

## Report of the Director of Communities and Environment

### Report to Executive Board

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018

### Subject: England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) funding for Non-turf Pitches

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, name(s) of ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, access to information procedure rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

### Summary of main issues

1. Leeds City Council manages almost 4,000 hectares of parks and green space, which includes 7 major parks, 63 community parks, 95 recreation grounds, and 155 hectares of local green space.
2. There is a wealth of evidence showing that contact with the natural environment can improve physical and mental health. The parks and green spaces in Leeds provide opportunities for residents and visitors to take part in recreational activities that can reduce obesity levels, disease incidence, and boost well-being.
3. In 2017, the ECB launched a project with a focus on South Asian communities and funded 5 free to use non-turf cricket pitches at Roundhay Park, Armley Park, Cross Flatts Park, Harehills Park. There are positive signs of regular use by a wide sector of the local community on an informal basis as well as organised activity.
4. The ECB have offered around £72k to fully fund a further 6 non-turf pitches in public parks via the local authority non-turf pitch scheme along with potential for more subject to site selection, with specialist maintenance for a 5 year period.
5. It is anticipated that sites will be chosen for informal use and pitches located on publically accessible sites with sufficient space to participate safely. The process for final site selection will be subject to a consultation exercise in liaison with the ECB.

## **Recommendations**

Executive Board is recommended to approve the following:

- To accept the ECB funding and enter into an agreement to develop non-turf cricket pitches in relevant parks, recreation grounds and playing pitches in line with the ECB offer.
- To carry out a consultation exercise to determine suitable site locations.
- To delegate future decisions on this project to the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside.
- To note that Chief Officer Parks and Countryside is responsible for implementing these proposals anticipated to be in place by summer 2019.

## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 This report outlines an opportunity to receive around £72k funding from the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) for the provision of 6 non-turf cricket pitches in parks and green spaces.

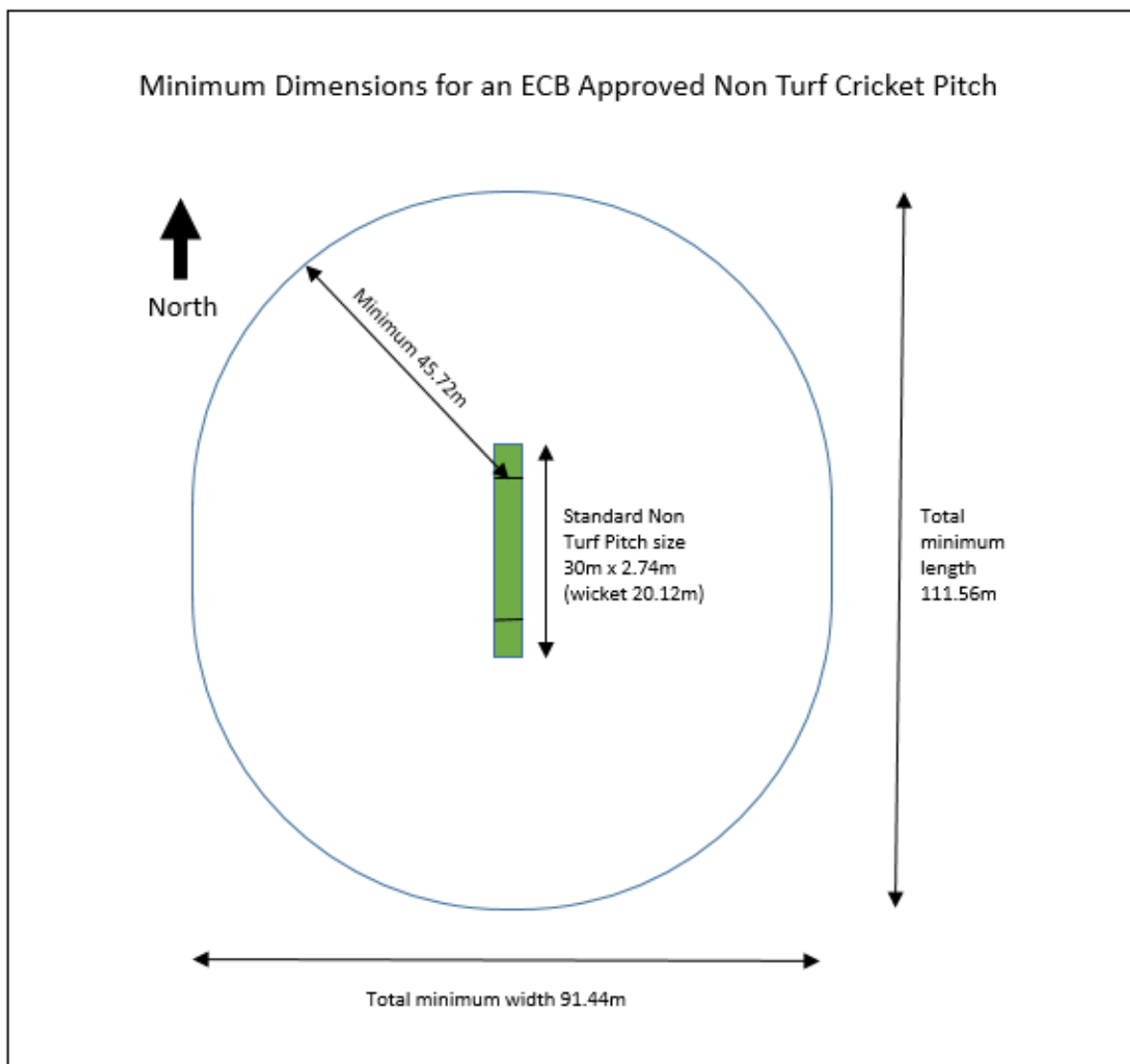
## **2. Background information**

- 2.1 Leeds City Council manages almost 4,000 hectares of parks and green space, which includes 7 major parks, 63 community parks, 95 recreation grounds, and 155 hectares of local green space. From the latest parks survey, 91% of residents visit a park with 50% visiting at least once a week. There are around 45 million annual visits by adults residents in Leeds with the top 3 reasons to visit as follows:
- To get some fresh air
  - To go for a walk
  - Enjoy nature
- 2.2 There is a wealth of evidence showing that contact with the natural environment can improve physical and mental health. The parks and green spaces in Leeds provide opportunities for residents and visitors to take part in recreational activities that can reduce obesity levels, disease incidence, and boost well-being.
- 2.3 The recent scrutiny statement 'enabling active lifestyles' from the Scrutiny Board (Inclusive Growth and Culture) highlighted the health and socio-economic benefits of an active lifestyle. It also acknowledged however the challenges associated with inactivity with for example around 240,000 people in Leeds not active enough for good health, with 50% of children not achieving the level of physical activity needed to benefit their health.
- 2.4 The significance of parks to the promotion of health and the creation of a healthier city is a key theme in the Leeds Parks and Green Space Strategy. Parks and green spaces provide opportunity for freely accessible physical activity, primarily walking, that have proven benefits to health. Parks and green space provide a key opportunity to introduce people to physical activity of a broad nature from informal activities to participation in outdoor sport.
- 2.5 Numerous recent outdoor recreation developments including the establishment of Leeds Urban Bike Park at Middleton Park and the acquisition of new playing pitch provision at Woodhall demonstrates a commitment to expanding and improving provision and opportunity. Furthermore, the status of Leeds as a sporting city continues to grow, and achievements such as the continuing status of Headingley as a test cricket venue helps to develop legacies in terms of local participation. Indeed, Yorkshire has more cricket clubs (778) and players (around 131,000) and provides more international players in both the men's and women's game than any other county.
- 2.6 An assessment of cricket facilities in Leeds which concluded in 2017, identified 78 natural turf cricket squares and 23 non-turf pitches in Leeds available in some capacity for community use. Many of these pitches are located at sites leased to a cricket club and support formal participation in local leagues. In terms of booking allocations in Parks and Countryside, there are 2 squares currently booked by 4 local cricket teams at Roundhay Park.

- 2.7 In 2017, the ECB launched a project with a focus on South Asian communities and in Leeds £50k funding was provided for an additional 6 non-turf cricket pitches at the following four parks:
- Roundhay Park (2)
  - Armley Park
  - Cross Flatts Park
  - Harehills Park
- 2.8 All of these non-turf pitches are available free to the public and as they are in parks, are readily accessible. There are encouraging indications of regular community use with younger participants often from South Asian communities using these facilities on an informal basis led by local community leaders. There are weekly 'Wicketz' sessions (a community cricket programme aiming to establish free sustainable cricket environments for young people in areas of high deprivation) held at the facility in Roundhay Park. The Cross Flatts park facility is also proving popular with a weekly Beeston Ladies session and a South Asian men's team using the pitch for training. There are also 'pop up' cricket sessions planned during the summer holidays.
- 2.9 The Caribbean Cricket Club on Scott Hall Road also received a new non-turf pitch as part of the funding. This is available for use by the club for matches and training purposes, and to encourage new players to join.

### **3. Main issues**

- 3.1 In order to build on the success of the South Asian community project, the ECB local authority non-turf pitch scheme was developed to create a substantial number of sustainable new cricket pitches in areas of strategic need. This is in support of the ECB role to grow and diversify cricket, making it a game for everyone and inspire the next generation of players. As part of this strategy it is acknowledged that one of the biggest opportunities to grow and diversify cricket is to engage better with South Asian communities and has shown via research that through ten key cities, 61% of this population can potentially be reached. Leeds has been identified as one of these ten cities with an estimated 44,000 from the South Asian community.
- 3.2 There is therefore an opportunity in Leeds via this scheme to expand provision by funding a minimum of 6 non-turf pitches in public parks. The scheme will offer around £72k capital grants towards the cost of construction of ECB approved non-turf pitches, periodic (specialist) maintenance for a period of 5 years and equipment to engage new participants. This scheme is fully funded with no requirement for in-kind or financial support to match the offer.
- 3.3 It is anticipated that sites will be chosen for casual or informal use and pitches located on publically accessible, unconstrained sites. Where there are any risk areas (such as roads, property, playgrounds) within an 80m radius of the pitch then the site can be considered on a risk assessment basis. The process for final site selection will be subject to a consultation exercise in liaison with the ECB and subject to the following minimum dimensions for a pitch space:



- 3.4 The opportunity to fund accessible facilities in this way is timely given that the Cricket World Cup is to be held in Leeds in 2019 from 30<sup>th</sup> May to 14<sup>th</sup> July. Headingley has been chosen as a venue to host four matches that involve England, India, Pakistan, West Indies, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan thus helping raise the profile and support Headingley remaining as venue for test cricket. It is anticipated that work would commence in March 2019 and aim to be completed before the Cricket World Cup commences thus giving opportunity to capture increased participation afterwards.
- 3.5 There is some parallel with developing non-turf cricket pitches and the development of artificial football pitches via the Parklife programme which should see the development of between 12-15 new pitches. This will complement 802 pitches identified via the assessment in 2017 of which there 599 football, 110 rugby union and 93 dedicated rugby league pitches identified in Leeds.
- 3.6 Enabling people across the city to gain access to cricket facilities and increase participation will contribute to more people becoming more active. The introduction of non-turf pitches will therefore play a part in helping to address the issues identified in the scrutiny statement and thus embed physical activity as part of an active lifestyle.

## **4. Corporate considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and engagement**

4.1.1 A consultation exercise will be undertaken in order to select suitable sites for selection in liaison with the ECB and in line with technical and funding requirements.

### **4.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

4.2.1 An equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening has been completed and appended to this report.

### **4.3 Council policies and best council plan**

4.3.1 The proposals support the Vision for Leeds 2011 to 2030 and particularly the aspiration that 'there are high quality buildings, places and green spaces, which are clean, looked after, and respect the city's heritage, including buildings, parks and the history of our communities' as part of the overall aim that "all Leeds' communities will be successful". They contribute to the Best Council Plan outcomes to 'enjoy happy, healthy, active lives', and 'enjoy greater access to green spaces, leisure and the arts' and also priority 20 'enhancing the quality of our public realm and green spaces'.

### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 The ECB offer is to fund a minimum of 6 non-turf pitches in public parks and the scheme will offer around £72k capital grants towards the cost of construction of ECB approved non-turf pitches, periodic (specialist) maintenance for a period of 5 years and equipment to engage new participants. There is the potential for more pitches subject to site selection and more funding would be made available to cover the cost at around £12k per pitch. This scheme is fully funded with no requirement for in-kind or financial support to match the offer.

### **4.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

4.5.1 There are no legal issues identified with this report or with access to information. The report is subject to call in under the Council's constitution, rules and procedures.

### **4.6 Risk management**

4.6.1 There are no significant risks identified with the recommendations contained in this report.

## **5. Conclusions**

5.1 The installation of non-turf pitches in suitable parks and green spaces will provide free access to a recreation facility to encourage wide participation from a wide section of the community. In particular there is potential to increase participation in cricket coupled with the associated health benefits that access to the natural environment and physical activity brings.

## **6. Recommendations**

6.1 Executive Board is recommended to approve the following:

- To accept the ECB funding and enter into an agreement to develop non-turf cricket pitches in relevant parks, recreation grounds and playing pitches in line with the ECB offer.
- To carry out a consultation exercise to determine suitable site locations.
- To delegate future decisions on this project to the Chief Officer Parks and Countryside.
- To note that Chief Officer Parks and Countryside is responsible for implementing these proposals anticipated to be in place by summer 2019.

## **7. Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

7.1 None.

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.