1 Project Planning

1.1 Installing or refurbishing a hockey facility may be one of the most important projects a hockey club or other hockey playing community tackles. It is important because:

- it may be unlike any previous project undertaken – and so requires new skills and ways of working;
- it involves significant costs – which can escalate or be wasted if badly managed;
- it enables the sport to be enjoyed – but if badly installed will frustrate players or hinder development.

1.2 Planning the project is a key initial and continuing step. It is not an added option but is crucial to maintaining a clear focus on the aims of the project, ensuring sound financial management, carrying the project to a successful conclusion and establishing the foundations for effective ongoing management.

1.3 This section of the Guide indicates some issues to consider. However, it is not and cannot be a blueprint because no two projects are the same. Throughout the planning and development of a hockey facility there are many key issues to consider of which the main ones are:

- what will the facility be used for – for example, is it for recreational hockey or potentially a venue at which top level events will be held?
- how will the facility be managed and maintained when completed?
- what local requirements or opportunities are there for the development and use of the facility including by sports other than hockey?

The Project Team

1.4 Finding people to contribute to a hockey facilities project is often not easy because some of them will be volunteers providing their own time to contribute to their sport. However, getting the right team together is just as important for a project of this sort as getting the right team together to enjoy playing the game!

1.5 Consider the following points in relation to the project team:

- depending on one or two individuals can easily over-load them or they may not have all the necessary skills – hence the team approach;
- keep the size of the team small enough (eg 5 to 8 core members) to facilitate communication and efficient decision making – utilising sub-teams for more detailed planning and action as necessary;

- consider the specialist knowledge required including: project management, construction (including sports facilities and/or turf installation if possible), facilities management, finance and funding (including knowledge of public funding sources if possible), local authority planning;
- include a user, perhaps a young person or someone who plays at a lower level and who will provide a good insight to some of the practical issues which specialists sometimes overlook;
- one of the project team members should be the project champion or sponsor; they will play an important role leading negotiations and maintaining momentum.

Consultants

1.6 If the necessary skills cannot be built into the project team or if a professional reference point and advice will be useful, there are consultants who specialise in the installation of sports facilities and playing surfaces (including synthetic turf). They may include project managers, architects, quantity surveyors, construction engineers, and electrical and mechanical services engineers.

1.7 National sports governing bodies are sometimes able to offer advice on suitable consultants. Alternatively, it is useful to ask proprietors or installers of similar facilities about their experiences.

1.8 If consultants are employed, it is important to have a clear contractual arrangement for their role and remuneration. And remember that a consultant is employed to interpret, analyse and advise on the client requirements and should not dictate to the client!

The "Business Case" : Step 1 : Assessing Viability

1.9 At this point, no reference has been made to the justification of the project. This is deliberate. It is important to get the right contributions to the project from a project team from the very start. If a team approach incorporating the necessary skills and expertise is not employed from the start, incorrect assumptions and unreasonable expectations can occur and may constrain or prejudice successful development of the project.

1.10 A good approach is to establish a "business case" for the project.

1.11 In a hockey club or community it is tempting not to think of this sort of activity in "business" terms but the level of investment involved and the impact on the club or community makes a business-like approach necessary.

Justification Study

1.12 The first stage in assembling the business case should be to conduct a justification study Points to consider and incorporate in the justification study include:

- identify the stakeholders – who should be consulted to ascertain requirements and may offer useful advice; they include users of the facility, the general public or communities on which the facility may impact, local authority agencies and sports governing bodies;
- consulting a hockey governing body or an overall sports governing body is especially useful because they will have experience of similar projects and funding opportunities in particular;
- establish the aims of the project and the intended use of the facility;
- investigate alternative ways of meeting the aims;
- assess costs and funding opportunities including the financial implications of ongoing use and maintenance;
- assess the suitability of proposed or available sites – including issues such as ground conditions, access to the site, impact on neighbourhoods, potential for expansion and development;
- analyse environmental issues – especially the availability of water if a water-based turf is an option;
- evaluate risks to the project and how they can be managed;
- identify any legal or planning constraints on the proposed development;
- assess feasible timescales for the project development and completion.

1.13 The Justification Study should be written up even if only in a brief note form for small projects. It provides a helpful reference point when questions arise about the direction of detailed project stages and plans because it essentially establishes the aims of the project. It also forms the basis of the project brief.

Project Brief

1.14 Having investigated options and selected a preferred approach through the justification study, the project brief provides more detailed information on which the intended design and construction methods can be developed.

1.15 The information included in the brief should be as complete as possible although it is probable that more detail will emerge as the brief is developed and evaluated. The brief must be flexible to respond to changes in opportunities and circumstances although it should not deviate from the option selected in the justification study without reviewing the basis of the justification.

1.16 However, there should be milestones at which key points are agreed. Otherwise, control of the project will suffer. In particular, changes to requirements and planned actions at a later date will invariably prove expensive.

1.17 Items for incorporation in the project brief include:

- the overall aims;
- design requirements and any constraints;
- the intended use of space including the pitch and its surrounds, related buildings, ancillary areas and access;
- energy and natural resource requirements;
- planning and any other regulatory requirements;
- standards to be achieved (eg in relation to the type of turf to be used);
- the project budget;
- the development and completion timetable.

1.18 A detailed project brief provides the basis for procurement of the facility and establishment of contracts. This subject is dealt with in a subsequent section of this Guide.

The "Business Case" : Step 2 : Confirming Viability

1.19 The work on the justification study and project brief will provide most of the material needed for the Business Case.

1.20 In summary a business case should include:

- the strategic case – including aims, scope, justification and commitment;
- the economic case – including the range of options explored and the balance of costs, benefits and risks;
- the financial case – including value for money and the nature of funding;
- the project management case – including the organisation's capacity, the management of risks and the timescale.

The Project Plan

1.21 The last element in project planning is to produce the Project Plan including, in particular, the ways in which the project will be managed. The Project Plan governs the way forward for the

duration of the project. It is essentially about what will be done, by whom, when and what it will cost.

1.22 Again, the simplest way to describe the plan is to consider its recommended component parts:

- plan description – a brief description of what the plan covers;
- management structure – showing the composition and main roles of the project team;
- planning assumptions – including availability of financial, practical, human resources and skills;
- prerequisites – any fundamental requirements which must be in place at the start of the project and which must remain in place for the project to succeed;
- external dependencies – factors outside the control of the project team but on which the project depends for successful delivery;
- internal dependencies – focusing on the stages of the project and how they relate one to another;
- a Gantt chart or bar chart – showing project stages, milestones, dependencies and control points;
- stage components – essentially what will be delivered at what time to what quality;
- table of resource requirements – showing the origin and planned use of resources;
- project tolerance – in relation to time and budget and as triggers for contingency plans;
- contingency plans – showing how risks will be managed.

1.23 The Project Plan is a living document. It is the key working document throughout the life of the undertaking. It must be regularly reviewed at project team meetings. Changes must be evaluated and documented.

1.24 Making changes to plans without justification and without considering the knock-on effects is one of the most common causes of drifts in the project timetable and increases in costs. Documenting them helps to avoid these pitfalls and also ensures that all relevant parties know about them.

1.25 In relation to the overall project schedule, it is worth bearing mind the adage that "*the first ninety percent of the task takes ninety percent of the time, and the last ten percent takes the other ninety percent*"!

Summary of Key Points

- **To some readers this explanation of project planning may appear daunting and unnecessary – but at some level it is essential.**
- **For smaller projects, some of the steps can be combined and the level of detail reduced – but this lower level approach should be undertaken in full awareness of the issues to be considered.**
- **For larger projects, detailed plans may be required and a specific project management method employed.**
- **Getting the right people involved as project team members or as consultants is crucial.**
- **Establishing the "business case" including the "justification" for the project either in outline for a small project or in detail for a large project is a key step in planning.**
- **The "project brief" provides a clear focus for the design and construction of the facility.**
- **The "project plan" is the working document governing the development and management of the project.**
- **The importance of planning must not be underestimated; failing to plan is planning to fail.**