for sport led improvements to provision.
 - ❖ A prioritised area-by-area action plan to address key issues.

The Strategy and Action Plan recommends a significant number of priority projects for Hambleton.

5.2 DEMOGRAPHICS

- 5.2.1 The current population of the authority (ONS 2019 Mid-Year Estimate) is 101,526. This is expected to rise to 111,631 by 2039.
- 5.2.2 Blaby is ranked 36th out of 40 LAs in the region, and 281 out of 326 Local Authorities nationally on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (ONS).
- 5.2.3 Blaby's ethnic composition is primarily white (88.5%). This is higher than the national average (85.4%).
- 5.2.4 The proportion of Blaby's population represented by the BAME community is 11.5%. This is below the national average (14.6%)
- 5.2.5 Blaby's overall levels of inactivity (25%) according to Sport England's Active Lives survey are slightly below regional and national levels.

Research has shown that there is a high correlation between levels of deprivation, and participation levels in sport and recreation. Blaby has a higher than average proportion of higher income earners compared to the regional and national averages. This could equate to the area having a lower level of deprivation.

- 5.2.6 The Index of Multiple Deprivation ranking (IMD) demonstrates the level of deprivation within that area, where 1 indicates the most deprived. The IMD Ranking is updated on a regular basis with the most recent being 2019. Blaby resides amongst the 40% least deprived neighbourhoods in the country (LSOA ranking 31,450 out of 32,844).

5.3 Sports Participation

- 5.3.1 The Sport England Active Lives Survey measures overall engagement with Sport and Physical Activity. It measures the number of people aged 16 and over who take part in sport and physical activity.
- 5.3.2 The most recent results from November 2019 found that in Blaby levels of activity were higher than the national averages. 72.6% of individuals were classed as active (they participate in sport or physical activity for at least 150 minutes a week.) The national average was 61.4%. The levels for inactivity (less than 30 minutes a week) were lower (9.5%) than the national average (11.5%).

5.4 Football Population

- 5.4.1 The Leicestershire and Rutland County Football Association (LRCFA) maintains records of numbers of affiliated clubs in the local authority, and their most recent participation report estimated that in the 2018/19 season there are 306 teams playing across Blaby.
- 5.4.2 Over the last 10-years there has been a significant national increase in the number of large multi-team football clubs. In Blaby, 11 clubs have more than 10 registered teams.
- 5.4.3 The FA is committed to investing and supporting clubs both on and off the pitch which includes an aim to have a qualified FA coach with every youth team by 2022. In addition, it will support 1,000 clubs to create full player pathways from youth to adult teams and develop 150 community football hubs with male and female pathways, disability, and recreational playing opportunities.
- 5.4.4 Eighteen leagues operate in Leicestershire and Rutland. They offer competitive opportunity for many different players, including women and girls, disability, youth and adults . Male, female and youth futsal leagues also run in Leicestershire and Rutland. The largest local leagues (2018-19) in the County include:

The Alliance Football League – 74 teams– home and away

Leicester and Charnwood Sunday Football League – 43 teams– home and away

Leicestershire Senior League – 40 teams– home and away

Leicester City Football League- veterans – 40 teams– home and away

North Leicestershire Football League – 37 teams– home and away

Leicester and District Football League – 33 teams– home and away

Hinckley and District Sunday Football League - 21 teams– home and away

Leicestershire Senior County Women's Football League - 11 teams– home and away

Leicestershire and Rutland's largest youth local leagues (2018-19) include:

Leicester and District Mutual Football League, U7-U10 – 452 teams– home and away

Leicester and District Sunday Junior U13-U15– 218 teams– home and away

Leicestershire Foxes Sunday League U11-U12 – 201 teams– home and away

Leicester City County Girls League U8-U18 – 142 teams– home and away

MDH Teamwear Leicestershire Youth League U16 – U18 – 89 teams– home and away

Leicestershire Midweek Floodlit Youth League U18 – 20 teams– home and away

- 5.4.5 To support any potential applications to the Football Foundation it is crucial to understand the issues currently facing this facility, along with any opportunities to sustain and support growth linked to all formats of the game.
- 5.4.6 Key findings linked to the PPS and supported by the LFFP confirm the need for 4 additional 3G FTPs within the LA as well as significantly better quality NTPs for local football users.
- 5.4.7 Blaby District Council completed a PPS assessment and strategy in 2020, which indicated that there is a shortfall of full size 3G FTPs (based on projected demand to 2034). Based on small-sided provision alone, there is a gap in 3G provision. Local consultation reveals common issues with limited availability due to the absences of full-sized provision across the district and subsequently long travel distances to access facilities.
- 5.4.8 Holmes Park is specifically prioritised within the Blaby LFFP (Local Football Facility Plan) and it is, in principle, an appropriate location for the development of a 3G FTP facility in line with the local facility development programme. It must also be noted however that a newly identified scheme at Countesthorpe College has been developed and has secured partnership funding in place. This site is a short (5 minute) drive from Holmes Park. Consultation with proposed clubs was due to take place in November 2022 with an anticipated application being made to the Football Foundation for funding support to be submitted in early 2023.

5.5 Links to Wider Strategies

- 5.5.1 Any proposed site developments have tangible links with the following national and local strategies:

Sport England (SE) Strategy – ‘Uniting the Movement’ 2021-2026

- 5.5.2 In response to the Government’s strategy, Sport England’s new strategy vision is that that everyone in England, regardless of age, background, or ability, feels able to take part in sport or activity. Sport England’s new vision and its supporting aims will therefore contribute to achieving the governments. Key features of the new Strategy are:
- Imagine a nation of more equal, inclusive and connected communities. A country where people live happier, healthier and more fulfilled lives.
 - Sport England are ‘here to invest in sport and physical activity to make it a normal part of life for everyone in England, regardless of who you are.’
 - SE recognise the need to invest in sport and physical activity through national governing bodies, other sports bodies and local sports clubs, organisations and community groups to increase engagement for different groups as part of our core purpose. But we need now to go further in promoting movement in general as the means to unlock sport and activity for some people.

- Dedicated sport and physical activity facilities: i.e. pitches, courts, pools and leisure centres.
- SE have historically focused their efforts on facilities like these. Relationships with local authority and sports club owners of these facilities remain vital, as does the investment in them from various sources, including our own. They also have a statutory responsibility to protect playing field sites in the planning system.
- Dedicated sport and leisure facilities need to be co-created, well-designed, supported and maintained to benefit the local community and their users.
- What has been learned about these dedicated spaces – whether indoor or outdoor - is that they can be more inclusive and more environmentally friendly, which will lead to a more sustainable stock of facilities offering better, affordable experiences for local people. This will be a focus of our capital work and investment.

Active Environments

- To truly create active environments, we need to look at the big picture – every space and place that we move through in our daily lives, from our front door to the supermarket or our place of work, and everywhere in between, can have a bearing on if and how we move more.
- This means connecting dedicated sport and activity facilities and community spaces, by making it easy for people to walk and cycle, by better design and by using the built and natural environments around us.

What SE will focus on

- Every space and place that people move through in our daily lives can have a bearing on if and how we move more.
- Protecting and improving the nation's sport and leisure facilities by using our investment and expertise to revive places to play, and to innovate new designs and operational models which are community-focused, environmentally sound, financially sustainable and contribute to reducing inequalities
- Creating opportunities around community spaces by inspiring local communities to influence owners or increase their own capability to use and sustain these spaces themselves, through advice, training and resources
- Helping to create better places to live by influencing those who develop and manage local environments to encourage both formal and informal activity close to where we live, maximising the potential of green spaces through walking and cycling
- The implications of climate change. The sport and leisure sector must play its part, so we'll adapt our expertise, guidance, tools and support to help our partners rise to the challenge.

- Working closely with governing bodies of sport and others who support people who already play regularly, to help them become more efficient, sustainable and diversify their sources of funding.

FA National Facilities Strategy (NFS) and supplementary Local Football Facility Plans (LFFPs)

- 5.5.3 The FA is looking to assess and set out its priorities at local level to underpin delivery of its National Facilities Strategy and inform discussion about required national levels of investment with local authorities, football partners and other stakeholders.
- 5.5.4 To support in delivery of both the current and superseding FA National Games Strategy (NGS), the FA has commissioned a nationwide consultancy project. A Local Football Facility Plan (LFFP) will be produced for every local authority across England. Each plan will be unique to its area as well as being diverse in its representation.
- 5.5.5 The LFFP is strategically aligned to the National Football Facilities Strategy (NFFS); a 10-year plan to change the landscape of football facilities in England. The NFFS represents a major funding commitment from the national funding partners (The FA, Premier League, DCMS, Football Foundation) to inform and direct an estimated one billion pounds of investment into football facilities over the next ten years.
- 5.5.6 Each LFFP will build upon PPS findings (where present and current) regarding the formal and affiliated game, to also include strategic priorities for investment across small sided football (recreational and informal including indoors). The LFFP will also incorporate consultation with groups outside of formal football, as well as underrepresented communities. This could include those which may be key partners with regards to football for behavioural change and groups which may be key drivers of FA NGS priorities around participation in the likes of women and girls' football, disability football and futsal.
- 5.5.7 LFFPs will identify key projects to be delivered and act as an investment portfolio for projects that require funding. As such, around 90% of all national football investment through the funding partners will be identified via LFFPs.
- 5.5.8 The FA vision through the NFS is the "Building, protecting and enhancing sustainable football facilities to improve the experience of the nation's favourite game".
- 5.5.9 Blaby District Council have an adopted LFFP (November 2020) with implementation ongoing.
- 5.5.10 The plan will:
- ❖ Identify priority areas for the provision of 3G Football Turf Pitches (FTP).
 - ❖ Identify key current and future locations of Natural Turf Pitch (NTP) hubs.
 - ❖ Identify strategic locations for refurbishment of existing or the development of new clubhouses.
 - ❖ Identify strategic locations for sided football facilities including multi use games areas and futsal venues.
- 5.5.11 It is important to recognise that a LFFP is an investment portfolio of priority projects for potential investment - it is not a detailed supply and demand analysis of all pitch provision in a local area. Consequently, it cannot be used in place of a PPS and is not an accepted

evidence base for site change of use or disposal. A LFFP will however build on available/existing local evidence and strategic plans and may adopt relevant actions from a PPS and/or complement these with additional investment priorities.

6 STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

6.1 Board and Council

- 6.1.1 Members of the board and council of the County FA were invited to two consultation events on the evening of Wednesday 12th October and the following day at the County FA headquarters.
- 6.1.2 In addition the consultation questionnaire was then made available online and publicised through emails from the County FA and again at the well attended Annual General Meeting of the County FA.
- 6.1.3 Unfortunately in all there were only 7 responses. As the consultation was anonymous it is not possible to differentiate between board and council member responses. One of the responses concentrated almost entirely on staffing (rather than the facility itself) and on issues such as work from home which was not the intention of the consultation and therefore gave little value to the purpose of the consultation.
- 6.1.4 The consultation was deliberately targeted to give the respondents mainly open text boxes for their responses in order to get as many ideas from them as possible. Questions asked were as follows:
- What are the best things about Holmes Park as a County FA Headquarters?
 - What are the worst things about Holmes Park as a County FA Headquarters?
 - What are the top 3 things you would like to see happen at Holmes Park that would support delivery of the County's FA Plan?
 - Do you believe the County FA requires a facility such as Holmes Park?
 - Give your reasons
 - Do you believe the County FA needs to have its own facilities?
 - What facilities should the County FA provide on site?
 - If the county FA were to consider an alternative venue, where should any new office be/not be?

6.1.5 What are the best things about Holmes Park as a County FA Headquarters?

- 6.1.5.1 There was clear unanimity here regarding Holmes Park and in particular its well known central location as a football focal point for all Clubs, Leagues and Players with clubs viewing it as "their Wembley". The facilities for meetings were also commended.

- 6.1.6 A selection of comments:

"Focal point of local football"

"Playing opportunities for local clubs"

"Well known location amongst a small group of clubs in our area"

6.1.7 What are the worst things about Holmes Park as a County FA Headquarters?

Whilst there was consensus that Holmes Park was now looking tired and in need of investment there was a divergence of views as to why. Some thought that the facilities, especially catering and the bar were not advertised enough and therefore not used whilst others thought the whole site was a financial drain and that the County FA was not there to run parties and weddings but to run football. There were complaints that it was not a central venue for the whole of the county and most agreed that there was simply insufficient

parking. There was a view that pitch fees were too high but others commented that it hampered financial sustainability.

A selection of comments:

"Facilities are getting tired. Little investment in recent years"

"The FA don't utilise it enough. It isn't advertised enough to be used for parties, weddings etc like it used to be. The catering should be in house"

"For the majority of County FA Clubs Holmes Park is a waste of space as they are unable to use it"

6.1.8 What are the top 3 things you would like to see happen at Holmes Park that would support delivery of the County's FA Plan?

There were suggestions that the installation of a 3G surface would support the site making the facility available for other sports, although the majority wished to retain a grass surface. There were no suggestions as to the other facilities apart from one who suggested catering be run internally under a property and grounds committee be re-established. Two people advocated that the site should be sold.

A selection of comments:

"Sell it to the highest bidder"

"Install a 3G"

"Keep the grass pitch - teams prefer it"

6.1.9 Do you believe the County FA requires a facility such as Holmes Park? Give your reasons

The majority view (5 v 2) was that a facility such as Holmes Park was required. Reasons were varied but included the need for a show piece ground, a focal point for football, to encourage Community / Education usage and involvement which would provide a catalyst for a greater social and community atmosphere with the Association and the clubs in one league wished it to be retained. Those saying no advised that many clubs did not want a showpiece facility but a county FA that invested in all levels of football and in a number of facilities around the area.

A selection of comments:

"As a County FA we should have a show piece ground for local clubs can aspire to be like"

"Our County FA Clubs do not want a show piece ground. We just need a fully staffed county FA who invest in all levels of football."

"To encourage Community / Education usage and involvement which would provide a catalyst for a greater social and community atmosphere with the Association."

6.1.10 Do you believe the County FA needs to have its own facilities?

The majority view (5 v 2) was that the County FA does require its own facilities.

6.1.11 What facilities should the County FA provide on site?

There was a fairly unanimous view here in that there should be a football facility with a pitch at its centre. Other views included catering facilities up to 7 days a week including evenings, adequate parking, good viewing facilities, changing rooms, an administrative headquarters and meeting/classroom facilities.

6.1.12 If the county FA were to consider an alternative venue, where should any new office be/not be?

Again there was complete unanimity here with a view that any new facility should be as Central as possible to give access from all areas of the Association but that it should be outside the City Centre and should not be in a neighbouring County.

6.1.13 Conclusion

It is quite difficult to write a conclusion to this section given that only 7 people gave a response from some 50 plus potentials despite having the opportunity to do so at two consultation events, being given an open invitation for a 1 to 1 discussion with the consultancy team and being reminded of the opportunity on several occasions, not least the well attended AGM of the County FA.

The consultancy view is that this lack of dialogue may represent an apathy towards the future of Holmes Park and that people are inclined to trust the judgement of the board and the necessary business decisions it must take for the good of the County FA. Of those that did respond and expressed a concern there was a tendency to a view that sought the County FA to increase its services, especially around catering and social events, without a clear idea as to whether such events would be income generating, rather than a cost burden, and whether the role of the County FA staff was to facilitate such delivery.

6.2 Staff

6.2.1 A specific consultation session took place with the staffing team of the County FA in order to ascertain their thoughts as a group to the future of Holmes Park. The session was run along the lines of the board and council consultation asking many of the same questions although from a staff and work place perspective.

6.2.2 Staff initially completed a personal consultation before being asked to work in three different groups across the County FA service provision to get a group perspective and view. For the purposes of the feedback the group was split into 3 and each group gave their thoughts.

6.2.3 Individual views

Best things about working at Holmes Park?

Location and accessibility to major routes were seen as a positive factor as was the presence of a pitch and the general football environment. There was a lot of positivity about the amount of office space available together with the ability to have meeting rooms whenever needed. The ability to have an office away from home and connect with colleagues was also seen as a positive

A selection of comments:

"Central to County and accessible. Good transport links"

"Location - easily accessible with major routes"

"Football environment - turn up to work with the pitch etc."

"Lots of work space, can get access to a room when needed for an event/meeting"

6.2.4 Worst things about working at Holmes Park?

6.2.5 The condition of the building, its age and general upkeep were the unanimous views of the staff. Comments included how unwelcoming it is, the blandness and that areas feel very outdated. A lack of parking. Especially at busy times was a concern.

A selection of comments:

"Outdated building and office space"

"Some areas are run down and in need of new equipment, heating, lighting are poor, windows don't open, site usage not maximised"

"Poor connection around the office/building"

"Rooms lack character and are dated, feels "cold" and lacks quality as a first experience"

6.2.6 What are the top 3 things you would like to see happen at Holmes Park that would make it a better place to work?

There was a great deal of consensus here as to how the facility could be improved focussing in the main on a complete modernisation of the premises, increasing parking provision and the installation of a 3G surface in order to maximise income generating opportunities.

A selection of comments:

"Reposition parts of the site to make better use of space"

"Renovation of office space"

"Better facilities/less upkeep. Grass pitch is hard to maintain"

"More welcoming work environment with offices which meet the need"

6.2.7 How many days per week do you work from Holmes Park?

The vast majority of staff responded with 2 to 3 days per week

6.2.8 How far do you travel to Holmes Park?

Average response was 9.3 miles with a maximum of 22 miles and a minimum of 0.1 miles.

6.2.9 How do you get to the office?

All but one travel by private vehicle. The other walks

6.2.10 How long does the journey take?

Maximum time was 45 minutes with the average being 20 minutes.

6.2.11 Do you need office accommodation to fulfil your role?

Most answered that they did although 40% didn't. However amongst those that didn't they would still prefer access to an office at times. Of the staff that do require office accommodation the average was 32 to 3 days per week with only one requiring it longer.

6.2.12 What facilities would you like to see at your place of work that aren't currently available and would help you to deliver your work?

Most responses here featured on the meeting spaces and the need have enhanced technology so that meetings and events could be delivered to a high standard. Usage of the pitch without fear of damaging it was also mentioned.

6.2.13 Do you believe the County FA needs to have its own facilities?

80% of the staff responded yes to this question

6.2.14 If the county FA were to consider an alternative venue, where should any new office be/not be?

The responses here broadly mirrored that of the Board and Council members with a view that it should be a central location, not in the City Centre. However there was much more of a view that it should not be in either the north of the county or the south.

6.2.15 Which office facilities do you consider the most important?

Top answers almost without exception featured on break out space, meeting rooms, a reception area, secure access, and fast internet.

6.2.2 Group Session

The questions used in the group session mirrored those used as an individuals but were designed for the staff team to have some discussion and listen to other views and not just their own. Not surprisingly however, much of the discussion did continue to agree with and emphasise the above views.

6.2.1 Best aspects of Holmes Park

The geographical location and ease of travel again featured heavily. The scope of facilities including meeting space and most especially the football facilities were much appreciated. It was viewed as being very important that the football pitch on site made it look like it was a football facility and that having its own headquarters was important in that it was associated directly with the County FA and not simply an “add on to another site.

6.2.2 Worst aspects of Holmes Park

The current state of the buildings came in for much discussion and criticism. There is a feeling that previous repairs had been poorly completed resulting in bigger problems in the long run. The poor state of the buildings leaves the staff feeling that Holmes Park is not a nice place to work leading to people preferring to work remotely when really they would just like good conditions to work in. The building is not viewed as “homely” or welcoming to visitors and it doesn't feel like it has an identity. The office layout was viewed as being poor and inflexible and not conducive to good team working. Issues of technology particularly wifi were also highlighted.

6.2.3 Potential Improvements

A need to modernise to make the working environment more welcoming and comfortable was highlighted including a need to reconfigure the building and indeed the whole of the site. The refurb would need to include re-wiring, wifi, technology and sound systems. The view was that such work would support Holmes Park to become more efficient with flexible work spaces and meeting areas. Dedicated work and leisure areas including break out areas were requested in order that people did not eat at desks and a better work/life balance was achieved. An examination of parking on the site together with the possibility of a 3G pitch was also mentioned.

6.2.4 Activities not presently at Holmes Park which would help delivery

Overwhelmingly the installation of a 3G surface was requested by all groups. Such an installation could be used all year round, giving community access and extending relationships with strategic and local partners. Also possible was a gym space and greater emphasis on community education opportunities through the provision of a more education space as well as the potential for conference facilities. The addition of coffee/vending machines was also viewed as a potential area of activity as were social events for the volunteer work force.

6.2.5 The ideal office environment

Issues with office temperature came to the fore with a simple request for working in the right temperature mentioned by more than one group. Also mentioned were a positive atmosphere, attractive and comfortable environment, reliable technology including wifi, internet and phone signal, recreational facilities, quiet working areas, airy and welcoming spaces with good lighting, a nice reception area visible to staff, breakout rooms and a social space for casual meetings and breaks.

6.2.6 Alternative Venues

Views here again mirrored the views in the individual section which can be summarised as a central venue, not on the edges of the County and not in a city centre that can be accessed easily. Holmes Park was viewed as having a history, in a good location with available land and facilities. For this reason Holmes Park was preferred albeit with significant investment and vastly renewed infrastructure including a 3G pitch, moving/restructuring existing buildings pitches and parking to make more efficient/effective use of the present available space. Any new venue should have good parking and be a football facility. However, it should not be at a member club site as association with that club and not the County FA may be considered by other clubs as favouritism to that club.

6.2.7 Conclusion

The overall view of the staff was mixed in that it was accepted by all that the current condition of Holmes Park is not good and significant investment at the site would be needed in order to make it a fully functioning site that effectively supported the delivery of the County plan. Such investment would need a complete refurbishment of the current facilities, potentially a full re-build and needs to include a 3G pitch installation. That said the location was viewed as being good for a number of reasons, not least its ability as a central venue in terms of delivery and travel. It is clear that in the view of the staff team any new facility should have football delivery at its heart and would therefore need to include the provision of football within it.

6.3 Existing Partners

6.3.1 Football and Fitness

The football club are a current user of the Holmes Park and are in the first year of an initial two year agreement to use the facilities for training and match play. The club are a youth football club formed in 2009 specialising in working with players aged 4 – 18 and currently have 14 representative teams. All players are local to the site and consider Holmes Park to be their ideal long-term venue. Current development is restricted due to lack of

facilities/availability and as such they would be keen to increase usage of the site where possible.

6.3.1.1 Their usage of Holmes Park consists of:

Practical Facilities:

4 nights per week (Monday/ Wed – Fri) utilising the small sided 3G FTP on site for training their younger teams.

Use of the main 11 v 11 pitch for their under 18 team (which also included usage of the changing rooms pre and post match).

Built Facilities:

Social space utilised for club meetings and gathering during junior training sessions.

During the consultation, the club identified the potential to extend this usage and look to provide training and match day refreshments to their members to both increase secondary spend for the club and to increase overall usage of the site. At present, this activity is not permitted in their terms of use.

The club do undertake some operational management during their periods of use and would be interested in developing this further given the opportunity. They see Holmes Park as a potential long-term home for the club and would be open to discussion regarding a long term lease/licence to operate or (potentially) a purchase of the site.

The club would be keen to be a partner user of any potential 3G FTP pitch should the opportunity arise at Holmes Park.

6.3.2 College Consultation

North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College, currently utilise on site facilities for delivery of their Level 3 Sports programme. This entails up to 18 hours of usage of the classroom facilities and 3G FTP – although currently is only used for 8-10 hours per week. The College also utilise the match pitch for Wednesday afternoon college representative games.

6.3.3 During consultation, the college indicated they were surprised at the mix of facilities on site and felt they were underutilised. Challenges around Wi-fi signal and connectivity were identified and the lack of food availability during the daytime were significant and in their view did reduce the student experience. These would need to be addressed in a timely manner to meet their aspirations.

6.3.4 They were keen to further use the facilities on site if possible, however ensuring the right education environment was paramount for delivery of their programmes. Moving back to the classroom rather than delivering sessions in the “bar area” was seen as a positive. The potential to further develop their existing commitment at Holmes Park was expressed, again citing any potential 3G facility as a positive long term addition and potential expansion of their delivery on site.

6.3.5 The main campus is 3 miles away from Holmes Park and it was stressed that they need to ensure that all students are fully engaged and receive an appropriate ‘experience’ from their engagement at the college. For them, location is key and should any decision to move away

from Holmes Park by LRCFA would potentially impact their students significantly should any proposed new site (which would need to include usage of and access to classroom and pitch facilities) be too far from the existing one. It would need to have good accessibility and transport links as well as the requirements for connectivity and refreshments etc listed above.

6.4 Robert Holmes

- 6.4.1 Mr Holmes was a specific consultee for this report at the request of the County FA and in view of a number of comments received during the course of the consultation concerning his family's linkage to Holmes Park and particularly its history. Indeed he was able to provide much colour and background as to the full history of the development which came from the County FA growing over a number of years and needing increasing facilities.
- 6.4.2 Over the years he believes that there have been a number of review points where the board of the County FA need to review their mode of operation and delivery and we are again at such a point. In the view of Mr Holmes a decision about the future of Holmes Park is actually the wrong way round and instead the board should be looking at how it wishes to develop football delivery in the County over the next 10 years and then decide whether Holmes Park plays a part in that delivery.
- 6.4.3 That said he is very much of the view that the days for a County FA to have premises, including a football pitch have gone and that there is no need for an administrative centre, people can work remotely either from their own home or from facilities all over the County ensuring that the County FA travels to members rather than the reverse.
- 6.4.4 Therefore the considered view of Mr Holmes is that Holmes Park should be sold and the funds released used to support the ongoing delivery of the County FA over the next period of time. Mr Holmes made the point that of all people to feel an attachment to Holmes Park he was the only "Holmes" that still maintained an interest and despite that he still felt the best option was to sell.
- 6.4.5 A short discussion emerged about Holmes Park and the need for funding should the County FA choose to remain in situ. One of the potential sources of a funding shortfall could be sponsorship including naming rights over Holmes Park. If that was to happen Mr Holmes is adamant that the Holmes name should be removed as he would not wish the name to be associated with a commercial organisation.

7 OPTIONS ANALYSIS

7 INTRODUCTION

7.1 In compiling this report the consultancy team have identified two primary options

Stay at Holmes Park
Find an alternative venue

However, both of these options come with a number of potential alternative options within them:

7.1.1 Option 1 - Stay at Holmes Park

Change nothing and continue as you are
Refurbish the existing building
Demolish the existing building and rebuild elsewhere on site
Installation of a 3G pitch

The 3G pitch proposal could be a stand alone option but obviously will incorporate at least one of the previous options.

7.1.2 Option 2 - Relocate to an alternative venue

Office accommodation only
Incorporating a football offer on an existing football site
Incorporating a football offer on a site not presently connected.

7.2 Options Analysis

7.2.1 Option 1 - Stay at Holmes Park

Although there are various possibilities within this option, there are advantages and disadvantages that pertain to all. Therefore, Table 1 should also be read in conjunction with the detailed options that follow.

| PROS | CONS |
|---|--|
| History The County FA has a long history associated with Holmes Park and this is obviously important to some Members. | Facilities There is a strong perception that a number of the facilities at Homes Park are inadequate in a number of ways including the current condition of the buildings which are deteriorating, car parking which can be dangerous and is inadequate in terms of space and general facilities such as connectivity. |
| Reputation | Cost (Revenue) |

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| <p>The site has been referred to as “Leicester’s Wembley” in that it is still seen as a focal point for football and a place to be proud of being given the opportunity to play at,</p> | <p>The current buildings are draining revenue funds away from the County FA’s delivery plan and are not generating the level of income that they could/should</p> |
| <p>Own site</p> <p>Holmes Park belongs entirely to the County FA and it is therefore completely within its own control as to its usage, what events are held there and who it partners with</p> | <p>Cost (Capital)</p> <p>Because of the poor condition of the buildings, they are in constant need of upkeep. This is leading to “make do” repairs which although addressing immediate issues are not looking towards the building becoming a true long term asset of the County FA. A common theme running through the consultation has been the need for investment in Holmes Park. The level of investment required for each sub option is detailed below but in each case is significant.</p> |
| <p>Location</p> <p>Everybody spoken to agrees that the site is in a good location, central to the County, where the staff live, has good connections along the M1 And M69 corridors and is easily accessed from both.</p> | <p>Need for Funding</p> <p>In order to address the issues raised above there will be a need for significant financial investment into Holmes Park. Given the limited financial resources and reserves that the County FA presently has at its disposal it must effectively source this funding elsewhere. The move towards charitable registration will help to source charitable foundation funding. However a funding search completed by consultants has revealed no clear results. Instead funding will need to come from Football Foundation and Football Association Headquarter Grant funds which will be limited in scope and size.</p> |
| <p>Facilities</p> <p>At face value current facilities are good with an excellent playing surface, refurbished changing rooms, a small 3G area, good meeting and office space.</p> | <p>Ongoing Management Responsibility</p> <p>Management of a site such as Holmes Park is not an easy issue to overcome and manage effectively. Staff are there to provide football services and to encourage the development of football. Much comment was made by Council members of the need for the bar and cafe to be open on a much longer basis. However this would need specialist management in order to be effective and would not necessarily generate further income to the County FA. If such an option were to be considered a separate business plan should be commissioned to ascertain demand and</p> |

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| | financial sustainability. |
| Income Generation Because of the amount of space Holmes Park has at its disposal within its buildings it has the ability to generate income from renting out areas such as it presently does to Football and Fitness and North Warwickshire and South Leicestershire College | Legacy Fund Although a very welcome financial benefit, the fund can only contribute to some of the options below and will not provide sufficient funding all cases. |
| Least Controversial option Of the two principal options staying at Holmes Park would be the easiest and least controversial option particularly amongst some members. | |
| Decision Made Effectively choosing to stay at Holmes Park would draw a close to much of the speculation and uncertainty that has surrounded the County FA in recent times and would mean that the main core of business delivery could be concentrated upon. | |
| Presence of Legacy Fund LRCFA has a legacy fund which can be used without restriction on a CFA County Ground and is available for both revenue and capital purposes. Such funds could be used towards any of the options listed below. | |

Table 1: Option 1 - Stay at Holmes Park – Pros vs Cons

7.2.2 Option 1A - Change nothing and stay as you are

This option calls for limited intervention and basically maintains a situation of status quo where issues are only addressed as and when they arise.

| PROS | CONS |
|--|---|
| Less Financial Impact There is no option that has no financial impact. Obviously the option that will cost least, although the ongoing cost to the organisation in continuing to maintain Holmes Park in its | Building decline The existing building is clearly in decline and without change will continue to do so with repairs becoming needed more and more |

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| current condition as well as potential reputational damage from a deteriorating asset cannot be understated | frequently and potentially bigger and bigger. |
| Maintains relationships Existing relations with partners such as the College can be maintained without a risk of being impacted on by building works or other changes. | Revenue Drain As the building deteriorates it is likely to face higher ongoing costs such as heating and lighting which will inevitably increase revenue costs. It will also become less attractive to licensees who may not renew contracts or demand rent reductions as conditions become worse |
| Business Continuity Enables the continued delivery of the existing County FA Plan without losing focus on other matters relating to estate management and development. | Staff Impact Doing nothing will impact on the staff in a number of ways. Morale will be damaged and will steadily become worse as working conditions continue to deteriorate. With unreliable facilities such as heating and technological issues such as wifi people will want to work less in the office impacting on team morale and potentially the delivery of services. |
| Legacy Fund The fund should enable the present facility to be maintained. However, it is estimated that it will do no more than maintain the status quo. | Licensee Requirements Stakeholder consultation evidenced that partners were a little frustrated at some of the facilities offered which in turn could impact on their own service delivery. In particular there needs to be some consideration given to technology issues including wifi, a catering need potentially solved through the installation of vending machines and the availability of the bar. |
| | Building Size The current building is far too large for the needs of the County FA and its core operations. Comments have been received about the cafe/bar area which is a sizeable area not being open but the fact is that neither have anything to do with what the County FA is there to deliver. In fact the operation of catering and a bar and potential associated events are unlikely to be effective and financially sustainable especially if a staff is needed to be employed to deliver the service. |

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| | Additionally, as the County FA moves towards Charity registration such activities (dependent on turnover) may not be compatible with Charity status. |
| | Building and Site configuration The present configuration of the building is simply not effective. Adverse comment has been received for example about the lack of ability to see reception and the ability of visitors to know anybody knows they are there. Access to rooms means effectively going out and coming back in again and the size, access and layout to the car park is not necessarily safe and optimum. |

Table 2: Option 1A - Change nothing and stay as you are - Pros vs Cons

7.2.3 Option 1A Summary

This is effectively the least ambitious option but also the most cost neutral - at least at the outset. It should not impact overall on service delivery as current levels can be maintained, especially as people continue to work from home and only attend the office on average for 2 to 3 days per week, although if facilities deteriorate or technology becomes less reliable working from home may increase.

- 7.2.3.1 It does not however come without cost. Work will inevitably need to be carried out on the building, probably in the same piecemeal way as has been seen in recent years, without significant investment.

7.2.4 Option 1B - Refurbish the Existing Building

This option maintains the existing footprint of the two main buildings including the changing room block but seeks significant investment in order to overcome all of the issues identified by staff and partners in one major refurbishment including improving heating and lighting, addressing building and office layout, revamping meeting rooms and significantly investing in upgrading the present technology.

| PROS | CONS |
|---|--|
| Modern Facilities If completed correctly would give the County Headquarters a brand new feel that would make it fit for purpose with modern facilities that would be attractive to people to use on a more frequent basis | Car Parking Does not address the need to change the car parking arrangements at Holmes Park which do not work in their current configuration as any refurbishment would be on the same footprint as the current structures. If added as part of the refurbishment costs would significantly increase and there would be no external funding to pay for extra car parking |

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| | costs for which at present are running at approx £10k per parking space. |
| Attractive for Licensees A fit for purpose building with the attendant facilities would ensure long term tenancy arrangements and could increase rental income. | Potential short term closure Such a refurbishment that would likely have a major impact on day to day building operations that could mean the short term closure of the building. This could mean that alternative accommodation would need to be sourced on a temporary basis and licensees may need to be advised to find alternative solutions with no guarantee that they would return once the refurbishment was completed. |
| Legacy Fund The presence of the legacy fund should ensure that a general refurbishment and upgrade of the premises to a higher standard is possible. | Cost The cost of refurbishment to achieve what is desired by Board, Council, staff and partners is significant. It is not certain that the legacy fund will cover all of the necessary refurbishment and upgrade to current facilities. |
| | Need for Grant Funding With significant costs, the County FA will need to access substantial external funding in order to facilitate the level of refurbishment required. The most likely fund to support such a refurbishment would be the County FA HQ Grants scheme which has a maximum value of £100k leaving a potential shortfall. It is believed that Charitable Foundations such as Garfield Weston Foundation would be unlikely to support the project because of a perceived lack of additionality in terms of outputs - the project is not likely to add extra services but simply maintain what is already existing. |

Table 3: Option 1B - Refurbish the Existing Building - Pros vs Cons

7.2.5 Option 1B Summary

In some ways this is the most appealing option in that it transforms the existing buildings into something that is fit for purpose going forward and would therefore be acceptable to many people. However, it does not address key concerns concerning the configuration of the present parking facilities and if it did this would significantly increase costs.

Although an appealing option there are major issues not least of which is who will pay the costs of completing the work since the available grant is significantly below the estimated costs of completing the work. **For this reason this option is not viewed as viable**

7.2.6 Option 1C - Demolish the existing building and rebuild elsewhere on site

This option seeks to entirely change the look of Holmes Park addressing the fact that the existing buildings are too large for the current needs of the County FA as a functioning County FA headquarters, ensuring that a new build is a modern fit for purpose facility with all of the service delivery requirements such as meeting facilities and technology addressed, and addressing ancillary issues such as the provision of car parking.

- 7.2.7 In order to address the car parking issues the present changing room facility has been identified as the most likely site to rebuild a new Headquarters. As this building was not built with two storey's in mind it was also need to be demolished and replaced in such a scenario.

| PROS | CONS |
|--|---|
| Modern Facilities Such a building would be purpose built to a 2022 specification that would ensure that the County FA was fit for purpose and delivering services to meet the County Plan for the next generations | Potential long-term closure Such a major build would likely have a major impact on day to day operations. Whilst it's possible that a build could happen first with the demolition of the present building towards the ending of the programme it is likely that there would be some period of closure and that may be for many months. This could mean that alternative accommodation would need to be sourced on a temporary basis. |
| Improved Car Parking Provision A new configuration of the site will allow for a complete redesign of the entrance and exit of the site which will ensure in turn more car parking spaces and address a long-standing issue. | Loss of Licensees A re-purposed and rebuilt County FA Headquarters would most likely only have room for County football operations given the costs of building a new facility, and as such licensees would be lost together with the revenue income they currently provide |
| Lower Revenue Costs A new state of the art facility would be built to 21st Century specifications and therefore day to day running costs would be vastly reduced especially in terms of the costs of heating and lighting with the opportunity through the installation of solar panels etc to completely remove such costs. | Cost The cost of demolition of the existing building is estimated at £500 - £700 per square metre. Research has shown that new County FA Headquarters are built to an average size of 600sq metres. Building costs at present are estimated at £2750 per Square Metre leading to a potential build cost of £1.6m. Car parking reconfiguration would cost an estimated additional £150k leading to an estimated overall cost of £1.85m |

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| | <p>Need for Grant Funding</p> <p>The County FA will need to access substantial external funding in order to complete the demolition and rebuild. The most likely fund would be the County FA HQ Grants scheme which has a maximum intervention for rebuild projects of £100k, as no new grass or 3G pitch would be added leaving a minimum shortfall of at least £1.5m after the legacy fund is also used. Again, it is believed that Charitable Foundations such as Garfield Weston Foundation would be unlikely to support the project because of a perceived lack of additionality in terms of outputs - the project is not likely to add extra services but simply maintain what is already existing and even if they did this level of charitable foundation intervention is extremely unlikely.</p> |
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Table 4 Option 1C - Demolish the existing building and rebuild elsewhere on site – Pros vs Cons

7.2.8 Option 1C Summary

In terms of building work alone this represents the most expensive option. Whilst a brand-new headquarters built at Holmes Park with the history that the site undoubtedly possesses is notionally a good one and would give some financial stability to future operations in real terms it is almost impossible to deliver unless a major benefactor can be identified. With building costs increasing on almost a daily basis at the present time there is no clear way to envision how this option could be financed. **For this reason, this option is not viewed as viable and is discounted.**

7.2.9 Option 1D - Installation of a 3G pitch.

For clarity this option stands alone and as an option was part of the brief that the consultancy team were asked to cover. However, in essence it is a bolt on option to all of the options discussed above and should therefore be considered as such. Therefore, at the point a decision is made, should the stay at Holmes Park be viewed as the option to follow, the decision will be for example 1B plus 1D, provided that the installation of a 3G surface is seen as being financially wise and sustainable.

7.2.10 The installation of a 3G surface at Holmes Park was mentioned as being a potential positive improvement by many of the people spoken to during the consultation period.

| PROS | CONS |
|---|--|
| <p>Income Generation</p> <p>In order to support the ongoing financial sustainability of the County FA operation the installation of a 3G pitch could provide</p> | <p>Loss of history & Differentiation</p> <p>It is true to say that many member clubs have installed 3G surfaces over the past few years. As such what has made Holmes Park special in</p> |

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| <p>projected extra revenue income of £15/20k p.a. dependent on how well used the facility becomes</p> | <p>the view of many is that people get the opportunity to play on a historic grass pitch which is different from clubs elsewhere. To install a 3G surface at Holmes Park would in some way remove the “magic” and attraction of playing there and make it feel like games elsewhere that simply don’t feel “different”</p> |
| <p>Encourage site usage</p> <p>At the present time the grass pitch has to be nurtured so that it maintains peak condition throughout the season which is especially important for cup finals at the end of the season. By definition however this means that it can only be used sparingly whereas a 3G surface could be used much more extensively throughout the year and will always be in excellent condition.</p> | <p>User groups?</p> <p>Although there is a shortfall of 3G playing surfaces in the area there are no clear user groups at this stage who would use Holmes Park. If local clubs were invited to be Partner Clubs then this could severely diminish the image of the County FA to be impartial as any decision in favour of an on site partner may be seen as favouritism towards that club. In essence therefore partners in the scheme may need to come from the private and public sector and at this stage that is by no means certain leading to doubts on the ongoing sustainability of the proposal.</p> |
| <p>Required in Local Football Facility Plan</p> <p>The plan shows that there is currently a shortfall in the provision of 3G pitches in the area of Holmes Park which should help to ensure that take up of the facility is maximised.</p> | <p>Parking</p> <p>The installation of a 3G pitch would need increased car parking provision with the Football Foundation expecting a minimum of 75 spaces to be made available. Although this is possible on site it would only be so with a major re-configuration of the site and may not therefore be possible under the “do nothing” (1A) option described above.</p> |
| <p>Licensee Usage</p> <p>Licensees on the site at present have expressed a strong interest in the installation of a 3G surface that would support their service delivery and could lead to increased usage of Holmes Park as a venue.</p> | <p>Planning</p> <p>Planning approval for the installation will be required and is not necessarily automatic.</p> |
| <p>Enhanced image</p> <p>Installation of a 3G surface could enhance the image of the County FA bringing it in line with other cub facilities elsewhere in the area and being “state of the art”</p> | <p>Cost (Capital)</p> <p>The capital cost of a 3G surface has risen markedly in recent months from approx £750k up to over £950k and continues to rise</p> |

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|---|--|
| <p>Funding</p> <p>The full cost of a 3G FTP installation could be met by the Football Foundation (grant) and usage of the legacy fund provided the Football Foundation can be persuaded that the facility would be sustainable in the long term.</p> | <p>Cost (Revenue)</p> <p>Usage would need to be able to cover all costs which is estimated at £60/70k p.a. Including the need for a sinking fund of £30k p.a. To cover the potential resurfacing of the carpet at the end of its 10 - 12-year projected lifespan</p> |
| | <p>Funding</p> <p>The most likely funder for the installation of a 3G surface is the Football Foundation who up until recently would support with a maximum grant of up to £500k. However, given rising costs it is believed that this maximum may well be increased and intervention rate percentage of 65/70% used instead. If confirmed this would lead to a maximum grant of £665k, assuming a cost of £950k. That would leave the County FA with a shortfall of circa £285k to source or finance. The legacy fund could be used for this purpose, although no other improvements could be made to the grounds or buildings. Charitable Foundations such as Garfield Weston Foundation have supported such schemes in the past to a limited extent. Support here would be dictated on community impact and the potential partner organisations.</p> |

Table 5: Option 1D - Installation of a 3G pitch – Pros vs Cons

7.2.11 Option 1D summary

The installation of a 3G surface at Holmes Park was a specific part of the consultation brief and was certainly supported by many people spoken to, although some had reservations as it could make Holmes Park like any other modern football facility.

- 7.2.12 The question here is whether there is a need for the addition of this surface and how it could impact and support the long-term financial sustainability of the County FA. From a revenue perspective we believe its impact would be minimal from a revenue perspective. If fully utilised it will generate income but not at particularly large levels that will make a true impact on overall day to day delivery of the County FA Plan and therefore from a revenue perspective its a marginal benefit.
- 7.2.13 The problem once again is the capital cost and more importantly the need for a significant contribution from the County FA which will amount to almost £300k, not including increased car parking which could add another £100k to the cost. The legacy fund could make a substantial contribution to these costs with other funding coming from charitable foundations. Typically, Garfield Weston can fund up to £100k but rarely fund more than £50k

and they are generally the largest charitable contributor. It is believed that in order to make a 3G surface at Holmes Park a reality the identification of a significant partner needs to be prioritised.

7.2.14 Conclusion of Option 1 - Stay at Holmes Park

- 7.2.15 The conclusion of the consultancy team is that the only option that is viable from a financial perspective if the County FA were to remain at Holmes Park is option 1A, which is effectively to remain as it is. This is based on the reality of the financial cost of the other options, despite the presence of the legacy fund, as there may still need to be substantial external funding available in order to complete either a significant refurbishment or a complete new build.
- 7.2.16 Alongside this is the potential installation of a 3G surface which also provides significant financial challenges without supporting the ongoing financial sustainability of the organisation in a major way. However, given the legacy fund, and if other funding could be sought it would be an improvement on the existing facility offer and would show some investment in the site.

7.3 Option 2 - Relocate to an alternative venue

- 7.3.1 Although there are various possibilities within this option, there are advantages and disadvantages that pertain to all. Therefore, the table below should also be read in conjunction with the detailed options that follow.

| PROS | CONS |
|---|--|
| <p>Brand new bespoke facility</p> <p>A move elsewhere would provide the opportunity to have premises that are custom designed to meet County FA delivery expectations in the 21st Century with the attendant necessary facilities. Given the detail in this report, especially from staff, as to what is required the identified facility could be bespoke to the various needs identified.</p> | <p>Loss of History</p> <p>The presence of the County FA at Holmes Park is obviously one of historic significance for Members and could be highly controversial. If chosen this option would need careful explanation to the Members to convince them that the benefits of moving far outweighed the historic significance of the site</p> |
| <p>No Building Management responsibility</p> <p>Whether the new premises were part of an existing football complex, a new complex or simply office accommodation it is unlikely that the management of the building will need to be under the auspices and care of the County FA management team leaving them free to look after the development of football in the County and the delivery of the County Plan</p> | <p>Loss of Management Control of facility</p> <p>Given the view opposite then the lack of its own building would mean that in effect the County FA would have little or no say in the management of its building.</p> |
| <p>Financial Sustainability</p> <p>Should the County FA headquarters move then the existing site could be sold or placed on a long-term lease to a licensee. Sale would be preferable in such an instance as it would</p> | <p>Staff redeployment</p> <p>Should this option be considered there is the possibility of some staff redeployment as Holmes Park currently has a Site Manager and the consequences of the move would need to</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>give a large financial injection that would not guarantee long term financial sustainability of the County FA Leasing the site on a long basis would guarantee a level of annual income that could support the County FA towards sustainability but would not necessarily give funds for increased development work.</p> | <p>be considered on the role of that person who may need to be redeployed onto alternative duties.</p> |
| <p>Investment opportunity</p> <p>A sale of the site could provide a development fund that could be used to invest into football in the county which could further support club members either directly or through enhanced development schemes provided by the County FA.</p> | <p>Planning permission for Holmes Park</p> <p>Any move away from Holmes Park would leave the site vacant and able to be sold. However, any alternative use will require planning permission. This is discussed in more detail in the Land Valuation section of this report.</p> |
| <p>Location</p> <p>Location could be selected to suit the business needs of the organisation and its staff team bearing in mind the identified need to stay central to the County and not within a City Centre location.</p> | <p>Less/Restricted Revenue Income</p> <p>Currently the County FA receives rental income from two licensees at Holmes Park which would be lost should a move elsewhere happened though this should be offset through vastly reduced revenue and capital costs savings.</p> |
| <p>Parking</p> <p>A new site could be identified that would fully meet the parking needs of the County FA operation.</p> | |
| <p>Potential Sale/Lease to Licensee</p> <p>A concern of selling the site may be that planning permission for something different to its present use e.g. housing may be difficult to attain whilst if the usage was much the same to an existing licensee planning permission may not be needed. This could however affect the potential value of the site</p> | |
| <p>Legacy Fund</p> <p>LRCFA has a legacy fund which can be used without restriction on a CFA County Ground and is available for both revenue and capital purposes. Such funds could be used towards any of the options listed below including the employment of either a specialist external consultant or additional members of staff in</p> | |

| | |
|--|--|
| order to manage the whole process. | |
| FA HQ Grant LRCFA has access to the FA HQ Grant scheme which is available for both revenue and capital purposes. Such funds could be used towards any of the options listed below including the employment of either a specialist external consultant or additional members of staff in order to manage the whole process. | |
| Decision Made A final decision on moving and carrying through that plan would draw a close to much of the speculation and uncertainty that has surrounded the County FA in recent times and would mean that the main core of business delivery could be concentrated upon. | |

Table 6: Option 2 - Relocate to an alternative venue – Pros vs Cons

7.3.2 Option 2A - Relocate - Office Accommodation Only

Over recent years it has become a trend that County FA Headquarters no longer feel that they necessarily need to be based on a football site. This has become amplified since the centralisation of courses by the FA where instead of County FA Headquarters being used various member club sites around the County have been used to provide training courses. The Covid Pandemic and the move to work from home has increased the use of such facilities.

7.3.3 Such accommodation takes a variety of forms including office space on modern Industrial Estates to town centre locations.

| PROS | CONS |
|--|--|
| Accepted Practice Several County Associations have moved to or utilise accommodation that is purely an office base including Cumberland CFA, Westmorland CFA and Birmingham CFA. | No Football Onsite By their very nature these sites are not football centric which many of the staff were concerned would give the County FA a lack of identity. |
| Management Ease This is the easiest option from a management control and workload perspective, such facilities are generally very easy to manage as | |

| | |
|--|--|
| they modern and purpose designed | |
| Flexibility Availability of premises is usually plentiful in a variety of locations most of which have been developed with accessibility in mind both in terms of staff and visitors travelling to the site but also in terms of DDA compliance. There is also flexibility with the options as to how they are configured. Terms are usually flexible enabling some latitude if a particular location does not work to move again with minimal issues. | |
| Cheapest Option Because there is usually a plentiful supply of such premises rents are usual low and priced competitively. It is very possible to obtain premises that have shared conference and meeting facilities with the latest technology which means that costs are usually much lower than owning premises. | |

Table 7: Option 2A - Relocate - Office Accommodation Only – Pros vs Cons

7.3.4 Option 2A Summary

This option creates a real opportunity for the County FA to completely redesign and relaunch its service dependent on the cash receipt (if any) from Holmes Park. It is not strictly necessary for a County Football Association to be on a football site and this solution is accepted as being a valid way forward by many. However, against that is the potential loss of identity as a football body which many feel is important as part of the County FA brand.

7.3.5 Option 2B - Relocate - Incorporating a football offer on an existing football site

Some County Football Associations including Northumberland FA have relocated the County Headquarters onto an existing football facility. This is usually a Member Club's premises as part of that clubs existing infrastructure or potentially as a new separate build on the site should there be space available.

| PROS | CONS |
|--|--|
| Existing Facility Provided a suitable facility is available the possibility is there that there could be a readymade home for the County FA with | Perception If the County FA relocates to a local member club this could severely diminish the image of the County FA to be impartial as any decision |

| | |
|--|---|
| facilities such as a 3G pitch onsite. This is especially so as many clubs have used Football Foundation Funding in recent times in order to enhance facilities | in favour of an onsite partner may be seen as favouritism towards that club. |
| | <p>Potential Capital Cost</p> <p>As for rebuilding on Holmes Park costs could be prohibitive if the identified site does not have sufficient existing facilities.</p> <p>Research has shown that new County FA Headquarters are built to an average size of 600sq metres. Building costs at present are estimated at £2750 per Sq Metre leading to a potential build cost of £1.6m</p> |
| | <p>Location</p> <p>The most likely potential partner clubs may not be located in areas that suit the central needs of the County FA and its staff team.</p> |
| | <p>Funding</p> <p>With potentially significant costs for this option the County FA will need to access substantial external funding. The most likely fund to support such work would be the County FA HQ Grants scheme which has a maximum intervention for moves such as this of £100k</p> |
| | <p>Available Club (with space)</p> <p>The potential number of clubs that would have available space that could facilitate a new County FA Headquarters is severely limited and it is by no means certain that they would wish to share their site.</p> |

Table 8: Option 2B - Relocate - Incorporating a football offer on an existing football site – Pros vs Cons

7.3.6 Option 2B Summary

This option, although possible, is fraught with many issues, not least where the site would be and where the funding could come from in order to complete the move. **This option is therefore not recommended for consideration.**

7.3.7 Option 2C - Relocate - Incorporating a football offer on a site not presently connected

There is the possibility that the County FA could move to a site elsewhere in the County as part of a wider development. The exact location of this is discussed later in this document but the advantages and disadvantages of such a move are:

| PROS | CONS |
|---|------|
| Location Central location close to main arterial roads | |
| Bespoke Building & Facilities Office accommodation and facilities will be designed and built to County FA specifications and the site will include 3G football pitches as part of the development | |
| Developer Funded Minimal financial contribution will need to be made by the County Football Association as the plot is being developed through significant S106 contributions from the developer as part of the Area Development Plan | |

Table 9: Option 2C - Relocate - Incorporating a football offer on a site not presently connected – Pros vs Cons

7.3.8 Option 2C Summary

This option gives the County FA an outstanding opportunity that could ensure financial sustainability for many years to come, allow potential investments into local football, enable a relocation to a purpose-built facility with football facilities attached including 3G pitches and be in a location that is readily accessible.

7.3.9 Conclusion of Option 2 - Relocate

The conclusion of the consultancy team is that there are two viable options that could be undertaken here being options 2A - relocate to office accommodation only, or 2C - relocation to a football facility not presently connected to the football network as it would not encounter any potential complaints of favouritism that option 2B could produce.

7.3.10 In addition, both of these options could provide real benefits to football in the County through making funding available for development activity and could also ensure financial sustainability of the County Football Association for many years to come. However, option 2A of relocating to office accommodation only carries with it a potential loss of football identity and given the potential that could be forthcoming at the non-connected site the consultancy team believes 2C should be more fully explored.

7.4 Overall Conclusion of Options Analysis and Recommendation

The consultancy team believes that having examined seven potential options for the future of Leicestershire & Rutland County Football Association there are two that may be shortlisted for further consideration:

7.4.1 1A - Stay at Holmes Park - Change nothing and stay as you are

7.4.2 2C - Relocate - Incorporating a football offer on a site not presently connected

7.4.3 The simple fact is that many of the other options, although ostensibly attractive have a high degree of cost attached to them with very little chance of attracting anything like the level of funding to successfully deliver the various schemes.

8 RELOCATION

8.1 Introduction

Given the options analysis above and the summary recommendation that views the relocation of the County FA Headquarters as the most viable option, then the pertinent question becomes where to?

8.1 What are the Options?

Potential relocation sites across the Leicestershire and Rutland that incorporated access to a pitch were identified in a previous feasibility undertaken as being those shown below. The Consultancy Team have taken a review of this information and believe it to be accurate with no existing sites to add. The sites are:

| | Blaby | Charnwood | Harborough | Hinckley and Bosworth | Leicester City | Melton | North West Leicestershire | Oadby and Wigton | Rutland |
|--|-------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| FF funded facilities or proposed FF facilities | Saffron Dynamo's | Rawlins Academy | Harborough Town FC | Ilstock | Aylestone Park | John Fernley College | Newbridge College | Beauchamps School | Uppingham Community College |
| | Whetstone Juniors | Wreake Valley | Lutterworth Athletic | Hinckley Clubs for Young People | Aylestone Recreation Ground | Bottesford FC | Coalville Town | Wigston College | |
| | Kirby Muxloe Sports and Social Club | Cedars Academy | | Bosworth Academy | New College | Mowbray Rangers | | | |
| | | Syston Town Council | | South Charnwood | Leicester Bharat | | | | |
| | | | | Barwell Sports and Social Club | Riverside | | | | |
| | | | | | Beaumont Park | | | | |
| | | | | | Judgemeadow | | | | |
| LA facilities | | | | | Hamilton Park | | | | |
| | | | | | Highfield Rangers | | | | |
| LA facilities | Council offices | Council offices | Council offices | Council Hub | Braunstone LC | Council offices | Council offices | Council offices | Council offices |
| | Huncote LC | Leisure Centres | | Hinckley LC | Eyres Monsall CC | | Hood Park LC Hermitage LC | | |

Figure 2: Alternative Locations for County FA HQ (1) Source: Holmes Park Working Group.

| | Blaby | Charnwood | Harborough | Hinckley and Bosworth | Leicester City | Melton | North West Leicestershire | Oadby and Wigton | Rutland |
|--------|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Other? | Blaby & Whetstone | Barrow Town | <u>Kibworth FC</u> | Leicester Road | LCFC stadium (CT) facilities | Brooksby Melton College | Coalville Town | Leicester University | Agricultural Centre? |
| | Meadow Sports Ground | <u>Nanpantan Sports Ground</u> | Houghton on the Hill Sports Club | Sport in Desford | Belvoir Drive | <u>Asfordby</u> Amateurs | <u>Measham</u> Sports and social club | Coombe Park | |
| | | Anstey Nomads | | Market Bosworth Sports Club | The Emerald Centre | Melton Town (new facility) | Bardon Hill Sports and Social Club | <u>Horsewell Lane</u> | |
| | | Quorn FC | | | The Grove | | Heather St John | Stoughton Lane Playing Fields | |
| | | Sports Park (Loughborough Uni) | | | | | | | |
| | | LCFC Training Ground | | | | | | | |

Figure 3: Alternative Locations for County FA HQ (2) Source: Holmes Park Working Group.

8.1.1 A further review of this information has effectively ruled out several facilities for a variety of reasons:

- Sites associated with Football Clubs - ruled out for the reasons stated in option 2B - principally the view that there could be a perception of favouritism towards a Member Club with whom the County FA partnered
- Sites associated with education - ruled out as access to sites during the school day can be difficult with schools rarely allowing the usage of 3G pitches by outside organisations whilst pupils are on site
- Sites not central - a key response throughout the consultation, especially from staff and Council members was the need for a central location of the County FA headquarters should relocation be considered
- Local Authority facilities - an examination of these names sites shows little in the way of space in which to facilitate the build of a new County FA headquarters or sufficient empty accommodation to house the County FA staff.
- Sites which require a County FA financed build - Given the costs indicated for a new County FA Headquarters if the identified site does not have sufficient existing facilities at present are estimated at £2750 per Square Metre leading to a potential build cost of £1.6m with limited funding opportunities

9 JUSTIFICATION OF NEED

- 9.1 Justification of need asks the question, do the County FA have to do anything at all?. From a property perspective most of this is examined within the options analysis above and particularly through the “do nothing” option and remain at Holmes Park. To an extent it can be seen that this option is the most viable of the stay at Holmes Park options as it is the least costly and does not call for a large amount of external funding which could be difficult to achieve.
- 9.2 However, that perspective is only in the main from a property view and does not necessarily consider the justification from a full business and financial perspective including the longer-term health of the County FA as an organisation delivering football development and governance in the County.
- 9.3 The consultancy team have examined the work of the Working Party which reported its findings in December 2020 in order to form a view of the need from a business perspective. The report shows that the County FA were faced with continuing losses over a period of time, although these have been somewhat stemmed because of the leasing of the site to long term partner organisations which have more or less covered the shortfall.
- 9.4 Although slightly distorted as the report was made during the impact of Covid, it is clear from the report that the County FA was under financial strain and losses were being experienced. Levels of use of Holmes Park did not generate sufficient income to cover all of the costs for operating Holmes Park. Regular hirers reduced / declined further due to COVID and in general across the market have been very slow to come back.
- 9.5 Many consultees mentioned that the catering and function facilities were no longer regularly available. However, the report points out that in general people hire Holmes Park for functions if they can't find anywhere else or have an affinity with the site which is a small target market. However, as has been mentioned elsewhere even with a full catering and bar option in operation there is very little income to be made from such a service. At best with staffing costs it may cover its costs but, in all likelihood, will struggle to pay its way and is more likely to be a drain on limited financial resources that should be spent on the development and delivery of football in the County. Similarly, externalising the service through the installation of a partner catering company is unlikely to be attractive to the private sector as they too would be in a similar position and thereby unable to give the County FA an income stream.
- 9.6 With regard to the installation of a 3G surface the report is generally correct in its assumptions, although some costs including site management, renewing the rubber infill and other costs are not included. The view that at best it would cover its costs and not provide a regular income that would support football operations and development is correct.
- 9.7 Therefore, staying at Holmes Park in the longer term is seen as at best as a holding manoeuvre. It will not improve the County FA's financial position and indeed should ongoing maintenance increase then it could significantly worsen. It will not strengthen the County FA financially simply leaving it to be asset rich and cash poor and therefore unable to offer anything more than its current services which will continue to come under further pressure given the current economic and inflationary position and of the country generally

10 RELOCATION OPTION – NEW LUBBESTHORPE

Introduction

New Lubbethorpe is a major new development incorporating over 4,000 new homes including facilities. Approved in 2014, the first homeowners moved in during 2017 as the first phase of development continues.

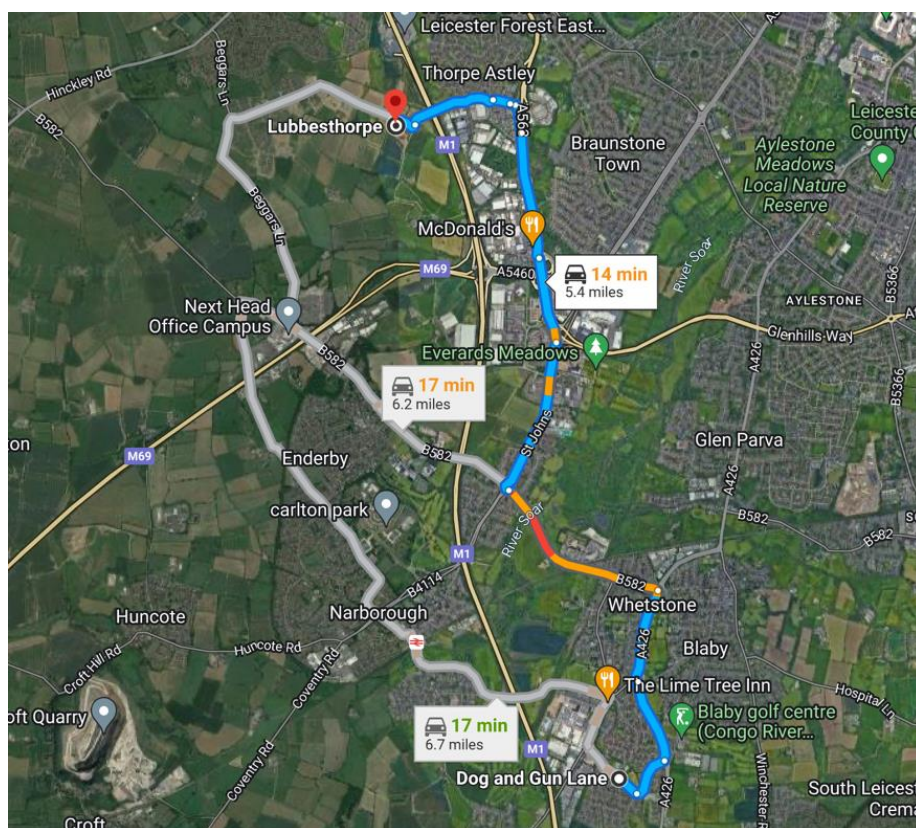


Figure 4: New Lubbethorpe Site Location (Distance from Holmes Park) Source: Google Maps

10.1 New Lubbethorpe lies to the south of Leicester Forest East and is bordered by the M1 to the east. The M69 separates the housing and employment sites in the new development. Effectively it is a site that meets the needs identified by stakeholders within this study including the staff and Council and Board members:

- Central location
- Good access
- Approx 6 miles from current location
- Football provision on site
- Not connected to a Member club

10.2 When the development is finished, it will include:

- 4,250 homes
- A District centre with buildings for retail, commercial, employment and community use
- Two Local Centres will include retail, community, and leisure facilities
- A secondary school with playing fields, sixth form facility, and community facilities including 2 full size artificial football pitches one of which will be dedicated to community usage.

- Two primary schools, playing fields and children's nursery facilities
 - A health centre
 - A Business Centre with office space
 - An employment site including office space, storage and distribution businesses and general industries
- 10.3 The first homes in the development have been built by Davidsons, Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes. Redrow Homes have also recently started building on their two parcels along Tay Road.
- 10.4 As of 31 October 2022, 812 homes are occupied. It is a requirement of the New Lubbesthorpe Development to provide affordable housing. This will be 10% of the first 600 homes, 20% of the next 2,000 and approximately 25% of the last 1,650 properties to be built.
- 10.5 A large amount of public open space will be available, including:
- Over 43 acres of playing fields
 - Over 475 acres of open space featuring the "Deserted Medieval Village of Lubbesthorpe"
 - Scheduled Monument, Lubbesthorpe Bridle Road, existing and new woodlands, allotments and embankments
- 10.6 New Lubbesthorpe will feature many transport features, including:
- A new bus, pedestrian and cycle only access
 - Improvements will be made to Baines Lane and the Baines Lane/A47 junction
 - Bus, pedestrian, cycle and resident access only onto Watergate Lane
 - The new bridge over the M1 gives access from Meridian Way
 - Two new access points for vehicles from Beggar's Lane
 - Improvements to the Beggar's Lane/A47 junction
 - Access for vehicles from Leicester Lane
- 10.7 New Lubbesthorpe will be constructed in four phases. The first phase began in 2016. Construction and all four phases of New Lubbesthorpe are anticipated to be completed in the 2030s. However, design of the new school, community buildings and business centre, including office accommodation is due to commence in early 2023.
- 10.8 The consultancy team have been in discussion with Robin Thompson who is a Leisure consultant working on the Lubbesthorpe development looking at how a potential relocation of the County FA Headquarters could be fitted into the new site. In essence, the developers would very much welcome LRCFA on site and are open to their full requirements including:
- Office space for circa 14-17 staff – potential for a mix of staff (some permanent location and others who travel)
 - Meeting room and training/conference space to cater for:
 - Disciplinary Hearings (1-2 per week) – requiring meeting room and small "holding" rooms
 - Board Meetings – 12 people (1 per month)
 - Council Meetings – 50 people (1 per annum)
 - Training sessions and courses (1st Aid, etc) – 20 people – 1-2 workshops per month

- Football space (Level 1 courses, etc) – classroom/training space linked to outdoor AGP – 2-3 courses per month
 - Meeting room/Training/Conference space could be shared with other users
 - Access to 3G AGP for practical coaching and coach training sessions
 - Access to a full-size pitch for county cup finals (circa 20 per season)
- 10.9 At this stage, and provided a decision is made in early 2023 it is thought possible that the County FA would be able to make its desired space bespoke to its needs within reason. There was no specific discussion around costs other than the assumption that the County FA would be paying for any facilities they required though that is expected to be far less than developing a new facility and possibly will be for any additionality required as opposed to all the facilities. These costs may well be covered through a grant from the Football Association County FA Headquarters Grant Scheme. The AGP's are expected to be funded predominantly through the Football Foundation and could contribute to the CFA requirements as well.



Figure 5: Indicative Facility Mix at New Lubbethorpe. Source RPT Consulting

11 INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Introduction

Should the decision be taken to dispose of the Holmes Park site via sale or lease/licence agreement, a number of potential opportunities exist for LRCFA to reinvest any income received into the county for the benefit of the wider football family.

11.5 Deliver new programmes

Targeted investment into entirely new projects or those which were suspended/removed during the COVID pandemic. This could include:

- Disability Football Provision
- Inclusion projects
- Targeted Women and Girls programmes
- Adult Participation
- Recreational central venue leagues
- KICKS programmes
- Coach / Referee CPD
- Pitch Maintenance CPD

11.6 Create new Grant Support Fund

Creation of the '**Holmes Park Legacy Fund**'. Any financial income generated could be ring-fenced to support local clubs/organisation looking to secure capital investment to improve facilities. This fund could split into larger capital investment towards built facilities given the significant increase in costs associated with capital builds over the last 6-12 months, and/or small grants to support purchase of, for example, pitch maintenance equipment in conjunction with the Pitch Improvement Programme. Other example of potential grant avenues are listed below

- Strategic contributions into projects linked to the LFFP documents covering LRCFA area
- Small Grant Fund – supporting kit and equipment
- Pitch Maintenance Equipment banks – strategically places hubs to support grassroots clubs pitch maintenance
- Cost of Living Fund – 'Funding Football For All'
- Bursary Fund for Coach Education / Referee Education Courses

11.7 Invest in Workforce Development

The impact of COVID and the current challenging economic environment has made workforce development more difficult than ever. Maintaining current levels of staff across the County FA has proved difficult and a potential area for (re)investment may lie with an increase in targeted employment opportunities to meet the demand of the County Plan.

- 11.7.1 Whilst potentially being only fixed term (for example, 3 – 4 years) investment could be made into developing areas of the workforce where a current shortfall of support to the wider county exists. These roles could be county wide or made specific to a particular area of need. Alternatively, should additional external (or direct FA) funding become available, the employment periods could be further extended based upon successful outcomes and impact being achieved.

12 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The following provides a summary overview of the main findings within the feasibility report.

- The option to do nothing and continue to exist at Holmes Park is available, however
 - The facility is likely to deteriorate
 - The current facility in its present configuration will not increase income streams
 - In order to bring about meaningful change, such as the installation of a 3G FTP or fit for purpose office accommodation, site reconfiguration would be required but investment needed is likely to be substantial and there are doubts as to potential sources and levels of intervention it will attract
- As an alternative to staying at Holmes Park, the option to move is available. This could be to:
 - office accommodation only
 - a non-connected site
- Moving to an office only site, although being the cheapest option, may have issues due to the perceived lack of football identity it would demonstrate to the wider Leicestershire and Rutland football family.
- New Lubbethorpe is a once in a generation opportunity to move the County FA HQ to a sustainable long-term home and provide access to football facilities and bespoke modern office accommodation.
- Dependent upon the above decision on whether to stay at Holmes Park or move elsewhere, there will be options to either sell or lease/licence Holmes Park to third party organisations. This decision will impact on LRCFA income over the next period.
- Should the decision be made to move elsewhere, various options are available should the Directors choice to market Holmes Park as an available asset.