



Enhancing our Recreational Facilities: Refurbishment of Homefield Park Tennis Courts

Report by the Director for Communities

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to ask the Joint Strategic Committee to reallocate the remaining £200,000 capital funding included in the 2016/17 Capital Investment Programme for Homefield Park to now refurbish the existing 6 tennis courts at Homefield Park.
- 1.2 This is a change from the original planned scheme of converting 4 of the 6 tennis courts at the park into a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), that the capital funding was originally allocated for.
- 1.3 It is also requested that JSC also approves allocating a further £50,000 of available 2017/18 capital underspend to the project as the cost to refurbish all 6 tennis courts has been estimated at £250,000, including professional fees.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The 6 asphalt tennis courts at Homefield Park were installed in 1994, with the courts being colour coated and minor repairs being undertaken from 2007/10 at a rate of two courts per year.
- 2.2 The court's present condition has been assessed as substandard by both Engineers of the Technical Services section and independently recently by a Consultant commissioned by the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA). Since 2014, the courts due to their poor condition have been closed for public use.
- 2.3 In 2016, a bid was submitted and subsequently approved by JSC to Worthing Borough Council's 2016/17 capital funded programme for £205,000 including Technical Service fees to convert 4 of the 6 tennis courts at Homefield Park into a Multi Use Games Area (MUGA) facility with a 3G surface.

- 2.4 The proposal was that the day to day management of the MUGA facility would be carried out by the local junior football club Worthing Town FC, in partnership with the Council.
- 2.5 Since the initial discussions, the football club has confirmed that they were withdrawing from the project as their committee had changed key personnel and the Management Board wanted to concentrate their efforts on their existing location - Palatine Park.
- 2.6 The medium term proposal for the remaining two courts was to seek external funding opportunities to fund the tennis courts being upgraded and retained for tennis use.
- 2.7 Recent discussions with initially Sport England and subsequently in more detail with the LTA regarding the Worthing Borough Councils tennis facilities in general, has led to a review of the original proposal. The LTA has demonstrated using a data modelling exercise, that presently there is both current and latent demand in central and east Worthing within a radius of between 1km and 2.5km of the park. Consequently their view is, that if good quality courts were provided and well maintained, they would be well used.
- 2.8 Included in the cost estimate, is the installation of the Club Spark remote access booking management system, which is endorsed by the LTA. This will enable the Council to manage the court's use effectively, and also to generate an income stream which can be used to offset the ongoing maintenance costs, as well as being able to allocate some provision for local free community use in off-peak hours.
- 2.9 The LTA have also confirmed that they are also on the verge of announcing a new major funding initiative this summer for investment into tennis facilities nationwide that will require partnership funding. Officers have confirmed with the LTA that the allocation of capital funds to this project by the Council, could be defined as match/partnership funding if the Council decides to submit a bid to the LTA to improve other tennis court facilities it provides across the Borough.
- 2.10 It must also be noted that the LTA objected to Sport England over the change of use of these courts from an asphalt surface to a 3G surface, as a 3G surface is not a suitable surface for tennis play.

3.0 Proposals

- 3.1 It is proposed to carry out a full refurbishment of the tennis courts at Homefield Park, to LTA standards. If maintained correctly this will give the tennis court facility a life expectancy of 10 plus years.
- 3.2 It is proposed that the refurbishment also includes the installation of the LTA supported Club Spark booking remote access system, including access gate and technology to maximise the potential usage of the courts.

3.3 It is also proposed that the Executive Member for Environment (Worthing) and Head of Environment continue to engage with the Friends of Homefield Park, Ward Elected Members and the local community to provide a platform for increased community participation of the tennis courts.

4.0 Legal

4.1 Section 19 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allow the Council to provide recreational facilities as it thinks fit and that includes the power to provide buildings, facilities, equipment, supplies and assistance of any kind, either without charge or on such payment as the authority thinks fit.

4.2 Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 allows the Council to do anything which is intended to facilitate or is conducive to or ancillary to any of its functions.

5.0 Financial implications

5.1 The scheme has been estimated at £250,000, including professional fees.

5.2 It is proposed that this scheme is funded through the Capital Investment Programme, utilising £200,000, funded £144,000 from S106 receipts and the remainder from capital resources, previously allocated to another Homefield Park project, plus £50,000 available from 2016/17 Capital Investment Programme underspends carried forward to 2017/18.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 The Joint Strategic Committee is requested to:

- i) Approve the refurbishment of the 6 tennis courts at Homefield Park, using funding from the 2016/17 Capital Investment Programme carried forward to 2017/18.
- ii) Amend the 2017/18 Capital Investment programme to include this revised scheme.

**Local Government Act 1972
Background Papers:**

None

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Schedule of Other Matters

1.0 Council Priority

- 1.1 This proposal supports the Council's on-going commitment to the health and wellbeing of its community and the development of our sports strategy, as outlined in Platform for our Places.

2.0 Specific Action Plans

- 2.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

3.0 Sustainability Issues

- 3.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

4.0 Equality Issues

- 4.1 The provision of tennis courts at Homefield Park will be open and accessible to all members of our community.

5.0 Community Safety Issues (Section 17)

- 5.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

6.0 Human Rights Issues

- 6.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

7.0 Reputation

- 7.1 The re-opening of the tennis courts will help to contribute to the Council providing a range of sporting activities in their neighbourhood.

8.0 Consultations

- 8.1 Discussions have taken place with the Lawn Tennis Association. The discussions have helped to shape this proposal.

- 8.2 It is proposed to hold further discussions with the Friends of Homefield Park and other interested stakeholders on how increased participation can be delivered.

9.0 Risk Assessment

- 9.1 If the courts are not refurbished, they will need to remain closed and unavailable for public use. There will also be the need to carry out any required on-going repairs to keep the facility secure and in a safe condition.

10.0 Health & Safety Issues

10.1 As 9 above.

11.0 Procurement Strategy

11.1 Matter considered and no issues identified.

12.0 Partnership Working

12.1 This report supports the relationship being developed between the Council(s) and the Lawn Tennis Association on tennis provision across both Councils.