

Worth Parish Council

Minutes of the Additional Ordinary Council Meeting held in the Parish Hub, Copthorne on 6th July 2026 commencing at 9.15 pm

Present: Cllr Dorey (Chair)
Cllr Casella
Cllr Gibson
Cllr King
Cllr Lord
Cllr Phillips
Cllr Wilson

Cllr Coote (Vice Chair)
Cllr Dymond
Cllr Hodsdon
Cllr Kipps
Cllr Pointer
Cllr Scott
Cllr Williams

Mrs L Bannister (Chief Officer)

Project manager for Copthorne Recreation
Ground Rejuvenation Project

031 Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllr Bingle.

Absent – Cllr Cruickshank and Cllr Stewart

032 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Gibson declared an interest in the S106 application for the project as he is a member of the MSDC Cabinet where a decision may be made.

033 Copthorne Recreation Ground Rejuvenation Project

Full details of the matter discussed can be seen in the appended report.

It was RESOLVED to enter a contract with Warwick Landscaping for the groundworks element of the MUGA project, subject to the contract value not exceeding the S106 funding of £164,300 currently available for the project.

The Chief Officer was instructed to explore cost-saving options and incorporate these into the design after consultation with the Lead Councillor.

Any subsequent contract for the MUGA will be subject to a separate Council decision.

034 Date of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Monday 20th July 2026, at the Glebe Centre, Crawley Down.

Meeting closed at 9.25 pm.

Chairman: _____

Date: _____

WORTH PARISH COUNCIL

Report to Council

Title: Copthorne Recreation Ground - MUGA

Meeting: Full Council

Date: 6th July 2026

Agenda Item: 3

Background

At the additional Full Council meeting on 15th June, it was agreed that a contract could be entered with Warwick Landscaping at a cost of £169,795.59 plus VAT for construction of the MUGA.

During pre-contract investigations, it was found that greater excavation and infill works are required than previously anticipated. This is due to the depth of the topsoil. It was expected that this would be 200mm but is now known to be approximately 500mm. The topsoil needs to be removed and replaced with infill material so that the MUGA is built on a solid foundation. The cross-section diagrams which demonstrate this are appended to this report.

This will result in a greater cost as there will be more material to remove from site, and more infill material to be brought in.

This was unexpected as this amount of topsoil did not show in the porosity test, and the rest of the site has been normal.

Assuming that the topsoil depth is consistent along the whole of the construction area, additional costs could reach £48,000 **without further mitigation**. There are amendments that could be made to the design that would minimise this cost, such as reducing the slope of the pitch.

The S106 Officer at MSDC has confirmed that they would be supportive of a further funding application from the Council. This will mitigate all additional costs in connection with this. There is additional funding available up to £190,000.

The Council now needs to decide how to proceed, because the original contract cannot be entered into knowing there may be additional costs that would exceed the approved budget, even with funding being available.

Detail

There are two options now open to the Council. The Council's Internal Auditor has advised that both options are a possibility, and acceptable from a procurement point of view.

Councillors are reminded that it is not an option to remove the MUGA from the plans. Funding for the groundworks and car park were contingent on S106 Formal Sports funding, and these are already close to completion.

Option one – re-procure the entire MUGA contract

Take the time to redesign the MUGA, complete ground surveys, explore any additional design benefits/cost savings, and secure any additional funding required.

It is expected that this option would take 3-9 months to complete, allowing for a new tender process. Not only would this option significantly delay this project, but it would also significantly delay other Council projects that are awaiting officer time to progress.

It is also expected that this option could create considerable additional costs. Savings have been relied upon with Warwick Landscaping due to them being on site already, and the additional work required would result in additional project management costs.

It is considered that this option is not in the public interest due to the additional costs and time delays that would be incurred.

Option two – phased delivery

Enter a contract now with Warwick Landscaping for the groundworks and remove the surfacing/fencing/floodlights from the contract. This will be within budget and will give the time needed to confirm additional S106 funding.

Once funding is confirmed, value and enter a second contract for the remainder of the works. Ideally, funding will be confirmed before the first contract is complete, meaning that there is not a delay. However, there is a risk that the groundworks would need to be fenced off for a period. In this scenario, the site would be left safe, secure and explanatory communications would be delivered to the community.

There are some cost savings that could be explored, and these will impact the cost of the initial contract to be entered. Some examples of these are set out below.

Reduce the fall of the MUGA

The MUGA is currently planned with a 1% fall. Reducing this to even 0.5%, will reduce the amount of infill material that is required, which will directly reduce costs. This option would require MSDC to approve new plans. The timescale/possibility of this is currently being explored, and until it is known if this is possible, this option has not yet been costed (it is expected that this information will be available by the time the meeting is held).

Remove the tarmac from beneath the MUGA surface

It has been suggested that this is not necessary, and costs £18,000 (included in the current plan). Council may consider instructing PBA Planning to investigate if this is a design necessity, or, take advice from the MUGA surfacing company on this point.

Change the floodlighting provider

It is possible to include this with the fencing installation, so that it does not have to be built into the ground in the same way. This would reduce construction costs.

This option is also expected to attract additional project management costs due to the additional work required, which would be added to the S106 request.

Under Financial Regulations, the second phase of this option could either be re-tendered or directly offered to Warwick Landscaping under regulation 5.12 iii which says:

"The requirement to obtain competitive process in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:

iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract."

The second phase of the contract would be entered after a further decision of Full Council (or the Finance & General Purposes Committee, depending on the value).

Financial implications

The below table illustrates the financial implications of this decision, *before* any cost savings are applied.

Item	Cost
Original contract sum	£169,795.59
Maximum additional costs	£48,000
Total MUGA cost =	£217,795.59
Less Current S106 funding	(£164,300)
Less Current contingency available	(£5,000)
Potential funding gap	£48,495.59

The opportunity to apply for further S106 funding allows the Council to remove the funding gap, and obtain funding for additional items that were not included in the original application. Although this needs further exploration, it is estimated that this could positively impact the contingency by approximately £10,000 (increasing the contingency available from approximately £5,000 to £15,000).

In addition, the office is now able to explore business sponsorship which will further increase the contingency available and therefore reduce the amount of the final loan draw down.

Recommendation/conclusion

Council is recommended to proceed with Option Two and authorise the Chief Officer to negotiate and enter into a contract with Warwick Landscaping for the groundworks element of the MUGA project only, subject to the contract value not exceeding the S106 funding of £164,300 currently available for the project.

It is further recommended that the Chief Officer is instructed to explore the cost-saving options and incorporate these into the design after consultation with the Lead Councillor.

This option is considered to be in the best interests of the Council and residents because:

- It allows the project to continue progressing without the significant delay that would result from a full redesign and re-tender process.
- It enables the Council to retain the benefit of Warwick Landscaping already being established on site, avoiding potential remobilisation costs.
- The S106 Officer has indicated support for a further funding application.
- It reduces the risk of inflationary cost increases that could arise if the entire project is delayed and re-procured.
- It allows further investigation of potential cost mitigations before the surfacing, fencing and floodlighting elements are constructed.
- It ensures that the Council remains committed to delivering the MUGA, which forms part of the wider recreation ground project already substantially underway.

Whilst there is a risk that delivery of the second phase may be delayed pending confirmation of funding, this risk is considered preferable to the significant time, cost and resource implications of re-procuring the entire project.

Any subsequent contract for surfacing, fencing and floodlighting will be subject to a separate Council decision once costs and funding have been confirmed.

Lead Officer

Leanne Bannister, Chief Officer

Appendix A – cross sections