



7th January 2013

Great Aycliffe Town Council
Council Offices,
School Aycliffe Lane,
Newton Aycliffe,
County Durham,
DL5 6QF

Dear Sir/Madam,

Development of Sports Facilities at Woodham Academy

Consultation on disposal of school playing fields

We are seeking to install a full sized, floodlit 3rd generation artificial football pitch on the site of Woodham Academy. The facility would be used by the school for PE lessons, Sports Academy coaching and after school fixtures. It would be available to local football clubs and the wider community at other times. The provision of such a facility would provide extensive opportunities for the local community and would potentially have a significant impact on the levels of participation in sport within the town and the district.

We have already secured some funding from external sources. In order to raise the additional capital required, we wish to sell an area of land behind the existing school buildings. This land includes a football pitch and an area which is currently not in use.

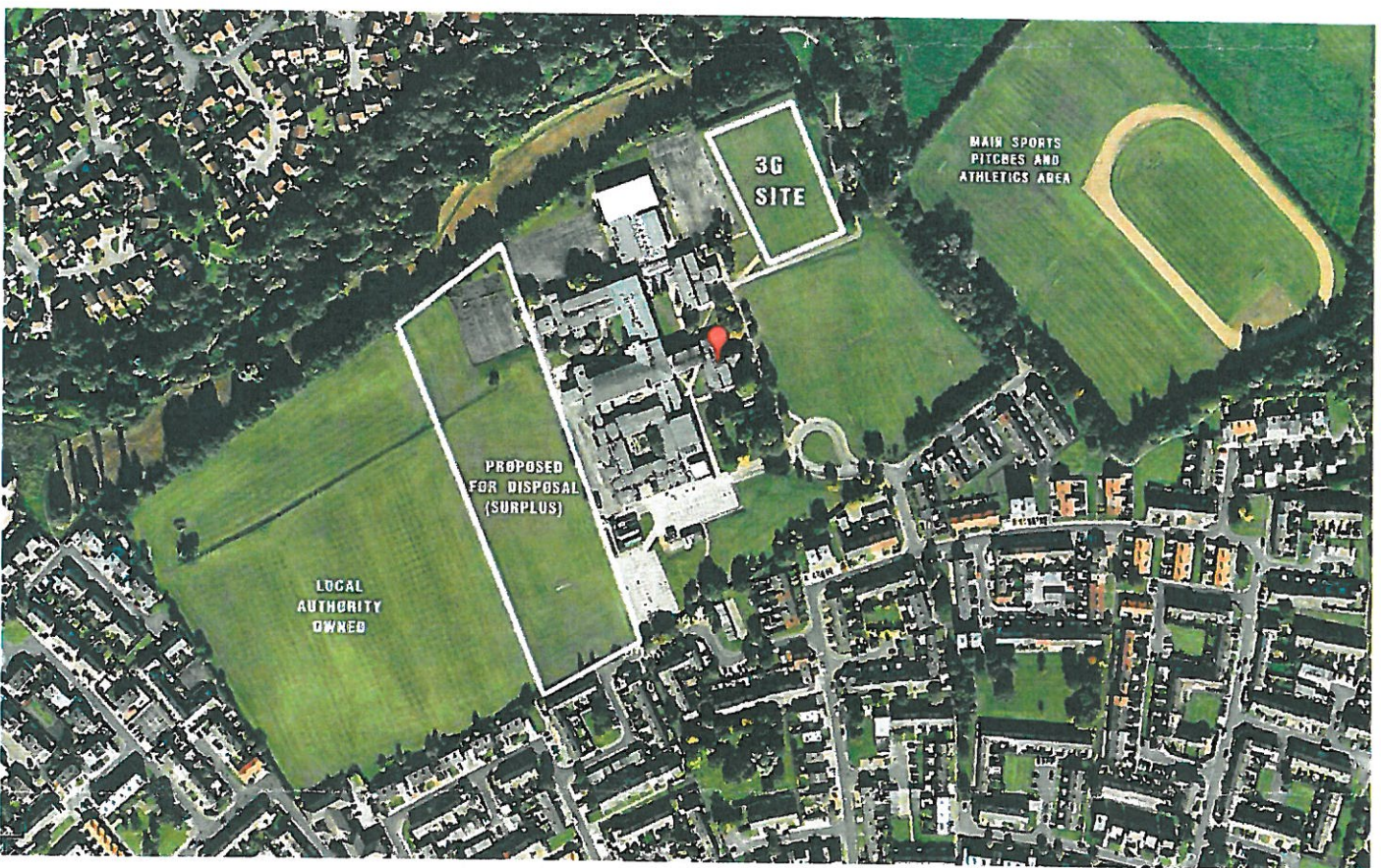
We have included details of our proposals and would welcome your comments on our plans to dispose of the land. The consultation period is from **7th January 2013 to 22nd March 2013**.

Yours sincerely,

Headteacher

Consultation on the proposal to dispose of playing fields at Woodham Academy

Woodham Academy is considering disposing of an area of land totalling approximately 5.06 acres. The land lies behind the current school buildings, along the perimeter of the site, adjacent to a field belonging to Durham County Council. At the moment there is one full-sized football pitch on the land. The remainder of the land is not in use. The proceeds from the land, together with significant external funding, would be used to improve sports facilities, namely, to refurbish the existing sports hall and swimming pool, to build a 3rd generation, floodlit artificial pitch where the current artificial pitch is located. This would replace the pitch behind the school. The school would retain the 4 football pitches and the running track which lie beyond the perimeter fence. The area of the remaining site would total approximately 20.6 acres. This exceeds the total site area currently recommended for new secondary schools as defined in The Department's Building Bulletin 98 and 99. Please see plan below.



What are the benefits for the school and the students?

During the winter months, our five existing grass football pitches are often out of use because they are either frozen or waterlogged. An artificial pitch would allow core PE lessons to take place outdoors throughout the year and would thus give us increased capacity for our curriculum provision. Similarly, a floodlit artificial surface would allow extra-curricular sport and inter-school fixtures to take place irrespective of the weather conditions or the time of year.

We wish to upgrade the sports hall facility, installing heating and providing the requisite storage areas.

We also wish to improve outdoor hard areas for both curriculum PE, and to encourage students to take part in physical activity at lunchtimes and to create further capacity for Woodham Sports Academy.

What are the benefits for the local community?

In addition to increasing the availability of pitches to local football clubs, an artificial pitch would allow us to offer a range of opportunities within the community. These would include:

- Structured coaching sessions and formal competitions for primary age students.
- The development of girls' football to allow girls to participate in competitions.
- A structured programme of events to increase participation of disengaged young people.
- Competitive opportunities for young people.
- Competitive opportunities for adults through the development of an adult league.

Improvements to the sports hall and swimming pool, including upgraded changing facilities would create an additional facility for community use.

We believe that these opportunities would have measurable benefits, including improved health and fitness, a reduction in obesity and a reduction in youth crime. Quite simply, we believe that we can secure external funding and use our own resources to make the town a better place to live for many people.

Is there is strategic need for additional football facilities in the town?

Newton Aycliffe and its surrounding area is served by 4 junior football clubs. Currently these clubs organise provision for somewhere in the region of 30 junior teams with ages ranging from under 8s up to under 18s. Such provision places a strain on the pitch resources within the town, not only in terms of the fulfilment of competitive fixtures, but also in providing adequate training and coaching opportunities, particularly in periods of inclement weather and dark nights. An artificial pitch would go a long way towards addressing these issues and thus improve the opportunities for young people in Newton Aycliffe. Increasing participation rates in football would address one of the key issues in the Local Area Action Plan which identifies activities for young people as a priority.

How can I find out more about this proposal?

There will be a meeting for parents, students and members of the community on 28th February 2013 at 6pm. Information is also available on our website www.woodham.org.uk.

What happens next?

Consultation on these proposals takes place between 7th January 2013 and 22nd March 2013. Please let us know what you think. There are a number of ways in which you can do this:

1. Write to us at Woodham Academy, Washington Crescent, Newton Aycliffe, Co. Durham, DL5 4AX
2. Email your views to l.woodward@woodham.org.uk
3. Attend the meeting at Woodham on 28th February 2013.

You can comment at any time until 3.15pm on Friday 22nd March 2013.