

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Communities & Leisure Cabinet Committee

Date: 10 September 2024

Reporting officer: Danielle Lock, Leisure Manager

Subject: Lawn Tennis Association: Gravesham Park Tennis – Project update

Purpose and summary of report:

To update the Communities and Leisure Cabinet Committee on repairs and improvement works across the 7 GBC owned tennis courts at Windmill Gardens, Wombwell Park and Woodlands Park.

Recommendations:

Key Implications:	
Item	Implications
Legal	This report relates to external grant funding from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) to undertake repairs and improvements to the tennis courts in 3 locations. A grant funding agreement and contractor framework contract are in place, to ensure delivery of the scheme and use of funds according to the LTA standards.
Finance and Value for Money	<p>The grant funding has been allocated to specific repair and improvements works across seven courts at three sites across the borough. The works have been delivered by a contractor engaged by the Lawn Tennis Association and will be signed off by the end of September.</p> <p>Under section 4.4.6 of Annex 2.6 – Financial Procedure Rules, the Cabinet may incur, without Council's prior approval, expenditure not within the approved budget provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) the cost is to be met from external funding, a contingency or reserve set up for the purpose, andb) The expenditure is in line with the delivery of existing Council policy or furtherance of the Council's Corporate Objectives.
Corporate Plan	#oncommunity – Healthy Living; Improvement Wellbeing
Climate Change	There are no implications

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In June 2024, Gravesham Borough Council were successfully awarded £120k worth of funding from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) to resurface and improve the seven council owned tennis courts situated within Windmill Gardens, Wombwell Park and Woodlands Park.

2. Refurbishment works

- 2.1 The funding received by the LTA covers the cost of refurbishing the courts, including resurfacing, fencing, nets and line marking, where appropriate, to bring the courts up to the standard set out by the LTA.
- 2.2 Annual court maintenance such as sweeping, power washing etc will be undertaken by the Parks and Open Spaces team, who will also undertake weekly inspections to ensure any issues or defects are dealt with promptly, to ensure the courts remain in constant use.
- 2.3 As well as refurbishing the courts, the funding included the implementation of an online booking system and website branded as Gravesham Park Tennis. Access is controlled by an automated gate accessed by a pin number, which is generated at the point of booking.
- 2.4 This provides the Council with full control over access to the courts and increased visibility of availability for those wishing to use them. It also enables the Council to block out periods during the week when it is to be used for free sessions, school access etc.

3. Access and Fees

- 3.1 A mix of chargeable and free to play sessions are available 365 days a year during regular park opening times (9am to dusk) to ensure that access is available to all residents.
- 3.2 Fees are being set at a standard rate across all parks as follows:

Pay and play £6.50 per court, per hour
Season ticket (family) £45 per annum for upto 5 people of the same household

- In addition free access to courts will be available on Sundays between 9am and noon and on a Wednesday between 1 and 7pm. These sessions will enable those on lower incomes to access the courts and offer the opportunity for local schools to make use of the sites during school hours.
- 3.3 Park Tennis sessions will also be introduced in due course where residents can engage in free tennis coaching and have access to equipment, to ensure those who are not in a position to obtain their own items can still engage in the sport.
 - 3.4 Bookings can be made online in advance, in one hour time slots via the Gravesham Borough Council Clubspark website or through a secondary method set up by the Council, e.g. via Customer Services or reception points.
 - 3.5 Data obtained through the system will include name, email address and emergency contact number. Additional information such as demographics can be collected if the Council so wish. The data is held within the cloud based booking system, but is accessible by the Council to enable analysis of usage, peak times etc. The LTA use the data to analyse areas and levels of uptake and usage.

3.6 Anticipated completion date for all three sites is 18 September.

4. Launch and promotion

- 4.1 In addition to regular social media posts on the works, the Council undertook a soft launch of the scheme during the Community Fun Day at Wombwell Park on 14 August. The engagement event offered tennis coaching as one of the free activities for children and families to participate in and enabled officers to promote the new courts and explain the new booking system.
- 4.2 Working with Kent Tennis, advertising is underway to find Park Tennis Activators to deliver free fun tennis sessions across all sites on a Saturday morning (Park Tennis). The relaxed group sessions are suitable for all ages, backgrounds and abilities, will incorporate mini games and skill development and are a great way to introduce people to the sport as all equipment is provided.
- 4.3 The new courts will be officially launched at Woodlands Park by the LTA and The Mayor on Friday 20 September between 2 and 5pm offering school children and the wider public the opportunity to interact with the new booking process and to participate in free coaching.
- 4.4 Further promotion of the courts will be undertaken during the annual Summer Fun programme where the Council will offer free tennis coaching sessions in addition to regular seasonal social media campaigns.

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Secondary Implications	
Risk Assessment	There are no risk associated with this report
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i>
	a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of personal data or special category data or criminal offence data ? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner's Office website via the above links. Yes
	b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? Yes
	c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk . N/A
Equality Impact Assessment	a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. No
	b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. Yes – the scheme will increase accessibility to the Borough's outdoor tennis courts
	<i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i>
Crime and Disorder	The scheme will positively feed into reducing crime and disorder. The system applied to the tennis courts will afford a level of security to avoid the courts being used for inappropriate activity, asb etc. The aims of the project is to increase uptake and involvement in tennis, which could act as a diversionary activity
Digital and website implications	There are no implications – the booking system is hosted in the cloud outside of Gravesham networks
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	As with crime and disorder, whilst the scheme is not designed as a personal security measure, it will bring a level of security around the sites, ensuring that children or vulnerable adults are able to play tennis in a more secure environment.