



Sports hub plans kick on with backing from Wilts FA

Exciting plans for a new community sports hub in Wichelstowe have scored highly with the local community following a recent consultation.

And, with local people indicating there is high demand for football facilities, the Wiltshire FA has lent its considerable expertise to the ongoing design of the new sports provision.

The Wichelstowe Community Sports Hub will be located between Middle and East Wichel and will include facilities for various sports as well as play provision.

It is being funded through Section 106 money, which is paid by the Wichelstowe developers to Swindon Borough Council to deliver local infrastructure improvements and community facilities. Grant funding will also be sought to expand the range of facilities on offer at the site.

The space has been earmarked for use by the whole community to encourage people to get active either by playing a competitive sport or by taking gentle exercise such as walking in the local area along Wichelstowe's canals.

Almost 400 people took part in an engagement exercise earlier this year on the initial plans and were asked what they would like to see included. Although football facilities were a popular choice, the survey identified the importance of including other uses.

As a result, a number of multi-use games areas and children's play areas will form part of the design, while the pavilion will also host a café and flexible community rooms, as well as changing rooms.

The feedback also demonstrated the number of people who use the paths around Wichelstowe to walk, run and cycle. It is hoped the site can be a base for both individuals and groups walking along the canal and through Wichelstowe's green spaces.

Wroughton Parish Council is working alongside the Borough Council to develop the plans, meanwhile the Wiltshire FA has been identified as the preferred operating partner, due to the organisation having the skills to deliver a successful facility for the whole community.

The emerging plans will be available for residents to review and provide feedback on in early July prior to a planning application being made. Subject to planning, it is hoped construction could start in 2026.

Councillor Kevin Small, Swindon Borough Council's Cabinet Member for Finance, said: "I was really pleased so many people gave their views on the initial plans for the community

sports hub and we received some really valuable feedback which we have taken forward into the detailed designs.

“The Wilts FA have been brilliant in terms of their support, as have Wroughton Parish Council, and together we are developing a scheme which we hope the whole community can be proud of.

“From a personal point of view, I am delighted the Wilts FA has been identified as the preferred operating partner to run the facility as they have a wealth of experience in running such facilities and I look forward to sharing the updated plans with local residents before we turn them into a reality.”

Simon Russell, CEO of the Wiltshire FA, said: “It’s really exciting to be involved in a project that will do so much to support people to be more active - whether that is recreationally or playing competitive football.

“Part of our purpose at Wiltshire FA is to work with any and all stakeholders to deliver improvements to existing facilities or to help with the development and delivery of new facilities. However, this is special as we will operate the new sports hub - enabling us to engage more directly with the football family and wider community in Swindon.

“Working with Swindon Borough Council and Wroughton Parish Council we are confident we can provide an exceptional facility for all future users.”

Councillor John Hewer, Chair of Wroughton Parish Council, said: “We welcome the feedback from the consultation and are very pleased and excited to be involved in bringing this important facility to Wichelstowe.

“The parish council has worked closely with the borough council, together with the Wilts FA’s Simon Russell and David Ridley, visiting the Wilts FA headquarters in Devizes to see the fabulous facilities that we want to replicate here in the Parish of Wroughton.

“Having seen the draft plans for the Wichelstowe Community Sports Hub, we are pleased that the facilities provided meet the requirements asked for in the consultation, so that although directed towards football, multi-use games areas (MUGAs), a skate park, a learn to cycle area, and play areas will also be provided.

“We’ve also got the pavilion where visitors can enjoy the café, outside leisure areas and first-class changing facilities for the sports teams.

“We look forward to the final plans and, hopefully, building starting next year.”

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

Picture 1: a CGI of the proposed new pavilion at Wichelstowe community sports hub

Picture 2: an aerial view of where the Wichelstowe sports hub will be located

Picture 3: A map showing the sports hub's location in the wider Wichelstowe site

Picture 4: initial thoughts on how the Wichelstowe sports hub land could be used

Information about Wichelstowe

Wichelstowe is being delivered by a joint venture company which is a 50:50 partnership between Swindon Borough Council and Barratt Developments plc.

The Wichelstowe development is being built by Barratt Homes and David Wilson Homes in partnership with Swindon Borough Council which will deliver 3,000 new homes along with new schools and community facilities over 20 years. The 250-hectare site on the southern edge of Swindon will include extensive open spaces, nature conservation areas, playing pitches and allotments.

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