

Leisure & Recreation Committee

Report: Mannington Recreation Ground – Phase 1 Drainage Improvement and Football Foundation Funding

Date: 3rd September 2026

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1. Purpose of Report

1.1 To update Members on the work undertaken following the Grounds Management Association (GMA) technical assessment of Mannington Recreation Ground and subsequent investigation of the existing drainage infrastructure.

1.2 To present the proposed Phase 1 remedial drainage scheme, focused on establishing a new main drainage route and improving the existing outfall infrastructure.

1.3 To advise Members of the opportunity to seek financial support through the Football Foundation Grass Pitch Drainage Fund.

1.4 To provide Members with an indicative project cost based on the mean of the two contractor quotations received to date, noting that the quotations are being obtained to support the grant application and do not represent a proposed contract award.

1.5 To seek Members' support to continue developing the project, establish the final funding requirement and progress an application to the Football Foundation.

2. Recommendations

Members are asked to:

2.1 Note the findings of the GMA technical assessment and July 2026 key-stage drainage investigation.

2.2 Note that an existing surface-water drainage route and outfall to the River Ray has been positively identified and appears potentially capable of supporting the proposed drainage scheme, subject to further investigation, cleaning and statutory approvals.

2.3 Support in principle the proposed Phase 1 remedial drainage scheme, comprising principally:

- investigation and remediation of the existing drainage outfall;
- installation of a suitable headwall at the River Ray;
- installation of approximately 410 metres of new 160mm sealed main drainage;
- installation of new inspection/silt chambers;
- connection of viable existing drains encountered during excavation; and
- associated earthworks, reinstatement and grass-establishment works.

2.4 Note that two quotations have now been received and that, for financial planning purposes, the mean indicative project cost is approximately £36,300 including a 10% contingency, before any additional investigation, professional, statutory or unforeseen costs.

2.5 Note that the Football Foundation Grass Pitch Drainage programme provides a potential funding route of up to £25,000, subject to eligibility and formal grant approval.

2.6 Note that, using the current mean estimate, a maximum £25,000 Football Foundation contribution would leave an indicative funding requirement of approximately £11,300, before currently excluded costs.

2.7 Authorise officers to:

- a. complete and validate the contractor quotation exercise;
- b. undertake the necessary cleaning, jetting/rodding, dye testing and CCTV investigation of the existing outfall where required;
- c. continue technical liaison with the GMA;
- d. engage with the Environment Agency, Wales & West Utilities and other relevant bodies as required;
- e. develop and submit a Football Foundation Grass Pitch Drainage application; and
- f. explore additional partnership and external funding opportunities to minimise the Council contribution.

2.8 Agree that the final proposed Council contribution is brought back to Members for approval once:

- contractor quotations have been confirmed;
- drainage investigations are complete;
- professional and statutory costs are known; and
- the Football Foundation contribution and other funding opportunities have been established.

3. Background

3.1 Mannington Recreation Ground is one of the Council's principal grass-pitch sites and has historically accommodated a significant number of football pitches alongside cricket and wider recreational use.

3.2 The Council commissioned the Grounds Management Association to undertake a detailed technical assessment following long-standing concerns regarding waterlogging, historic drainage systems and the reliability of the pitches during periods of wet weather.



3.3 The assessment identified several generations of drainage across the site. Much of the existing system is understood to have become ineffective through a combination of:

- age;
- sedimentation;
- tree-root ingress;
- damaged or unidentified drainage routes; and
- uncertainty regarding the condition of existing outfalls.

3.4 Rather than immediately progressing a significantly more expensive full re-drainage of the individual playing pitches, the GMA recommended a phased approach.

3.5 The proposed first phase is intended to establish a reliable main drainage backbone through the site. This provides infrastructure into which viable existing drainage and future secondary pitch-drainage systems can be connected.

3.6 The GMA specification describes Phase 1 as the installation of a new main drain as the first stage of the wider sports-field drainage upgrade. This includes a new headwall, inspection chambers, a new sealed main drainage pipe and connections to viable existing drains identified during trenching.

4. 2026 Drainage Investigation

4.1 A further GMA key-stage monitoring inspection was undertaken in July 2026 to investigate the drainage infrastructure in the north-western corner of the recreation ground.

4.2 The purpose was specifically to establish whether an existing surface-water outfall could provide a suitable discharge point for the proposed new system.

4.3 Two existing inspection chambers were identified and opened. Both were approximately 3–4 metres deep and appeared to form part of an existing surface-water drainage network.

4.4 The drainage route was followed towards the north-western boundary, where an existing surface-water outfall discharging into the River Ray was positively identified.

4.5 This is an important finding because it provides a potential discharge route for the proposed new main drainage system.

4.6 The existing outfall pipe is approximately 110mm in diameter. Silt and soil ingress were evident around the pipe outlet and no discharge was observed during the inspection, although this was during a period of dry weather. The GMA therefore recommends further investigation before reliance is placed upon the existing outfall.

4.7 The recommended follow-up work includes:

- confirming ownership and function of the existing drainage network;
- checking and cleaning the inspection chambers and outfall;
- recording accurate ground and invert levels;
- jetting or rodding the section between SW IC2 and the River Ray;
- undertaking a dye test to confirm connectivity;
- undertaking CCTV inspection where required;
- undertaking any necessary remedial repairs;
- obtaining relevant statutory approvals; and
- liaising with the Environment Agency and gas-pipeline owner.

4.8 This enabling work will need to be undertaken or satisfactorily resolved before the Council commits to installation of the new drainage system.

5. Proposed Phase 1 Scheme

5.1 The GMA has developed a detailed specification and Bill of Quantities for the proposed Phase 1 works.

5.2 Phase 1 is deliberately limited to the main drainage infrastructure. It is not intended to represent a full re-drainage of all football pitches.

5.3 The principal works comprise:

- site establishment and protection of existing services;
- temporary access and working areas;
- installation of a new outfall headwall;
- installation of new inspection/silt chambers;
- approximately 410 linear metres of 160mm sealed main drainage;
- connection of viable existing drainage discovered during excavation;
- management of excavated material;
- replacement of topsoil;
- reinstatement of drain lines;
- seeding and fertilisation; and
- topping-up where settlement occurs.

5.4 The specification requires the pipe to be installed to a controlled gradient and provides for drains encountered during excavation to be assessed and connected into the new system where these remain operational and beneficial.

5.5 The GMA plan identifies five new silt chambers along the proposed main drainage route. Future Stage 2 lateral drainage is shown separately and does not form part of the present Phase 1 proposal.

5.6 This approach avoids undertaking isolated or abortive works and creates infrastructure capable of supporting later pitch-specific drainage investment.

6. Contractor Quotations

6.1 The specification and Bill of Quantities have been issued to specialist contractors for competitive quotation.

6.2 These quotations are being obtained to:

- establish a realistic market value;
- support the Football Foundation funding application;
- demonstrate the required procurement evidence;
- identify the likely partnership funding requirement; and
- inform future Council financial decisions.

6.3 At the time of writing, two contractor quotations have been received.

6.4 Contractor identities have been anonymised for the purposes of this Committee report while the quotation and funding exercise remains ongoing.

Contractor A

6.5 Contractor A submitted a base quotation of £42,523.35, giving an indicative total of £46,775.69 after application of a 10% contingency.

6.6 The largest individual elements of Contractor A's quotation are:

- mobilisation and overheads – £4,200;
- access, compound and service searches – £3,400;
- five inspection chambers – £6,000;
- 410m main drainage system – £18,126.10; and
- associated reinstatement and agronomic works.

Contractor B

6.7 Contractor B has submitted a substantially lower schedule of rates.

6.8 In reviewing the quotation, officers have interpreted the main drainage price of £36.20 as a rate per linear metre against the specified 410m drainage run. On this basis, the calculated drainage cost is approximately £14,842.

6.9 Including the other priced works and a 10% contingency, Contractor B provides an indicative project figure of approximately £25,800, subject to final confirmation of the rates, quantities and provisional items.

6.10 Contractor B's price also includes certain items on a provisional or unit-rate basis, including:

- ditch/outfall clearance;
- connections to existing drainage discovered during works; and
- elements dependent upon actual conditions encountered on site.

6.11 Officers will therefore confirm the submitted rates before any formal comparison or recommendation is made.

7. Mean Project Cost for Financial Planning

7.1 At this stage, neither quotation is proposed for acceptance.

7.2 Given the significant difference between the two submitted prices, it would not be prudent to use either the highest or lowest quotation alone as the Council's current financial planning assumption.

7.3 Officers have therefore calculated a mean of the two current indicative project totals, including a 10% contingency.

Current Quotation	Indicative Total
Contractor A	£46,775.69
Contractor B*	c. £25,817
Mean indicative project cost	c. £36,296

*Subject to confirmation of Contractor B's rates and provisional items.

7.4 For Committee and initial funding-planning purposes, it is therefore recommended that the Council uses a rounded £36,300 indicative construction budget.

7.5 This is an interim planning figure only.

7.6 The final project value may increase or decrease once:

- all quotations have been fully checked;
- existing outfall works have been investigated;
- drainage repairs are identified;
- the number of existing drainage connections is known;
- professional fees are finalised; and
- Environment Agency or other statutory requirements are confirmed.

8. Additional and Excluded Costs

8.1 The indicative £36,300 mean primarily relates to the construction works contained within the GMA Bill of Quantities.

8.2 Additional costs may arise from the following:

Existing Outfall Investigation

- jetting and/or rodding;
- specialist root cutting;
- CCTV inspection;
- dye testing;
- cleaning/desilting; and
- repairs to the existing pipe between SW IC2 and the River Ray.

Professional Fees

Further GMA involvement is likely to include:

- additional spot and invert-level surveys;
- completion and refinement of the detailed drainage design;
- technical advice during procurement;
- inspection of the drainage trench during installation;
- assessment of existing drains encountered during excavation; and
- final inspection/completion advice.

Statutory and Environmental Requirements

Potential additional costs could include requirements arising from:

- Environment Agency approvals;
- works affecting the River Ray;
- Wales & West Utilities requirements;
- ecology or arboricultural constraints; and
- other statutory permissions.

8.3 These costs will be quantified as far as reasonably possible before the final funding package is presented to Council.

9. Football Foundation Funding

9.1 Officers have engaged with Wiltshire FA and the Football Foundation regarding the proposals.

9.2 The Football Foundation has advised that, because the current PitchPower ratings at Mannington are predominantly Good or Advanced, securing a major capital grant for comprehensive drainage works may be challenging.

9.3 However, the Football Foundation has confirmed that its Grass Pitch Drainage programme is the appropriate route for the proposed Phase 1 scheme.

9.4 A potential grant of up to £25,000 is therefore being explored.

9.5 The application requires supporting technical and financial evidence, including:

- relevant PitchPower/GMA assessment information;
- appropriate drainage design and specification;
- drawings and schedule of works;
- comparable contractor quotations;
- evidence of partnership funding; and
- relevant statutory approvals where applicable.

9.6 The work undertaken to date means that much of the technical basis for an application is now in place.

10. Longer-Term Stage 2 Development

10.1 Phase 1 forms the first part of a potentially much larger improvement programme for Mannington.

10.2 The GMA plans identify future Stage 2 lateral drainage, with Pitches 7 and 8 proposed as the initial pitches for more comprehensive pitch-specific drainage.

10.3 The proposed Phase 1 main drainage system would therefore act as the infrastructure into which future lateral systems could discharge.

10.4 The Football Foundation has advised that larger future funding applications would need to demonstrate clear growth in football participation, particularly:

- women and girls;
- other under-represented groups;
- youth participation; and
- other identified areas of unmet demand.

10.5 A larger participation-led scheme would also require consideration of whether Mannington's existing ancillary facilities are sufficient to support this growth.

10.6 This may ultimately include consideration of:

- changing facilities;
- toilets and welfare provision;
- accessibility;
- parking and site access;
- pavilion provision; and
- overall pitch configuration.

10.7 Officers will therefore continue working with Wiltshire FA and local clubs to understand demand and develop a longer-term participation and facility strategy.

10.8 No commitment to Stage 2 expenditure is sought through this report.

11. Environment Agency and River Ray

11.1 The proposed system ultimately discharges towards the River Ray and includes works at the existing river outfall.

11.2 The GMA recommends that relevant permissions and statutory consents are established before the proposed new drainage system is connected or the existing outfall modified.

11.3 Officers will therefore engage with the Environment Agency to:

- confirm any required environmental permits or consents;
- establish requirements for the proposed headwall;
- confirm any constraints associated with working on the riverbank;
- consider flood-risk implications;
- ensure that works do not adversely affect the River Ray; and
- determine whether any additional environmental measures are necessary.

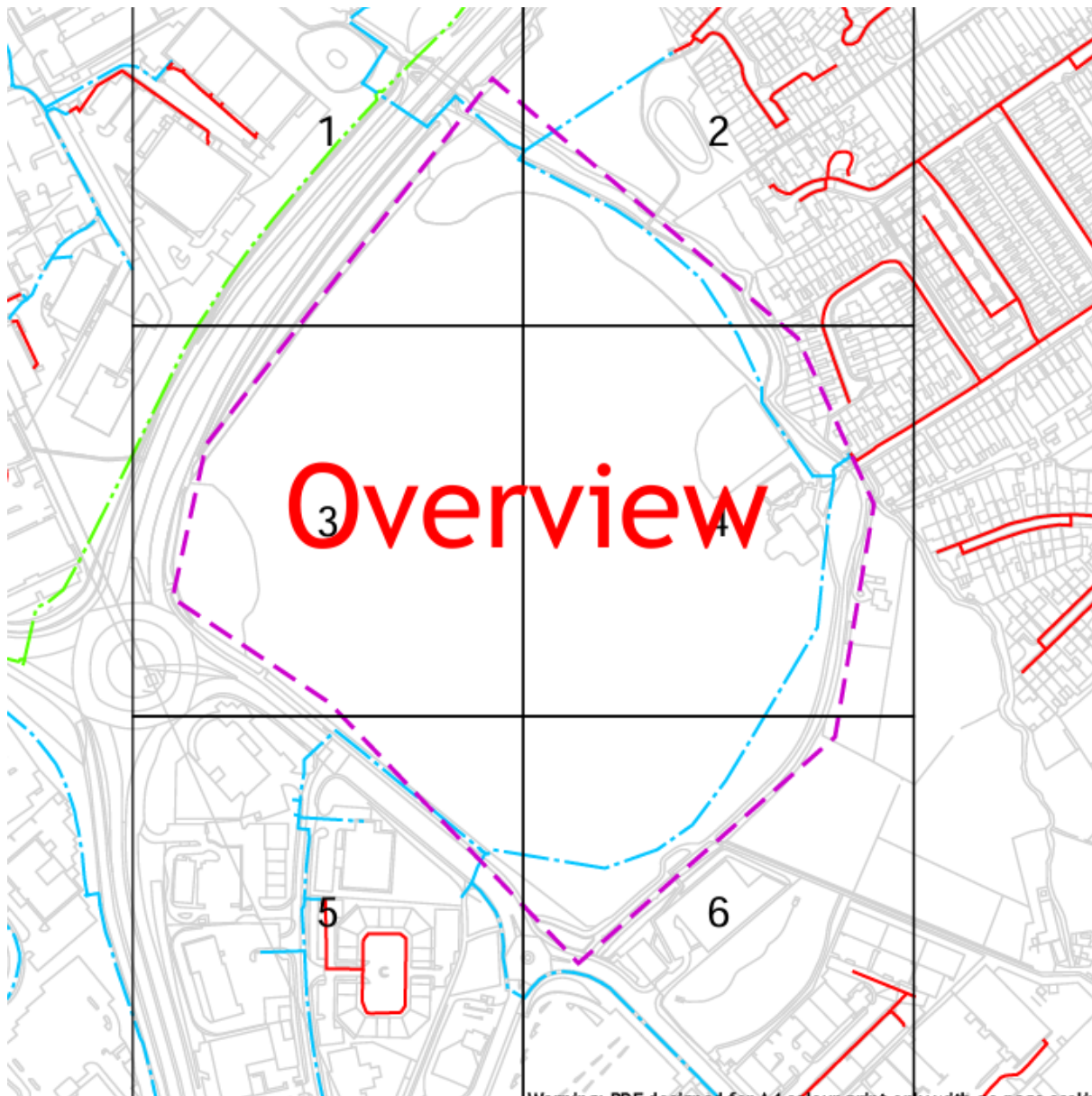
11.4 The Council will also seek to confirm ownership and responsibility for the existing surface-water drainage system.

12. Utilities

12.1 A Wales & West Utilities gas pipeline is known to cross the working area.

12.2 The GMA specification requires the contractor to identify, mark and protect all existing services and specifically identifies the need for engagement with Wales & West Utilities.

12.3 No excavation will take place until the necessary service information, safe-dig arrangements and contractor RAMS are in place.



13. Health and Safety / CDM

13.1 The eventual works will fall within the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015.

13.2 The appointed contractor will be required to fulfil the appropriate Principal Contractor duties and provide suitable RAMS.

13.3 Particular risks include:

- excavations and open trenches;
- underground services;
- the high-pressure gas infrastructure;
- public access across the recreation ground;
- working adjacent to the River Ray;
- deep existing inspection chambers; and
- movement of plant and machinery across grassed areas.

13.4 These matters will form part of the contractor assessment and pre-construction information before works are authorised.

14. Procurement

14.1 The current exercise is being undertaken as a request for quotations to support the funding application, rather than a contract award exercise.

14.2 Contractors have been asked to price the same GMA scope and Bill of Quantities.

14.3 Receipt of a quotation does not place any obligation upon the Council to proceed.

14.4 A contractor will only be appointed following:

- confirmation of external funding;
- approval of the Council contribution;
- confirmation of the final technical scope;
- statutory approvals;
- satisfactory due diligence;
- appropriate RAMS and insurance checks; and
- completion of the Council's required procurement process.

15. Financial Implications

15.1 There is currently no approved capital budget specifically allocated to deliver the Mannington Phase 1 drainage scheme.

15.2 A separate report or recommendation will therefore be brought forward seeking approval for the required Council contribution once the final project budget has been established.

16. Benefits

16.1 Although Phase 1 does not provide complete pitch drainage, it addresses one of the principal infrastructure weaknesses identified by the GMA.

16.2 Establishing a reliable main drainage route provides the basis for:

- improving the performance of existing drainage;
- reducing standing water;
- connecting viable historic drains;
- delivering future lateral drainage;
- reducing cancellations over the longer term; and
- progressively increasing the resilience and carrying capacity of the site.

16.3 The project also provides a realistic first step towards the Council's longer-term ambition for Mannington without committing the Council to the significantly higher costs of complete site redevelopment at this stage.

16.4 The scheme can therefore be viewed as an enabling investment which preserves future options for improving football provision at Mannington.