



## Wycombe Community Stadium

**Where we are, where we want to be and how we are aiming to get there**

A Factsheet

Wycombe District Council (WDC), Wycombe Wanderers and London Wasps are working together to investigate the potential for a new Community Stadium for Wycombe. The project is about finding a new, better and more suitable site for an enlarged sports and leisure facility that would benefit the Clubs as well as the community as a whole.

This facility would have a Community Stadium as its centre but provide much, much more. It is an opportunity to invest in something that will help both of the Clubs to be successful on and off the pitch as well as deliver far-reaching economic, health and community benefits for the District.

This Factsheet is designed to provide information about the work being carried out to identify a potential new site. The document explains:

- **Our vision** – what we are aiming to achieve
- **Why** – the benefits we believe a new Community Stadium and Sports Village would provide
- **The process** – how we are taking these ideas forward and what happens next
- **The timetable** – for this part of the project and possible next steps

### Our vision

We believe that the success of Wycombe Wanderers and Wasps contributes to the greater success of Wycombe. Our vision is for a new shared Community Stadium and potential Sports Village which helps both Clubs to be successful on and off the pitch – realising their potential and building a stronger future.

Sporting success and achievement is just one part of the story. The Clubs – through their Youth and Community Programmes, through the economic contribution they make, and through the benefits they bring to Wycombe's reputation as a whole – deliver much, much more for our community.

A new stadium and the improved infrastructure that would go with it would create a valuable asset for the District. Alongside a 15-20,000-seat stadium, comprehensive sports, leisure, education and commercial facilities are being considered.

The potential Sports Village – with two successful Clubs at its heart – would be a true community facility. A place where people of all ages can go to watch, participate in, learn about and enjoy sports and leisure activities.

Whilst we review the Adams Park location, our present view is that this vision cannot be achieved without relocating from Adams Park. As a first step in the process, WDC and the Clubs – through a special purpose vehicle called Wycombe Sports Developments Limited (WSDL) – have signed an agreement which means we can jointly progress work to see if it is viable to deliver a new Community Stadium.

The outcomes of this assessment will determine what happens next, where, when and how.

### **Why? – the benefits and what’s involved**

The need for a new stadium is driven by a series of important factors:

- Adams Park has serious constraints in terms of location, access and the overall quality of ‘experience’ that it can provide for home and away supporters.
- Opportunities to expand commercial activities at Adams Park are limited – it does not have the facilities that modern grounds need to diversify their income streams and build non match day business.
- The status quo is not viable – the current commercial performance of Wycombe Wanderers is not sustainable without significant financial patronage from Steve Hayes. Wasps cannot compete with national and international rivals based on the current set up.

To address these problems and to create a better future for the Clubs as well as the community, the partners have committed to investigating the potential for a new ground.

The new ground would ensure that the Clubs can do everything that they do today as well as provide additional facilities for the community.

- Providing a new stadium which, in turn, helps both Clubs to be successful and to maintain effective Youth and Community Programmes in Wycombe will deliver real benefits for sport and community access to it.
- Getting young people involved in sport has important social and community benefits – this scheme will help to do more of that.

A new site would mean the opportunity to develop new facilities in addition to the stadium.

- As well as the stadium, the scheme would have academy and training pitches (grass and synthetic) and a wide range of health & fitness activities and commercial facilities.

- The scheme would provide better and more accessible public facilities than currently available in the town. The facilities would be for community use.
- Improved facilities would create better opportunities for more people to participate in sport.
- By creating a broader mix of attractions and uses – and making them available seven days a week – there will be a significant opportunity to expand on the current commercial activities of both Clubs and increase financial performance.

This is about much more than the bricks and mortar of a new ground for Wycombe Wanderers and Wasps. It is about how these Clubs and these new facilities can help Wycombe and the wider community to achieve their potential too.

- By creating a destination and an attraction that people are proud of and which, like Eden, helps Wycombe to progress and to prosper.
- By making an investment into sporting excellence that inspires people, both young and old, to get involved in sport – in whatever shape or form.

### **The process**

WDC and WSDL have agreed to work together to see if it is viable to deliver a new Community Stadium. This is one, early step in what could be a much more comprehensive journey, depending on the outcome of assessments.

The partners have signed a Collaboration Agreement to formalise the way that they work together and agreed a fixed project budget. This budget is being met by joint funding (50/50) between WDC and WSDL with each contributing up to £250,000 to next phase of activity.

Work will now take place to investigate and assess potentially suitable sites in the District. WDC will carry out this work and will be advised by technical and professional specialists, as appropriate. WSDL will input to the process.

It is expected that the process of identifying and assessing potential sites will take in the region of 12 months. Further decisions will be made on the basis of the conclusions from these site and suitability assessments with a WDC Cabinet meeting in July 2011 programmed as a key milestone date.

Proposals for redeveloping any new site for the Community Stadium and potential Sports Village will need to be developed with strong input from the community and the Clubs. Planning policy and the statutory planning process require consultation and engagement ahead of a planning application being proposed. There will be detailed consultation and opportunities for people to have their say.

If, following the assessment work, the conclusions show that a deliverable new site cannot be found, the partners will re-examine their position before agreeing a way forward.

To keep people informed, a project website will shortly be launched providing information and updates.

### **The timetable**

The Collaboration Agreement was agreed in March 2010. The target date for a review as to whether or not to proceed is June 2011.

While there are a number of important reasons for anticipating a potential opening of the new Community Stadium, the timetable cannot be fixed until the site assessment and other phases of work have been completed.

At that point – and assuming a suitable and deliverable site has been identified – the Council will decide whether it will proceed with altering its land allocations/planning policy in the Core Strategy. A target would also be set for developing and submitting an outline planning application.

Any Core Strategy Alteration and separate planning application would be considered through the statutory planning process.

The indicative timetable for key stages in the project is:

- March 2010 – sign Collaboration Agreement
- April 2010 – commence formulation of strategic options and evidence gathering
- Oct-November 2010 – public and stakeholder consultation on high level options
- January 2011 – WDC Cabinet timetabled to agree preferred options consultation document
- Feb-March 2011 – public and stakeholder consultation on preferred option
- May-July 2011 – finalise Core Strategy Alternations document
- July 2011 – further Cabinet and WDC review

Important points to remember are:

- WDC and WSDL are at an early stage in the process.
- The initial phase of work agreed to is for site assessment and scoping only. No decisions have been made on individual sites nor how they might be developed.
- The outcome of the site assessment work will determine the extent to which planning 'designations' need changing and the subsequent timeline.

- It is in the financial interests of both Clubs that a resolution should be reached as soon as possible.
- The sooner a suitable site is found – and subject to further assessments and decision-making – the sooner the benefits of a new Community Stadium and Sports Village can be delivered.
- There will be numerous, well-publicised opportunities for local people to have their say.

### **Further information**

Further information on the project is available via the partners' websites.

[www.wycombe.gov.uk](http://www.wycombe.gov.uk)

[www.wycombewanderers.co.uk](http://www.wycombewanderers.co.uk)

[www.wasps.co.uk](http://www.wasps.co.uk)

- A project website will be launched shortly as a central source of updates and information on the proposals.
- For any general enquiries, contact the project consultation line on **0845 313 2184** (Monday-Friday, 9am-6.00pm)

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