

Ernest Stevens Trusts Management Committee

Report of the Environment Directorate

Update on the Lawn Tennis Association Improvement Project

Purpose of report

1. To inform the Management Committee and to provide an update, concerning the progress made with the Lawn Tennis improvement project.

Recommendations

2. It is recommended that the Ernest Stevens Trusts Management Committee note the content of the report.

Background

3. Following the update provided at the meeting of the Ernest Stevens Management Committee in April 2022. The Parks Development Team have been working with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) to undertake a number of improvements to the tennis facilities across 6 of its parks.
4. As one of 368 Local Authorities to have publicly available tennis courts, the Council has been granted £280,537.11 by the LTA to improve tennis facilities within the Borough. Dudley has been identified as a strategically important provider for tennis within the region, with our parks providing local people with an introduction to tennis and a platform should they wish to either play casually for health and recreational benefits, or as a base to join a local club and progress further with the sport.
5. The LTA have identified six sites as being viable for facility investment, with the required works. These works have already progressed on schedule and the six sites are as follows:
 - Huntingtree Park – court resurfacing, fencing works and gate access.

- King George V Park – court resurfacing, fencing and gate access.
 - Mary Stevens Park – gate access, fencing works.
 - Priory Park – court re-binding/reconstruction, painting, and gate access.
 - Silver Jubilee Park – court re-binding, painting, and gate access.
 - Wollescote Park – court re-binding, painting, fencing works and gate access.
6. At each location the LTA will install its digital gate access technology. Combined with the LTA's ClubSpark booking platform, customers are able to pre-book courts and Officers would be able to control the programming of the courts for different tennis activities, e.g., coaching, outreach programmes and school clubs etc. Offering a completely self-serve system, the digital gate access system provides users with a 4-digit code on booking, which is then entered into a courtside keypad, which releases a gate lock and allows access to the court.
 7. The booking and gate access installation will allow for a uniform approach to tennis across the six identified venues, with a clear customer improvement in terms of how people can find, book and pay for Council courts. Data shows that 87% of users of the LTA booking and gate access systems are satisfied with the online booking system. As well as providing a better customer experience, the booking and gate access system will also provide Officers with accurate data about usage of our parks courts which will be valuable for future service planning.
 8. Physical improvements on the ground are due to be completed by September with further press releases and promotional material will be published, regarding the booking system and the improvements.

Finance

9. The funding from LTA does not require any match funding but there is an understanding that the Council will operate a viable operating model that will ensure sufficient funding is generated to create a sinking fund to finance future maintenance of the courts. The current charge per court per hour is set at £5, however, there will be times set aside for free tennis and coaching sessions.

10. The LTA funding grant allocation is £280,537.11, however, there are some additional works required at Mary Stevens Park, which will be funded via £2991.45 of s106 funding.
11. The breakdown of funding across the sites are as follows:

Huntingtree Park	£22,251.97
King George V Wordsley	£124,394.85
Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge	£10,428.20
Priory Park	£52,893.78
Silver Jubilee Park	£25,352.56
Wollescote Park	£48,207.20

Law

12. Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides Councils with the general power of competence to do anything that individuals generally may do, subject to Sections 2 to 4, and Section 105, 117-123 of the Charities Act 2011 gives power to authorise dealings with charity property (as amended by the Charities Act 2022).

Risk Management

13. There are no material risks presented by this project.

Equality Impact

14. The proposals contained in this report are consistent with the Council's Equality and Diversity Policy. The project will not impact or restrict access for any members of the community.

Human Resources/Organisational Development

15. The proposals contained in this report will not directly impact on either the Council's current Human Resources or required future resources. Any work arising from this report will be managed from existing internal resources which can provide the necessary flexibility to be able to respond to any changing requirements or working in partnership with the LTA.

Commercial/Procurement

16. Any procurement of goods or services made by the Council will comply with the Councils Contract Standing Orders and governance arrangements in place which could include submission of options to Procurement Management Group (PMG).

Environment/Climate Change

17. The electricity to operate the digital gate access system will be provided via a solar panel and battery storage system, which will be installed at five of the sites. Only one of the sites will require to be connected to the mains power supply, therefore reducing the long-term carbon footprint of this project.

Council Priorities and Projects

18. This decision will improve the quality of the green spaces.

Developing Green Space: Providing a framework of good quality and accessible community space, parks & nature reserves with interconnecting green networks.

This proposal is not anticipated to have any implications for current activity.



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Appendices

None.

List of Background Documents

None.