



Cheshire Football Association

Press Release

West Cheshire chosen as site for proposed 'world class' football facility

Cheshire FA can confirm that after extensive research across the Cheshire area it has identified Knights Grange in Winsford as its preferred site for a proposed elite performance centre, and centre of excellence for women's and girl's football.

This will be the first major facility of its kind in Europe. Profits generated from the site will be re-invested back into grassroots football and the wider sporting community to promote healthy and active lifestyles.

The new multi-million pound football and leisure facility will be developed on the former Knights Grange Golf Club in Winsford. It will create many jobs, attract thousands of visitors a year and enable investment into community sports facilities.

Louise Gear, Head of Women's Participation for The FA, said, "We're delighted this exciting project is now in the next stages of development. It's great for the local community, its very presence will help raise the profile of women's football and provide excellent facilities to play all formats of the game."

The project will be developed through collaboration between Cheshire FA, Cheshire West & Chester Council and ION Developments as well as national sporting facilities grant providers.

Rob Mason, Development Director for ION, said: "After many months of work analysing alternative site options, we are delighted that our project partners have confirmed Knights Grange as the preferred location. This will enable us to take scheme development to the next stage and a big step closer to delivering this exciting project."

Cheshire FA can also confirm it is working in partnership with a Women's Super League team with a view to becoming tenants of the new site for training and FA Women's Super League matches. Women's football is the fastest growing sport in the world and Everton Ladies would be the first female team in the country to have their own purpose-built performance centre.

The project will also be of huge benefit to the local community. It will help to support grass root football development and deliver wider health and wellbeing community benefits. The public will have access to high quality facilities and opportunities to get active and take part in a range of activities to suit all abilities.

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The Cheshire County Football Association Limited
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Facilities on the site will include:

- Elite performance training facilities.
- 3,000 capacity football stadium, including 1,000 seats
- Elite quality 3G outdoor football pitches
- Elite quality indoor 3G football pitch, the first of its kind available to the grassroots community.
- A high quality sports medical facility for rehabilitation, preventative and precautionary care of elite athletes and sports participants.
- A Luxury 'destination' hotel & spa, wellbeing and conferencing facility.
- An 'Urban Attack' outdoor adventure and adventurous public attraction.
- Classroom and Education facilities to help support encourage 6th Form, University or college courses.
- Office and catering facilities as well as high quality changing areas for grassroots teams using the site.

Stuart Manifold, Project Director at Cheshire FA, said: "We want to create a world class sports facility that is at the heart of the local community. During our feasibility process we reviewed over 30 site locations. Knights Grange gives us an opportunity to invest into Winsford as a town and contribute to regenerating the area.

"This facility will have national and international significance in football as well as providing outstanding facilities for community use. We are really looking forward to working with the Council and local residents to maximise this opportunity and deliver a scheme that carries wide ranging benefits."

Councillor Louise Gittins, Cabinet Member for Communities and Wellbeing, said: "This bold and ambitious project will be a great asset for the local community. A project of this size and design has never been done before. Never before has a local Council and a County FA worked together to create a facility like this. It will offer similar facilities to those at St George's Park in Staffordshire where the England national football team trains."

There will be activity on site in order to conduct site and land investigations and will be closely followed with a planning application. The formal development requires 110 acres of the remaining area will be available for the public to use for walking, fishing and outdoor leisure pursuits.

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