

Subject:	Self- Management of Sports Facilities		
Date of Meeting:	8th October 2019		
Report of:	Executive Director, Economy, Environment & Culture		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Robert Walker	Tel: 01273 294349
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Ward(s) affected:	Hollingdean & Stanmer; Hove Park		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 Two organisations have submitted proposals to the council to self-manage sports facilities in the city's parks, one football and one football and cricket
- 1.2 The Committee is being asked to consider and approve these proposals.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee approves the grant of a lease for the football pitch at Hollingdean Park and delegates authority to the Executive Director, Economy, Environment and Culture to agree and execute lease terms.
- 2.2 That the Committee approves the grant of a lease for the football and cricket pitches, pavilion and facilities at Nevill Recreation Ground subject to the proposal receiving written support from the Sussex Sunday Football League and delegates authority to the Executive Director, Economy, Environment and Culture to agree and execute lease.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Following budget reductions in sports the standard of sports provision has declined in parks. A number of sports led proposals have been put forward to mitigate the impact, principally through self- management by sports clubs. To date the majority of proposals have been for sports organisations to take on facilities at a low rent and to take responsibility for the running costs of the facilities.
- 3.2 This approach has been successful in areas such as tennis courts, bowls pavilions and cricket squares. Although there are some historical arrangements with partially self-managed football pitches this is not something that the council has put in place recently.
- 3.3 Hollingdean Park pitch (see plan at Appendix 1) is currently not well used as it is in a poor state and unsuitable for match play. A proposal has been received from Hollingbury Hawkes FC in relation to the pitch and is attached at Appendix 3. Officers have not been made aware of any opposition to the proposal to let the

pitch and facilities to Hollingbury Hawks FC. Officers believe that leasing the pitch will give benefit to the new users in the community and allow other clubs to use this currently redundant site. In order to allow the club to access external funds it is anticipated a 25 year lease would be agreed.

- 3.4 The playing fields at Nevill Recreation Ground are used for both cricket and football. Brighton and Hove Cricket Club already hold a licence for use of the cricket ground and also hold a ground lease for their club house which is attached to the sports pavilion (plan attached at Appendix 2). A proposal has been received to grant Brighton and Hove Cricket Club a new lease to include the management and maintenance of the football pitches as well as a lease of the pavilion and facilities. The proposal is set out at Appendix 4.
- 3.5 The football pitches are of a mixed standard and the principal football users are the Sussex Sunday Football League who do not support the proposal as they have concerns about the future costs and availability of pitches. It is proposed that a new lease and licence only be granted when the cricket club have satisfied the concerns of the Sussex Sunday Football League. Therefore the proposed recommendation is to approve the proposal subject to the receipt by the Council of the written confirmation from the Sussex Sunday Football League that they are in agreement with the proposals. Currently maintenance is shared between the council and the club the aim would be to negotiate for the club to maintain the site releasing some council resource.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 Arrangements for both sites could remain as they are with the council maintaining the pitches.
- 4.2 At Hollingdean Park this would forgo the opportunity to bring the pitch back into play but would not lead to any budget or operational issues.
- 4.3 At Nevill Recreation Ground this would forgo the opportunity to deliver some budget savings if we have to continue to maintain facilities which would be handed over if the lease was amended.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Both organisations have engaged with ward members and users. Officers have engaged with current sports users (for clarity this is sports users who formally book or lease the facilities). In the case of Hollingdean Park there are no existing formal users, however community groups will be consulted prior to any lease being put in place to ensure support.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Although self-management has proven to be a very successful arrangement for the management of sports facilities, in the city to date it has only been implemented with the support of a significant number of the current users.

- 6.2 Without the support of the Sussex Sunday Football League it is not considered that the proposal for Nevill Recreation Ground proposal will be implemented successfully.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The proposed leasing of the two playing field sites and facilities to external organisations has no impact on the existing relevant service budgets providing the leases do not place any additional requirements on the Council as land owner.

Finance Officer Consulted: Jess Laing

Date: 28/09/2019

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 enables the Council to dispose of land it holds in any manner it sees fit subject to the condition that, except in the case of a short tenancy, the disposal must be for the best consideration reasonably obtainable. If the intention is to grant a lease for longer than 7 years then valuer input will be required to ensure the Council meets the best consideration requirement. The General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 does permit a disposal at an undervalue provided that the amount foregone is less than £2 million and there would be economic, social or environmental benefits to be gained as a result of the disposal. In addition, the Act further provides that an authority may not dispose of Open Space land until after an Open Space Notice has been advertised and any objections considered. Officers will need to review the plans and publish the relevant notices if the land in question is open space land prior to entering into any new lease agreements.

Lawyer Consulted:

Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 27/09/19

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 Leasing of sports facilities could restrict access to club members to these parks sports facilities. This could therefore disadvantage some groups who are no longer able to access these sites. However there are a number of other parks sports facilities in the city which continue to be maintained by the council and allow free access to all members of the public.

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.4 Due to reduced funding for maintenance costs some of these sites are falling into a poor state of repair. Leasing them to clubs and community groups will allow them to be maintained and used for the longer term.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.5 None

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Plan Hollingdean Park
2. Plan Nevill Recreation Ground
3. Hollingbury Hawks request for pitch lease
4. Brighton and Hove Cricket Club supporting information

Background Documents

None.