

Subject:	Management of Hove Park 3G Football Facility		
Date of Meeting:	20 March 2018		
Report of:	Executive Director Economy, Environment & Culture		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Robert Walker	Tel: 01273 294349
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Ward(s) affected:	Hove Park		

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

- 1.1 The report is to enable the ETS Committee to consider the proposal put forward by The Russell Martin Foundation to operate Hove Park's new 3G football area.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the proposal of the Russell Martin Foundation (Appendix 1) to operate Hove Park's 3G football facility by way of a commercial lease agreement and further notes that this proposal has been advertised by way of an Open Spaces Notice pursuant to s123 (2) (A) of the Local Government Act 1972;
- 2.2 That the Committee delegates authority to the Executive Director of Economy, Environment & Culture, Assistant Director Property & Design and Head of Legal Services to approve detailed lease terms, having taken into consideration any objections or representations received.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The previous sand carpet surface at Hove Park had reached the end of its useable life and had started to disintegrate. It had become unsafe for any sports use. There was no budget available within the Council to finance resurfacing of the area therefore external funding was required. Planning Gain [106] money was available for Hove Park so the decision was made to use this money to change the surface to a 3G football surface. It had previously been a facility used by both football and tennis.
- 3.2 Due to budget reductions Cityparks are reducing the funding going to all sports and are encouraging users to become more involved in running facilities as a way of keeping them going on the reduced budget whilst minimising impact on the sport. In the case of 3G surfaces it is necessary to put a considerable amount of money aside each year to ensure that when the surface does need renewing there is funding to do it. In the case of Hove Park the requirement is £15,000 per

year. As it was unlikely that any of the existing users would be able to take on this sort of financial burden, established football not-for-profit organisations were invited to put forward proposals to run the area.

- 3.3 Only one proposal was put forward from The Russell Martin Foundation who are a registered charity working to impact positively upon the lives of children and young people through sport. The Russell Martin Foundation proposal is attached in Appendix 1.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The Council has the option of running the area using it's own directly employed staff. Historically the Council has failed to operate sustainably within it's budgets as no money has been set aside for replacement of the surface. Policy, Resources and Growth Committee on the 8th February 2018 approved a ring fenced budget that can be used to hold money set aside as a sinking fund to cover this going into the future. To raise sufficient income to maintain the area and put the necessary money into the sinking fund the area will need to be better utilised and managed than it has been.
- 4.2 The Council would not be in a position to give the level of support and help to the range of groups possible with the The Russell Martin Foundation. Details of the scope of the offer are included within their proposal in Appendix 1.
- 4.3 Although it is possible that a Council run facility could cover its costs including a sinking fund, it would not deliver the social and community benefits that a Russell Martin Foundation run facility would.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 General consultation has taken place with tennis and football clubs and representatives and governing bodies about future provision of sports services. This is both in relation to the Council's budget cuts [tennis and football] and the City's Playing Pitch Strategy [football]. The City's Playing Pitch Strategy identifies the need for more 3G surfaces in the City.
- 5.2 Specific consultation took place with tennis users and football users about the change to a 3G surface at Hove Park which was supported by football and opposed by tennis.
- 5.3 The principle football user of facilities in Hove Park is Hove Park Colts. The aspects of the Russell Martin proposal impacting directly on them have been discussed with them and they are happy with the proposal. Russell Martin have liaised directly with a number of other schools and other clubs and have included letters of support from them within their proposal.
- 5.4 Following consultation with The Sussex Football Association on who to approach a number of not for profit organisations operating in the local area were invited to put forward proposals for operating the facility.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Russell Martin Foundation are offering a financially sound proposal that will enable the 3G facility at Hove Park to be well utilised, financially sustainable for the Council and cater for a broad range of football users.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The current revenue budgets within CityParks for sports bookings include the income received directly from the users of the Hove Park 3G football facility. As a result of the report recommendations, there will be a loss of income. It is estimated that this would be predominantly offset by the rental income from the proposed lease agreement and a reduction in ongoing revenue costs such as repairs and maintenance. The remaining shortfall will be met from other revenue budgets within CityParks.
- 7.2 The proposed lease agreement includes £15,000 per annum for the sinking fund, agreed by Policy, Resources and Growth committee on 8th February 2018, to pay for future replacement costs of the 3G football facility. This is estimated to be adequate based on an average useful life and current costs; however there is a risk that the pitch may require replacement after a shorter length of time. This risk will remain if the facility continues to be run by council staff.

Finance Officer Consulted: Gemma Jackson

Date: 02/03/18

Legal Implications:

- 7.3 Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act") provides that a Council may dispose of land in any manner it sees fit subject to the condition that, except in the case of leases for less than 7 years, disposal must be for the best consideration reasonably obtainable. 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. As the land to be disposed of is open space land, the requirements of the Act will be satisfied because this report confirms that the requisite notice has been advertised and that officers will take into account any objections before granting the lease.

Lawyer Consulted: Joanne Dougnaglo

Date: 06/03/2018

Equalities Implications:

- 7.4 None identified

Sustainability Implications:

- 7.5 None identified

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Russell Martin Foundation Proposal

Documents in Members' Rooms

1. None

Background Documents

1. None