

Beeks backs move to artificial pitch

ADAMS Park could be one of the first grounds in the country to lay a fourth generation pitch.

Artificial pitches are back on the agenda again with the Football League holding a public consultation until the end of next month to canvas opinions of

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clubs and fans.

It's understood there is a 'clear appetite' for it.

Wanderers chairman Ivor

Beeks said: "We've been at the forefront to promote its use.

"The Football League asked clubs a month ago if there was any merit in it, particularly 4G pitches, and their report has given the go-ahead to start discussions and move the proposal forward.

"There is a fair way to go, but it's certainly on the agenda whereas it never was before.

"Wanderers are looking at it, definitely, but there is a long way to go and I couldn't even contemplate when it might happen."

As it stands, regulations don't allow Premier League games and FA Cup matches to be played on an artificial surface, but the Football League's chief operating officer Andy Williams says there is a particularly strong interest from clubs in League One and League Two.

Beeks said: "Laying a 4G pitch would cost between £250,000 and £500,00, but it will save money and generate money.

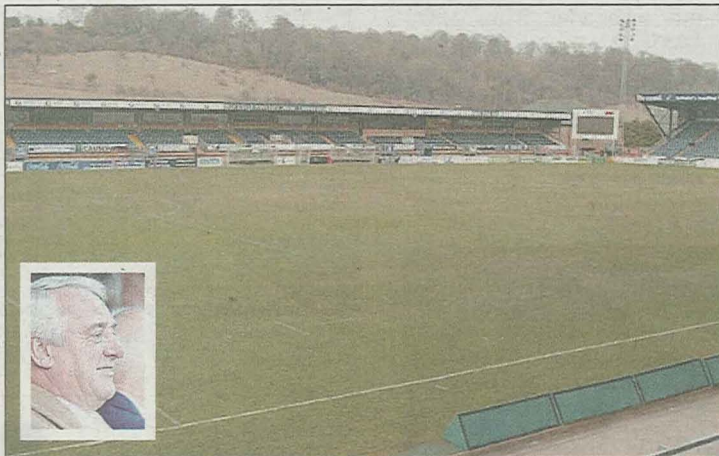
"It could be used 24/7, you

could play five-a-sides on it, the maintenance is next to nothing. There are an awful lot of benefits."

A recent poll on the Bucks Free Press website found supporters strongly against the idea, but Beeks, who says a 4G pitch could work alongside undersoil heating, believes those opposed are living in the past.

He said: "People haven't got their heads wrapped around modern 4G pitches. They're thinking about Luton and QPR in the 1980s, but it's moved on light years since then.

"Premiership Rugby can play their matches on it, FIFA have allowed matches to be played on it...they wouldn't do that if there was a risk of injury or the surface wasn't good enough."



PITCH IDEA: Wanderers chairman Ivor Beeks, inset, is backing a move to artificial surfaces

Would you like to see an artificial pitch at Adams Park?

Yes: 18%

No: 82%

Figures according to a BFP online poll