

Tennis Court Refurbishment – Gogmore Farm Budget Request (Community Services, Anthony Jones)

Synopsis of report:

This report outlines the steps Officers are intending to take to deliver the tennis court refurbishment at Gogmore Farm following the LTA's (Lawn Tennis Association) decision to, nationally, withdraw grant funding for refurbishments for single court sites.

Officers have identified that the Gogmore Farm works can be funded using one-off 2022/2023 budget underspends and are seeking the Committee's approval to proceed.

Recommendation(s) that:

- i) Community Services Committee notes the change to the LTA Grant Funding Agreement; and**
- ii) to address the lack of grant funding for the refurbishment of Gogmore Farm Tennis Court the following proposed option be approved:**

RBC funds the re-development of Gogmore Farm Tennis Court through identified underspends across Community Services totaling the required sum of £29,922.65, to ensure that the site is re-developed in-line with the standards advised by the LTA.

1. Context of report

1.1 Officers submitted a report to Community Services Committee in September 2022 which outlined the planned partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA), which would seek to deliver tennis court refurbishments across five sites: Gogmore Farm Park, Victory Park, Chertsey Recreational Ground, Heathervale Park and Ottershaw Memorial Field. The Committee approved the outlined recommendations, and this report subsequently went to Corporate Management Committee for approval, which was obtained at its meeting in September 2022.

1.2 A further report was submitted to Corporate Management Committee in November 2022 due to the need to secure a waiver for RBC's contract standing orders due to the LTA having gone through their own procurement exercise to secure the contractors for the refurbishment works that RBC are obliged to use in order to benefit for the LTS Grant funding. The recommendations in this report were approved.

1.3 Officers have since been engaging with the LTA regularly and at a recent meeting in February 2023, Officers were notified of two key issues which could have significant repercussions to the delivery of the project. These issues are:

- 1. The LTA have taken the decision to cease the grant funding of refurbishment to all single-court sites which had been ear-marked for

refurbishment due to financial pressures in the current economic climate

2. On multi-use sites, such as Chertsey Recreational Ground, the LTA advised that tennis should account for around 75% of peak-time usage on such sites, with other sports making up the remaining 25%. It had been advised that not meeting this target would potentially impact the awarding of grant monies for the site in question.

1.4 Officers have successfully addressed issue 2, with the split being circa 82% usage for tennis during peak-time and 18% for Netball during peak-time. This report will therefore solely focus on issue 1.

2. **Report**

2.1 The decision by the LTA to cease grant funding for single-court sites has led to Officers considering potential next steps in regard to this specific site.

2.2 The LTA has been clear in their communications that single-use sites are not in scope for any grant-funded refurbishment works now and, in the future, given the financial pressures they are facing. As a result, Officers have identified the following option which can be taken to address this issue:

RBC funds the re-development of the site through identified underspends across Community Services, with a total of £29,922.65 being needed to re-develop the site in-line with the standards recommended by the LTA, and as set out in the report previously presented which included the revenue implications for all sites including Gogmore Farm.

2.3 Officers have considered the impact that not delivering the refurbishment work could have at Gogmore Farm and in particular have noted the sensitivity of the issue given the need for refurbishment at the site.

2.4 As Gogmore Farm had been built into the financial modelling for the budget which had been outlined in the September 2022 Community Services Committee report, Officers are confident that refurbishing the site is viable and will provide the income necessary to maintain it.

2.5 Officers are therefore proposing that Community Services Committee consider supporting Officers in pursuing the identified option. The Corporate Head of Community Services has identified underspends in a number of 2022/2023 budgets which could be used to fund the £29,922.65 required.

2.6 Following the decision of this Committee, Officers will work with the LTA to determine next steps. From initial discussions with the contractors and the LTA, it is possible that the works to Gogmore Farm can take place as early as April 2023.

3. **Policy framework implications**

3.1 As outlined in previous reports on the refurbishment of tennis courts in the borough this work directly supports the objectives of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, in particular through supporting people to live healthy and more active lifestyles.

- 3.2 The refurbishment to the tennis courts is also an identified project in the Community Services Corporate Business Plan.
- 3.3 Whilst the wider project will still deliver the intended outcomes of the above-named frameworks, the overall impact of the project on the framework objectives will be reduced.
- 4. Resource implications/Value for Money**
- 4.1 The identified option for taking this work forwards is considered to demonstrate the best value for money and resources.
- 4.2 By funding this refurbishment work the Council will be more likely to realise the income potential of the sites, as outlined in the financial modelling in the September 2023 report. The income generated by the five refurbished sites had been intended to be utilised to fund the maintenance of the sites and provide the funds to support the running of a coaching provision and equipment, as well as the sinking fund.
- 4.3 The identified contractors to carry-out the works had been procured by the LTA to deliver the refurbishments across a number of regions. As a result, RBC benefits from a competitive price which may not be available should the authority consider refurbishing the site in the future, as opposed to now. Carrying out this work now would also negate any need to utilise staff time to prepare and carry-out a procurement exercise for this single site.
- 5. Legal implications**
- 5.1 This Committee approved entering into a Grant Funding Agreement with the LTA and waiver of contract standing orders to permit the direct award of contracts to carry out works to two contractors proposed by the LTA that the Council are obliged to use should they wish to benefit from grant funding.
- 5.2 Should the recommendation be approved, the Council will finalise the Grant Funding Agreement with the LTA and then enter into an agreement with the contractors (CIA Fire & Security Ltd and Spadeoak Ltd) to develop this site.
- 5.3 The LTA has provided the Council with contractual documentation for both the grant agreement between RBC and the LTA and templates for contracts between RBC and the two contractors. These documents are currently undergoing legal checks. Should the Committee agree with the Officers' recommendation, we will look to ensure the correct contractual documentation is in place for the works to include Gogmore Farm.
- 6. Equality implications**
- 6.1 There are no equalities implications which arise directly from this report.
- 6.2 Not delivering Gogmore Farm will likely have a detrimental impact on those from disadvantaged groups who would likely benefit from the refurbishment and the planned work around supporting those individuals to participate in sports and live active and healthy lifestyles.
- 6.3 Members will recall that a full equality impact assessment was completed at the time of the original report on this project in September 2022.

7. **Environmental/Sustainability/Biodiversity implications**

7.1 There are no environmental, sustainability or biodiversity implications which arise directly from this report.

8. **Timetable for Implementation**

8.1 As referenced earlier in this paper, the works to refurbish Gogmore Farm could be carried out as early as April 2023, and on that basis completed by June 2023, subject to the agreement of terms.

9. **Conclusion**

9.1 Officers are requesting that Community Services Committee support the proposed approach to fund the refurbishment of Gogmore Farm through identified underspends in a number of Community Services budgets.

9.2 As outlined within this report, the option presented is thought to align best with the goals of the health and wellbeing strategy and demonstrates value for money and resources, particularly as it would enable the site to be delivered alongside the other four sites which are earmarked for refurbishment.

(To resolve)

Background papers

September 2022 Community Services Committee Paper (Exempt)

[September 2022 Corporate Management Committee Paper](#)

[November 2022 Corporate Management Committee Paper](#)