

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 25 January 2021
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Healthy Living and Social Care
Report Title:	Romilly Park Tennis Court Refurbishment
Purpose of Report:	To seek approval to accept a grant from Tennis Wales and Sport Wales to assist in refurbishment of the Tennis Courts in Romilly Park and to enter in to a partnership with Tennis Wales to manage the facility once the refurbishment is complete.
Report Owner:	Report of the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Arts and Culture
Responsible Officer:	Miles Punter - Director of Environment and Housing
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	Accountant Environment and Housing Legal - Committee Reports Operational Manager - Accountancy Operational Manager, Property Neighbourhood Services Manager Landscape Architect Sport and Play Manager
Policy Framework:	This report is a matter for Council Decision
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The tennis courts at Romilly Park, whilst being well used, are currently in a poor condition. • Tennis Wales, the governing body for Tennis in Wales, has offered the Council £45,000 to assist in the refurbishment of the courts provided this is matched by the Council. • In addition, funding of least £30,000 has also been secured from the new Sport Wales recovery fund. • The shortfall in funding for this scheme, 50% of the projected costs, would be funded by a projected underspend on the replacement of the Barry Leisure Centre main hall floor. • Following completion of works the site would be managed and maintained by Tennis Wales via a 7 year lease. This would enable best use to be made of the facilities for the benefit of the Barry Community Tennis Club, The Vale Tennis Academy, the Council's own Sports Development team and the wider Community. 	

- As the tennis court area is designated as public open space there is a legal requirement to advertise the loss of this space and to consider any objections that may be received prior to any lease being entered into. This process and a consideration of any comments and objections would need to be completed in the first instance and prior to a commitment of funding and undertaking of physical works at the site.
- Should objections be received the process will have to be put on hold until Cabinet has had the opportunity to consider such objections. Should no objections be received the lease process will progress as per the report recommendations, along with a commitment to use funding as set out.

Recommendations

1. That the Director of Environment and Housing be authorised, in consultation with the Head of Finance / 151 Officer be authorised to accept a grant from Tennis Wales and Sport Wales to assist up-grading works at Romilly Tennis Courts, subject to Recommendation 3, below.
2. That the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services , in consultation with the Director of Environment and Housing Services and the Cabinet Member for Leisure, Arts and Culture, be authorised, subject to up-grading works being satisfactorily completed and subject to no objections being received in respect of recommendation 3 below, to agree terms and execute a 7 (seven) year lease to Tennis Wales to manage and maintain the Tennis Courts at Romilly Park.
3. That the authority is delegated to the Monitoring Officer/Head of Legal and Democratic Services to advertise for the disposal of the land forming the Tennis Courts by way of lease in accordance of s123 Local Government Act 1972, with any comments being reported back to Cabinet for further consideration.
4. That the value of the Romilly Park Tennis Courts scheme in the 2020/21 Capital Programme be increased by £120k, to be funded from a £45k grant from Tennis Wales and a virement of £75k from the Barry Leisure Centre hall floor scheme.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To allow refurbishment works to progress at Romilly Tennis Courts.
2. To provide a sustainable business partnership for the management of the upgraded facility.
3. To comply with the Council's legal duty for the disposal of public open space.
4. To amend the 2020/21 Capital Programme in order for the scheme to progress.

1. Background

- 1.1** Officers have had meetings with Tennis Wales, the governing body for Tennis in Wales, to discuss opportunities to develop tennis across the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 1.2** Tennis Wales is aware of high-quality Tennis Clubs across the Vale of Glamorgan some of whom have their own facilities and some who depend on the use of public tennis courts.
- 1.3** The tennis courts at Romilly Park are one such public facility. They are the primary facility for the Barry Community Tennis Club as well as being well used by the wider community. The Courts are however in a poor condition. Full details of the courts and their location can be found via the link below:
<http://valetennisacademy.co.uk/venue/romilly-park-tennis-courts/>

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1** Tennis Wales is keen to see the courts at Romilly Park refurbished and has identified £45K from its own funding resources to assist in a project it estimates would cost in the region of £150k (including fees). To assist with funding this project Sport Wales has indicated that it would be supportive of a minimum of £30k of its Sport Recovery fund being used for this scheme.
- 2.2** Works to the courts would include resurfacing, new fencing and installation of electronic access gates.
- 2.3** In addition, Tennis Wales is proposing a partnership with Vale Tennis Academy to provide coaching and would work with the existing Barry Community Tennis Club, our own Sports Development team and Tennis Wales to manage the site. Tennis Wales is seeking a 7 year lease from the Council and will then operate the site, taking bookings, payments and working with the Council's Sports development team to develop an annual plan to introduce people to tennis. The revenue generated from the gate access payment system would provide money to maintain the courts. At present fees and charges are set annually for the use of tennis courts but are rarely collected because of the costs involved in doing so. The area to be covered by the lease is attached as Appendix 'A'.
- 2.4** Romilly Tennis Courts are in a Green Flag Park and this investment will demonstrate further commitment to urban park infrastructure as well as securing the facility for future generations.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1** Long Term: Refurbishing the tennis courts at Romilly Park is a long-term investment that has the ability to provide health benefits to the Community as well as sustaining the facilities for the foreseeable future.
- 3.2** Prevention: Remaining fit and healthy is one of the best ill-health prevention measures known. Investment in tennis demonstrates the Council's commitment to positive long term health objectives for its residents.
- 3.3** Integration: Tennis, like most sports, provides many social benefits including reducing social isolation.
- 3.4** Collaboration: The proposals for the refurbishment of the tennis courts are heavily focused on collaboration between Tennis Wales, Sport Wales, The Barry Community Tennis Club, The Vale Tennis Academy and the Council.
- 3.5** Involvement: Barry Community Tennis Club has been requesting improvements to the facilities at Romilly to enhance their club activities for a number of years. Unfortunately, the Council has not had the funds to upgrade the facilities due to its many other commitments.
- 3.6** The proposals in this report are aligned to the Corporate Plan.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** The total cost of the scheme is anticipated to be £150k. This will be funded from a £45k grant from Tennis Wales, a £30k grant from Sports Wales and a virement of £75k from the Barry Leisure Centre hall floor scheme underspend as costs were lower than anticipated.
- 4.2** It is requested to increase the Romilly Tennis Courts scheme in the 2020/21 Capital Programme by £120k, to be funded from a £45k grant from Tennis Wales and a virement of £75k from the Barry Leisure Centre hall floor scheme. The £30k grant from Sports Wales is already included in the 2020/21 Capital Programme which was approved via emergency powers.

Employment

- 4.3** There are no direct employment implications associated with this report.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.4** The Council has a duty under section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 not to dispose of land at less than best consideration (other than by way of short lease) except with the consent of the Welsh Ministers. As the lease to Tennis Wales will be short term and given the nature of the recommended tenant, the Council has power to grant the proposed lease.
- 4.5** The lease to Tennis Wales will be exempted from the provisions of the Playing Fields (Community Involvement in Disposal Decision) (Wales) Regulations 2015 as the disposal will not have an adverse impact of the use of the playing field as a sports and recreational facility by the public and is to a body whose aims or objectives include the promotion of sporting or recreational activities in accordance with regulation 4.
- 4.6** The proposed lease must still be advertised as a disposal of Public Open Space in accordance with the requirements of s123 (2A) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 4.7** Any objections to the disposal of the Public Open Space will be reported separately to Cabinet for consideration prior to any final decision being taken. If no objections are received the matter will be progressed as set out in the Recommendations of this report.

5. Background Papers

None.

Appendix A

