

Report to	-	Cabinet
Date	-	6 November 2017
Report of the	-	Executive Director of Business Operations
Subject	-	Cricket nets at Little Common Recreation Ground, Bexhill

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) a Licence be granted to The Little Common Ramblers Cricket Club to construct an enclosed cricket net facility on the former tennis court;
 - 2) on completion of the works, a 6 year non-secure lease be granted to the Club for the exclusive use of the facility on the terms as set out in the report and such other terms and conditions as the Executive Director of Business Operations considers appropriate.
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Service Manager: Brenda Mason
Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor Jenkins

Introduction

1. The Little Common Ramblers Cricket Club is an established user of Little Common Recreation Ground and currently has three teams in the East Sussex Cricket League. The Club shares use of the pavilion with Little Common Football Club under a 25 year lease.

Request for Cricket Nets

2. The Club seeks to provide permanent enclosed nets for their members as an integral part of their expansion and the area of hard-standing adjacent to the cricket outfield at Little Common Recreation Ground would be an ideal location for this. A location plan is shown as Appendix 1.
3. The hard-standing is part of the area on which two tennis courts were previously sited. Use of the courts had historically been low and in recent years the fencing around them had become dilapidated and unsafe. The decision was taken in 2016 to install new fencing around just one of the courts with a view to using the other as a space on which picnic benches and seating could be installed overlooking the cricket outfield, however officers now recommend that the area be used for cricket nets.
4. The nets would complement the existing cricket provision, which in the Rother and Hastings Playing Pitch Strategy published last October, was in the top three scoring sites due to the high standard of grass wickets, a good artificial wicket and excellent pavilion accommodation. Indeed, the provision of new practice nets was identified as a priority for the club in the Strategy.

5. Furthermore, the Active People Survey 2015/16 highlighted that in Rother the percentage of those aged 14+ participating once a week in sport is lower than the South East of England and England.
6. The Club would expect between fifty and seventy five members to benefit from the nets initially, but these numbers would increase if the Club continues to grow as it is currently doing. In addition, the Club is keen to promote cricket by offering access to local schools and the wider community and this initiative could therefore make a contribution locally towards improving upon participation in sport.
7. A specialist company would be commissioned by the Club to design and install a synthetic surface system within a secure fence protecting the facility against vandalism and misuse. All liability and costs associated with the installation and the on-going management, maintenance and repair of the cricket nets would lie with the Club initially through a Licence for the duration of the construction period and thereafter under a 6 year non-secure lease. Little Common Recreation Ground is subject to a Deed of Dedication safeguarding its public recreational use under the Fields in Trust's QEII Playing Fields scheme. The introduction of a longer term lease could meet with objection from Fields in Trust.
8. The facility will be funded in full by the Club through a combination of grants and funds from the Club's own reserves. The Council does not propose to make any financial contribution to the project.

Conclusion

9. The provision of nets is a positive initiative that would engage youngsters and adults in sport and make greater use of this part of the recreation ground.
10. As the Club will be providing and maintaining the nets at their own cost and providing opportunities for active lifestyles, it is recommended that the lease is granted for a peppercorn rent.

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director of Business Operations

Risk Assessment Statement

There are no significant risks attached to this report.