

Planning an Improvement Project

Introduction

The Football Stadia Improvement Fund (FSIF) provides grant aid to clubs in the Football league, the Conference in the National league system, down to Level 4 and below that wish to improve their facilities for players, for officials and for spectators. The purpose of this series of Data Sheets is to offer initial technical and design advice to applicants and their professional advisers, and Data Sheet 1 concentrates on the process of planning and specifying an improvement project. These Data Sheets are primarily aimed at clubs in the National League System.

The series should not be seen as a substitute for reference to the Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (the 'Green Guide'). Nothing published in these Data Sheets overrides the requirements for any statutory approvals needed for improvements or developments at football grounds.

Whilst these Data Sheets concentrate on facility design rather than the management or stewarding of football grounds, it is important to remember that good design and good management go hand in hand. One of the two critical factors used in calculating the safe capacity of a football ground is the 'S' factor – the assessed quality of the safety management of the ground.

The range of projects considered for grant aid will vary widely and your scheme may include all of the improvements identified

by the FSIF as eligible for assistance or only certain elements, but fundamental to all grant applications is the need to think through your project in a systematic way, planning for the long term.

Types of Project

The types of project which qualify for FSIF funding and the amount of grant available depend upon the level at which clubs are playing, and are set out in full in the Fund's guidance notes. They include:

- Safety work
- Refurbishment and upgrading
- Spectator accommodation (excluding directors' and executive facilities)
- Toilets
- Floodlighting
- Improvements to changing facilities
- Pitch drainage
- Relocation projects
- Provision for disabled spectators.

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Planning a Project

Firstly, consider your timescale. If your scheme involves work to your pitch or your clubhouse can you plan ahead so that this can be done outside the playing season? If the timing will be tight, what contingency plans can you make to play elsewhere if necessary? Are there any legal issues concerning freeholds or leases to be negotiated?

Identifying the tasks which will take longest will enable you to prepare a timetable for the project, allowing you to fit in the short-term tasks so that they can run in parallel rather than 'end-on'. This timetable will form part of your application.

The second task should be information-gathering. This will include the requirements of your local authority for giving statutory approval for your ground and copies of some or all of the publications listed at the end of these Data Sheets.

Next, make an early visit to the local council planning department to establish what work (if any) will need planning approval. Bear in mind that the Council can, if necessary, take enforcement action to make you demolish any new development that does not have permission. Do not rely on the advice of a third party such as a builder or contractor; it is your legal responsibility to obtain the right permission, not theirs.

The timescale involved with a planning application will be partly outside your control, but it will definitely affect the realism of the timetable you are preparing for your overall project.

The Council can give one of two types of planning permission: outline or full (sometimes called 'detailed') permission. Outline permission deals with the principle of what you are intending to do and is usually appropriate where:

- you wish to avoid the cost of preparing full drawings at this stage
- the design or the size of your scheme might be controversial
- you are uncertain whether or not permission will be granted
- funding bodies require you to apply in order to judge how realistic your plans are.

Outline permission does not authorise you to start work.

The planning department will be interested not only in the physical developments you are proposing but also in the question of whether any of these will affect the pattern of use of your ground. Issues which could arise include whether a ground will go from seasonal use to all-year round, whether there will be evening as well as daytime use, whether the number of spectators will increase significantly, and whether tournaments and/or school usage will put extra pressure on your access and car-parking arrangements by generating extra traffic.

If your project (e.g. floodlighting) is likely to impinge on local people it may be in your interest to carry out a consultation exercise. Although the local authority must consult a range of interested parties once your application has been lodged, it is in your interest to take the initiative at an early stage to forestall the rumours and exaggerations which can build up when people do not have correct information.

Invite local residents to view your plans, either at an informal meeting or via an open meeting, preferably chaired by a neutral figure such as one of the ward councillors. If people have anxieties or criticisms, listen to them and be prepared to amend your proposals. Avoid confrontation and do not adopt an entrenched position.

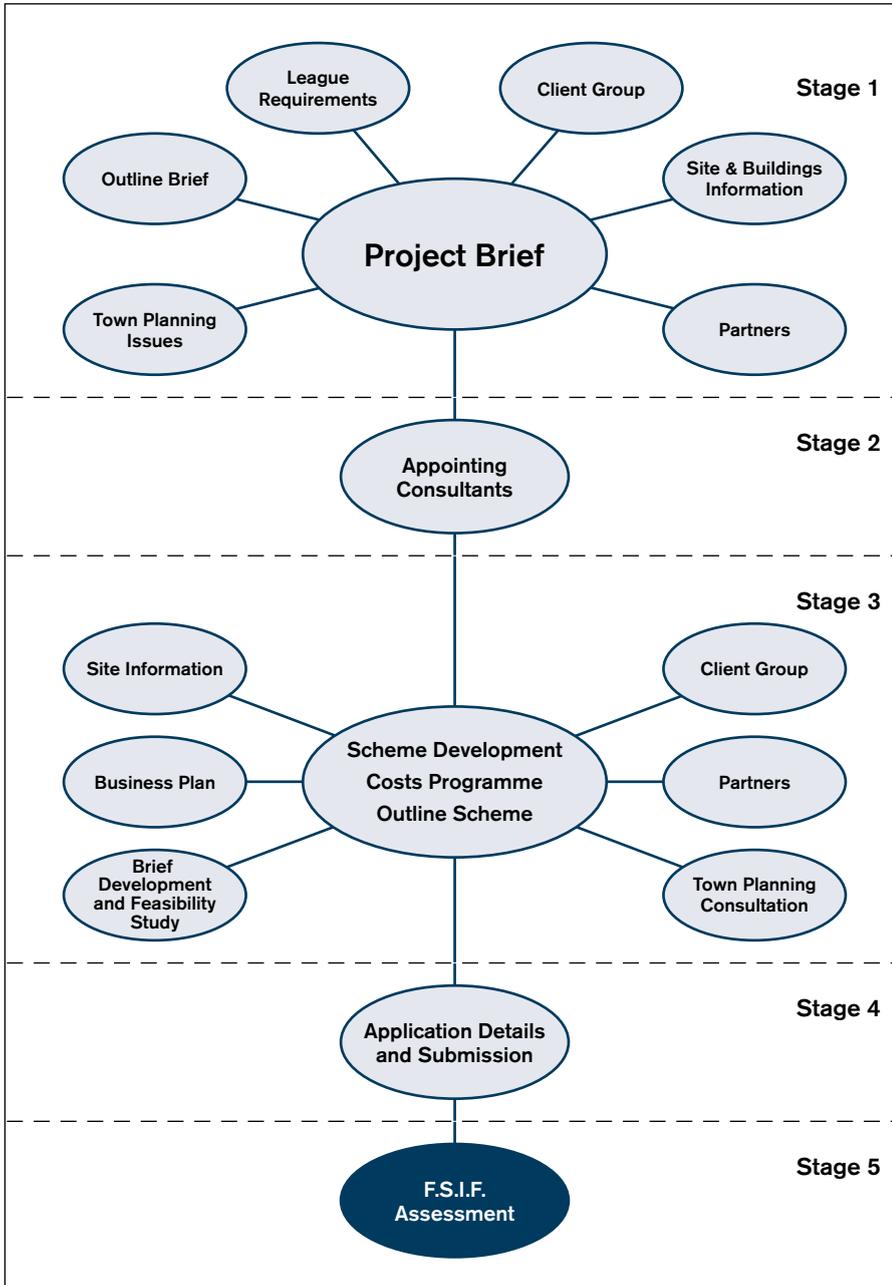


Diagram 1: Project Stages

Any significant-sized project will need to progress through a series of stages, which are shown here in Diagram 1.

STAGE 1

Project Brief

The project brief aims and objectives lie at the heart of any scheme which is of significant size, and a poor brief can lead to a surprising number of problems. If your project overspends or overruns its timetable, or if your architect or contractor do not seem to understand your requirements it may be because they are at fault. But it may be because you, the client, have not been clear about what you require or because your written brief was vague or incomplete.

A full brief for a sizeable project will cover the following topics, distinguishing in each case between what exists at present and what you are planning to provide:

- a site plan showing the extent and scope of your legal ownership, legal agreements, covenants, wayleaves and rights of way
- buildings, mains services, pitch layouts and local knowledge of ground conditions
- use of pitches, including future programme of usage
- the specific requirements of the league in which you play or are aiming to achieve
- pedestrian and vehicle access and egress; car parking
- initial schedule of proposed accommodation for changing rooms and support facilities
- topography (levels, trees and special features)
- access for people with disabilities, spectating and support accommodation
- other sports uses and events
- timetable for the project
- details of any initial consultations with the local planning authority and any other agencies
- your funding sources and initial capital budget
- any partnerships with clubs, schools, football programmes.

Client Group

Applicants will now need to consider who will prepare the grant application and who will be responsible for the project itself.

How far can clubs contribute these skills from within their own membership? The FSIF is committed to raising the standards and quality of football facilities in this country. Professional practices are trained to find solutions to clients' needs. They have professional indemnity insurance and must abide by codes of conduct laid down by their professional bodies, on risk of expulsion. Even where trained and qualified professionals are to be found among your members (e.g. architect, engineer) there are good arguments for employing 'outside' professionals. It is easier to maintain an arm's length relationship with them and, in the last resort, to take legal action against them.

You should agree in writing with any professionals who you employ to advise you what the scope of their work will be and how their fee will be calculated. Do not leave it open-ended.

Even where applicants decide to employ professionals to design and supervise the project itself, thought should be given to who will liaise with the various professionals. This is a role that can be

played by a member of the management committee but there is a good case for sharing the responsibility and forming a 'project group' or steering committee.

Choose a co-ordinator or project leader for this group, someone who is a regular point of contact and can take minor decisions. They should be diplomatic in dealing with club colleagues and with public officials, and should have reasonably good administrative skills.

Other members of the group should ideally have a mix of skills and should be clear about what their roles are. If necessary, write down a simple 'job description' for each of them. It is key that someone takes financial management of the project.

STAGE 2

Appointing Professionals

You may wish to entrust the entire responsibility for the project to professionals: most football clubs will be familiar with the different skills employed by (say) quantity surveyors, civil engineers or planning consultants, but the following guidelines may help to define the role of certain other key professionals and make clear your relationship with them.

Architect

Architects do not just design buildings. They have a responsibility for supervising and checking construction work on your behalf and, in most cases, they have experience of preparing feasibility studies for clients. They can also act as 'lead consultant' for an entire project.

Choosing an architect is an important decision. Buildings last for many years and, once built, are costly to alter so the selection of your architect should not be a casual matter. We advise you to draw up a shortlist of say four or five practices and then interview them to explore how they would approach your project, asking what relevant experience they have. They will no doubt wish to show you examples of work they have carried out for other clients.

The RIBA has a Clients' Advisory Service with a database of practices listing their activities, size, location and experience and will advise clients on an appointment of an architectural practice. This is a free service to clients.

Surveyor

Most chartered building surveyors offer a similar scope of professional service to those outlined for architects, though more often where the extension, adaptation or refurbishment of existing buildings is involved. They can also advise on the condition and suitability of facilities in respect of future planned uses.

General practice surveyors can advise on property values, land acquisition, tenure issues and associated legislation. Their advice should be sought whenever a project includes the purchase or disposal of property. Information on the selection of surveying practices is available from the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

Electrical Engineer

Lighting schemes are not for the amateur. They must be designed and installed by qualified lighting engineers to professional

standards, and advice can also be sought on energy running costs and measures to reduce consumption. More information on floodlighting is provided in Data Sheet 6 in this series.

Quantity Surveyor

The skills of a quantity surveyor come into play when you have to calculate the capital cost of your project and, on large schemes, during the life of the project itself when work that has been completed must be valued for certification purposes.

Structural Engineers

Structural engineers can advise on the structural condition of your facilities and will be part of the design team when structural alterations or new buildings and stands are included in your project.

Mechanical Engineer

A mechanical engineer will advise on existing and new services connected with water supplies, hot and cold water services, air handling and ventilation requirements or statutory requirements for your facilities

Landscape Architect

A chartered landscape architect can advise when site layout, car parking, earth moving or tree planting are important.

Agronomist

The services of a turfgrass agronomist are valuable when a project is heavily dependent upon grass pitch drainage or the laying of new pitches.

Planning Supervisor (CDM – Health and Safety)

The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 1994 are aimed at improving the overall management and co-ordination of health, safety and welfare throughout all stages of a construction project. The CDM Regulations place duties on all those who can contribute to the health and safety of a project, including clients, designers and contractors and they create a new duty holder – the planning supervisor. They also introduce new documents – Health and Safety Plans and the Health and Safety File.

The CDM Regulations apply to most construction projects apart from a few exceptions and, under the Regulations, you as 'client' have a series of duties which include appointing a planning supervisor.

Access Consultant

Access and provision for people with disabilities and your proposals in respect of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is a necessary requirement and important aspect for all applicants. A specialist access consultant will carry out an audit of your existing facilities and appraisal of your scheme proposals.

Planning Consultant

If your project involves sensitive planning issues, or if it looks as though planning permission will be difficult to obtain, you may wish to engage a planning specialist to help you to prepare the planning application.

STAGE 3

Scheme Development

The feasibility study is a necessary and important process which will enable club management and any project/steering group to consider all the options open to them, to make informed decisions, and to submit a realistic and considered project to the Fund. The topics to be addressed in a feasibility study include the following.

- Access and egress to the site for pedestrians and vehicles
- Circulation and movement within the site
- The age and condition of any existing buildings, with condition surveys if appropriate
- Details of existing, and proposed, spectator provision (seated and standing) and ground capacity
(See Data Sheet 2)
- Existing and proposed facilities for players, for home and visiting teams
- First aid provision and, depending on the requirements of particular leagues, medical services
- Floodlighting requirements
(See Data Sheet 6)
- Existing and proposed facilities for directors
- Catering requirements
(See Data Sheet 5)
- Provision for coaches; dugouts
(See Data Sheet 6)
- Town planning issues, including the ground's relationship with adjoining properties
- Disability access, including a disability access audit
(See Data Sheets 3 and 4)

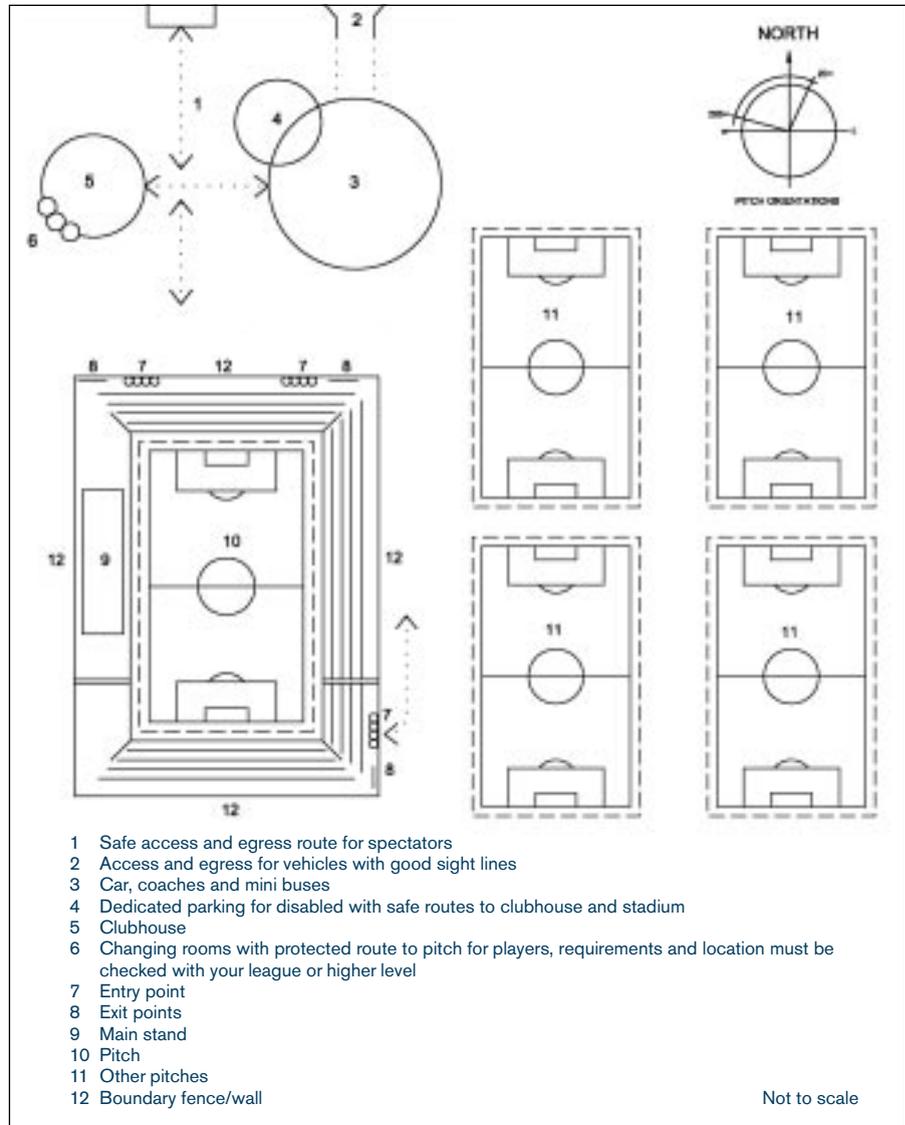


Diagram 2: A possible site plan and layout

- Toilets for all ground users
(See Data Sheet 5)
- The standards and requirements of your league
- A development plan (see next page)
- An appraisal of the various options, including refurbishment or new build, the footprint of any new buildings, and even the major step of relocating to a new site altogether.

Where options are presented in the feasibility study it is important to show in your application the reasoning which lies behind the choice you have made. It may be obvious to you, but it may not be to third parties and to funding bodies.

Diagram 2 shows a clubhouse outside of the stadium. Many clubs will have or are proposing clubhouse facilities and other support accommodation within the designated stadium area. (Diagram 3)

Development Plan

It is rare for clubs not to seek promotion, and an important part of your project planning should be to stand back and take stock of the opportunities, as well as the limitations, of your club ground. One feature of this appraisal will of course be the requirements of the league immediately above you, but with or without promotion it is wise to prepare a long term – say 10 year – development plan so that decisions taken now (such as the positioning of an entrance or a new building) do not block your prospects of expanding and developing in a few years' time.

It is often better for clubs to plan major developments as a series of smaller projects, or phases, spread over a number of years.

Access and transportation will be a key feature of this. If your site is very cramped there may not be much that you can achieve, but if space permits you should be thinking ahead and planning access for cars, coaches, ambulances, minibuses and pedestrians. Consider at the same time whether circulation within the site, especially for spectators, can be improved.

Apart from transportation there will be other long term issues to include in your thinking at this stage: whether the clubhouse can be extended or altered, what press and media provision you can make, where a control room might be located, and the long term condition of the playing surface itself (see *Data Sheet 6*).

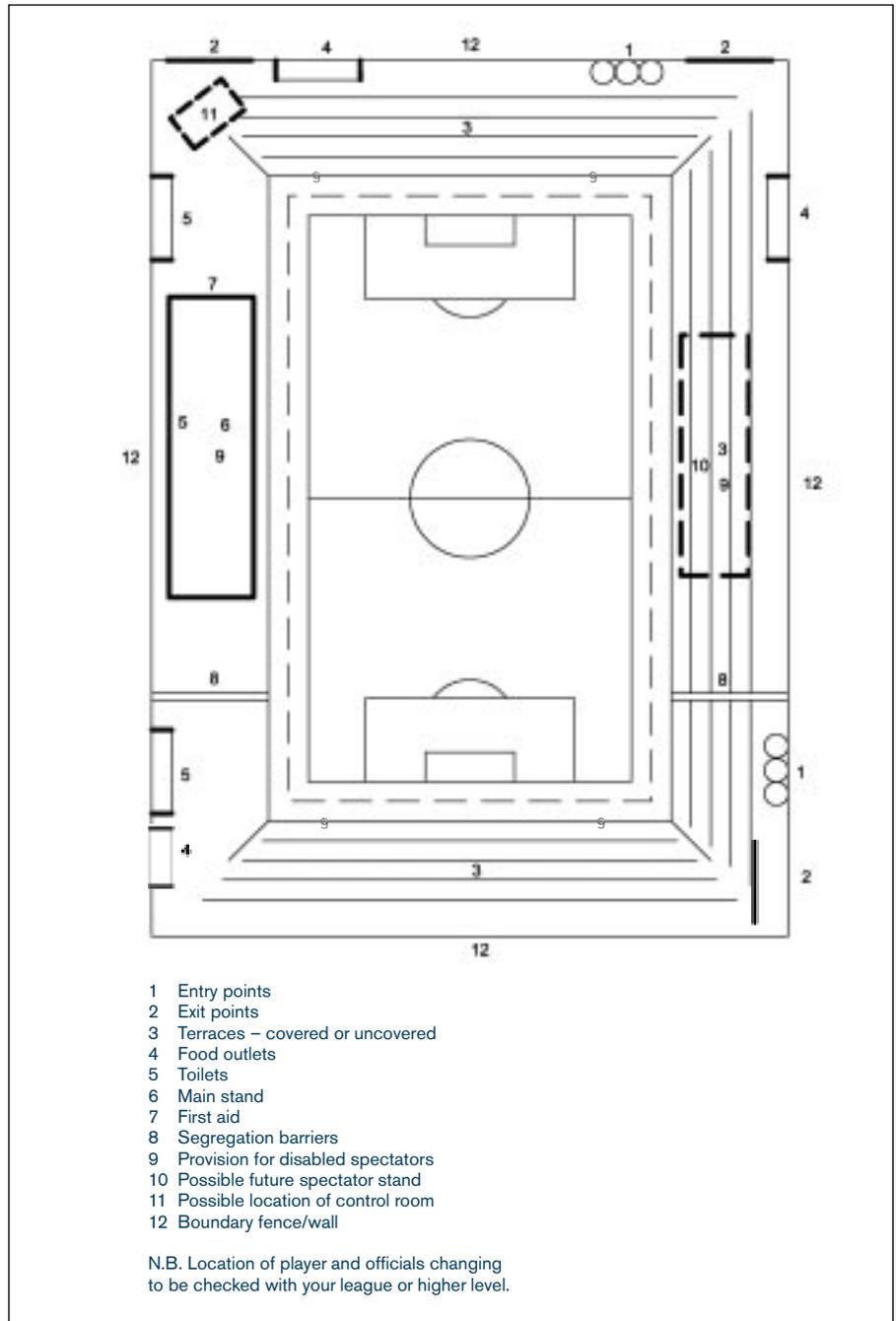


Diagram 3: Stadium Development Plan

Statutory Approvals

The Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds (the "Green Guide") issued jointly by the Department of Culture Media and Sport and the Scottish Office, provides detailed guidance on measures intended to improve safety at existing sports grounds and on the design and management of new grounds or newly-constructed sections of grounds. The Green Guide has no statutory force but many of its recommendations will be given force of law at individual grounds by their inclusion in safety certificates issued under the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 or the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987.

Under the provisions of the Safety of Sports Grounds Act 1975 the management of designated grounds are required to obtain a safety certificate from their local authority. A ground may be designated by the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport when in his opinion it has accommodation for more than 10,000 spectators or 5,000 in the case of Premiership or Football League Grounds. The 1975 Act defines a sports ground as a place where sports or other competitive activities take place in the open air, and where accommodation has been provided for spectators, consisting of artificial structures, or of natural structures modified for the purpose.

Any ground that is not designated under the 1975 Act but which contains a covered stand with accommodation for 500 or more spectators (either seated or standing) is required to have a safety

certificate for that stand in accordance with the provisions of the Fire Safety and Safety of Places of Sport Act 1987.

It is recommended good practice that local authorities responsible for issuing safety certificates under the 1975 and 1987 Acts should set up Safety Advisory Groups made up of representatives of the local authority, the emergency services and ground management. The purpose of such groups is to provide a forum for informed discussion of safety issues at the ground.

The need to ensure that planning permission will be obtained or has been granted is discussed earlier in this Data Sheet. Other statutory approvals, certifications and standards may influence and affect your scheme proposals and long term development plans, whether they be works to existing facilities or new build.

Recent amendments and revisions to the Building Regulations include PART L (April 2002) – Conservation of Fuel and Power and PART M (May 2004) – Access to and Use of Buildings.

The Disability Discrimination Act of 1995 provides a right of access to services and to employment for people with disabilities, and providers of services must cater for their needs. From October 2004 onwards 'reasonable adjustments' will have to have been made to the design of a facility to remove barriers to access, which means that new buildings with full access must be designed now. The Act also requires that no business which employs 20 or

more staff (whether they are permanent, temporary or contract workers) should discriminate unreasonably against current or prospective employees who have a disability (*see Data Sheets 3 and 4*).

Procurement

'Procurement' denotes the route you choose to follow to design and commission a new facility. There is a wide range of procurement methods but the main types are as follows. Each has its advantages and disadvantages.

Traditional Method

Here the client draws up a brief and then appoints an architect or a full design team. The design team seeks competitive tenders from building contractors, meaning that contractors compete to build the same building. This method has the advantage of putting the design firmly under the client's control, though it can be a slow process.

Design and Build

Again, the client prepares the brief with the help of his professional advisers but then invites several contractors to put forward their design solutions and their tenders. One contractor is appointed to do the work.

This method can save time and cost, but do not assume that you will be saving architects' fees. In most cases it means that the design and build contractor will be paying an architect and recovering the cost from your contract sum. However you can, if you wish, employ your architect in the design stages and then nominate

them to work with the contractor on the later stages of the work. Beware of quick and easy design solutions which are at the expense of quality.

Design and Construct

You, the client, appoint an architect who prepares the design and a detailed performance specification but not the working drawings. Tenders are then invited from contractors and the appointed firm prepares the working drawings and constructs the building.

This method can ensure speed and may save on costs, but it is important to ensure that the quality of the design and the building is not compromised. There can also be difficulties in apportioning responsibility for any problems that occur.

Package Deals

Package deals offer a standard 'off-the-peg' product which can be suitable for e.g. small spectator stands but not for adaptations or for refurbishment schemes.

Management Contract (Fast Track)

The characteristics of a Management Contract are that the employer engages the Management Contractor to participate in the project at an early stage, contribute construction expertise to the design and manage the construction. The Management Contractor is not employed for the purposes of undertaking any of the works but solely for managing the process. Every item of building work is sub-contracted to other works contractors.

This sub-contracting feature of Management Contracting distinguishes it from Construction Management, under which the separate works contracts are all made directly between the employer and the works contractors and the employer will, therefore, have an active role in the management of the process.

Both these procurement methods are generally only used where the project is fairly large and complex and there is a need for early completion. Advice should be sought from the employer's professional advisors before embarking on either of these routes.

In preparing their application, especially when providing the likely costs of a project, clubs should bear in mind the difference between the following terms.

- An *estimate* (even where it has been provided by professionals) is exactly what it says – an estimated cost which is not in any way binding. The eventual cost may turn out to be higher or lower.
- A *quotation* is likely to be calculated in a more detailed way, and the provider can be expected to stand by it unless there are contingency clauses. It is more likely to apply to specific products or services (e.g. a heating system) than to an entire building project.
- A *tender* is a formal bid for a contract, in competition with other tenderers, and is binding upon the provider for the period named in the tender.

A tender should be a response to a specification for the project, to ensure that tenders can be compared 'like for like'.

Partnering

A relatively new approach to procurement but one strongly favoured by Government and gaining popularity, especially in the public sector. It can take several forms, primarily split into single-project partnering and multi-project partnering. Other variations along similar lines are Framework Agreements.

The practical implications of Partnering can be quite complex but in essence the Client selects (usually through interview) a contractor together with a consultancy team. The project cost is often negotiated and a "Guaranteed Maximum Price" agreed but based on historic costs of similar projects. It is an open book approach and any savings are shared between all parties in a predetermined ratio. It relies heavily on teamwork and good communications with all parties working towards common goals of timely completion and budget.

It has been accepted for several Foundation projects, is approved by Sport England and by Local Authorities in compliance with "Best Value" criteria. There are now standard forms of contracts covering this form of procurement.

Programme

This refers to the programme, or timetable, for your project, setting out a series of dates or milestones for obtaining all your funding, for preparing tenders, for letting a contract, for accepting the finished facility from the contractor and for holding an opening ceremony. It is vital that this is an honest and realistic programme and that you do not turn it into an over-optimistic wish list.

As part of the programme, or in a separate document, you should be able to predict the cash flow at the various critical stages of the project. Normal income, plus any expected grant payments, should be matched on one side of the equation against the calls on your funds from the contractor (plus any fees payable) on the other. This will enable you to avoid a cash crisis during the period of the project. You may consider setting up a separate account through which to manage the project.

STAGE 4

Application Details

In addition to the completed forms, your application should include some or all of the following:

- the feasibility study
- any performance standards and specifications for buildings, e.g. heating etc.
- town planning consultations and/or permissions
- scheme drawings – plans, sections and elevations where appropriate
- professional estimates or competitively tendered costs with all other related costs included
- the programme and cash flow
- confirmation and details of provision and access for disabled spectators
- the club's accounts and confirmation that any partnership funding is in place.

Publications

Guide to Safety at Sports Grounds ('Green Guide')

The Stationery Office
PO Box 29
Norwich NR3 1GN
Tel. 0870 600 5522
www.the-stationery-office.com

Sport England Guidance Notes

From: Sport England Publications
PO Box 255
Wetherby LS23 7LZ
Tel. 08705 210255

Addresses

Football Licensing Authority

27 Harcourt House
19 Cavendish Square
London W1G 0PL
Tel. 020 7491 7191
Fla@flaweb.org.uk

Royal Institute of British Architects

(Client Advisory Service)
66 Portland Place
London W1N 4AD
Tel. 020 7307 3700

Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors

12 Gt. George Street
London SW1P 3AE
Tel. 020 7222 7000

Disclaimer

This Data Sheet is part of a series produced by the Stadia Improvement Fund. Whilst every effort is made to ensure that the contents are accurate the FSIF, its servants or agents shall not at any time be held responsible or liable for any loss, damage or expenditure arising from reliance placed upon the information in this Data Sheet. The information is intended as a guide, and should be supplemented where necessary by professional advice.

The FSIF reserves the right to amend, add to or discontinue the advice contained in this Data Sheet.

Should you have any queries on this Data Sheet, or anything on the wider work of the FSIF, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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