

## WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE 12/07/2016

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### Title:

**BADSHOT LEA RECREATION GROUND – APPROVAL TO SUBMIT PLANNING APPLICATION FOR THE INSTALLATION OF CRICKET BALL STOP NETTING**

**[Portfolio Holder: Councillor Kevin Deanus]  
[Wards Affected: Farnham Weybourne and Badshot Lea]**

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### Summary and purpose:

This report seeks approval to submit a planning application to install cricket ball stop netting at Badshot Lea Recreation Ground, Farnham.

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### How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

This report has the potential to contribute towards the following corporate priorities of the Council:

**Environment:** Managing our green spaces to ensure they offer biodiversity, remain attractive and continue to be safe for our communities to enjoy.

**Value for Money:** Using and investing in assets to enhance service delivery and to maximise value and income.

### Financial Implications:

The provision of ball stop fencing is to be met from the 2016/17 capital budget of £53,000 for infrastructure improvements that has previously been approved by the Council, which is made up of Planning Infrastructure Funds (PIC) and the Councils capital funds. The cost of the fencing and installation will be approximately £15,000. The cost of submitting a planning application is £195 and there are expected to be costs for any associated consultant reports if tree or contaminated land surveys are required.

### Legal Implications:

There are no direct legal implications raised by this report .

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### Introduction

1. Badshot Lea Recreation Ground is owned and maintained by the Council, under which there is a local management layer run by the Badshot Lea Recreation Ground Committee.
2. The Recreation Ground Committee manage the bookings on site and take booking income, whilst the Council incurs the costs of maintaining the facility without the benefit of receiving any sports pitch booking income. This is a historical arrangement that is unique to several recreation grounds in the Farnham area, it is planned to review these arrangement in the future.

3. The facilities on site include tennis courts (leased by Badshot Lea Tennis Club from the Council), a football pitch, cricket wicket and outfield, cricket practice cage and sports pavilion; all of which are used by the local sports clubs and the Recreation Ground Committee. The site is the home ground of Badshot Lea Cricket Club.
4. The northern and western boundary of the recreation ground is bordered by residential dwellings and distances from these vary between 45m and 65m distance from the cricket square.
5. There have been regular instances of cricket balls being hit outside of the recreation ground boundary and into the grounds and also hitting properties along the northern boundary during matches. Residents of The Green and Green Croft have complained to the Council in regard to this and have also directly approached the Cricket Club with concerns for the safety of the occupants and damage caused to the properties.
6. In recent years the problem appears to have worsened as cricketers improve their batting skills and are able to hit further, also the advent of 20:20 cricket has led to more balls being struck harder and therefore further.
7. The Cricket Club as a result have raised their concerns with the Council over this matter and have asked the Council to help assist them in providing a solution.
8. There have been no concerns raised by residents of Beech Tree Drive to the west of the Cricket square regarding stray cricket balls as the properties are partially protected by high ball stop netting around the tennis courts.
9. It is clear some form of ball stop netting protection is required for the properties along the Northern boundary. It would not be cost effective to move the square nor is there space to move it in due to the requirements of the cricket boundary.
10. Officers have met with specialist sports ground contractors on site to discuss the various options for cricket ball stop netting. Officers have subsequently met with members of the cricket club, Recreation Ground Committee and local residents to discuss the issues and solutions to the problem.
11. Further to these meetings, a letter of consultation was sent by post to the homeowners of the properties on the northern boundary of the recreation ground. Three options for design and location of ball stop netting were proposed and the responses requested. The most favourable option will be proposed in the planning application.
12. The planning application seeks planning permission for the erection of three individual sections of cricket ball stop netting on the Northern edge of the Recreation Ground. The proposal will serve to protect and preserve the amenity of the occupier of the property, due to the damage and safety issues created by cricket balls entering the property over the existing boundary.
13. Each of the three sections of fence will be of the same specification but sited at the locations highlighted on the Location and Site plans. Each section will comprise:

- Three 10m high galvanised steel square posts set into 1m deep ground sockets with concrete surrounds
- The three posts will hold in total approximately 20m length and 10m high, 50mm mesh ball stop netting of 2mm black, knotted polypropylene
- Pulley and cleats to allow the nets to be fully raised and lowered to minimise its visual impact on the local properties when the facility is not in play
- Each support post in each section can be removed from the ground sockets at the end of the cricket season for storage reducing the visual impact

14. The cost of the ball stop netting is approximately £15,000 including installation.

15. A capital budget has already been agreed by the Council using both Planning Infrastructure Contributions (PIC) funds and the funds of the Council during last years budget setting process. The Cricket Club and Recreation Ground Committee have stated they are unable to assist financially in the provision of capital funds for the ball stop netting. Officers will however seek to request again that a financial contribution is made by either organisation.

16. The Council will as requirement of its capital outlay and release of PIC funds be seeking a condition via a formal agreement with either; the club, or the Recreation Ground Committee to operate the ball stop netting and to maintain the structures and netting at their cost in perpetuity.

## **Conclusion**

17. In order to mitigate the risk of injury to persons and damage to property along the Northern boundary of Badshot Lea Recreation Ground, the only lasting solution would be the provision of ball stop netting to prevent cricket ball from straying over the boundary.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Executive approves the request to submit a planning application for the erection of ball stop netting around Badshot Lea Recreation Ground, Farnham.

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## **Background Papers**

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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