
SPORTSFIELD UPGRADES

1. Purpose of Report

This report is being presented as a means of recognising the difficulties and frustrations caused to sports codes following the wet 2010 winter and the associated poor ground conditions.

It requests Council's approval for the bringing forward of funding to allow construction of an artificial sportsfield at Wakefield Park during the 2010/11 financial year. This report also notes that Kilbirnie Park will be upgraded during the 2010/11 financial year.

2. Executive Summary

Council has approved a programme within its LTCCP, to install a further 5 artificial turfs over the next 7 years.

During this winter there has been a high level of frustration from sports codes and players alike at their inability to access sportsfields for both training and playing days because of the very wet conditions that have been experienced.

This report recommends the construction of one artificial sportsfield at Wakefield Park during the 2010/11 financial year. This will require bringing forward funding of \$1.125million CAPEX, currently allocated in the LTCCP in the 2011/12 and 2012/13 financial years. The total cost of the artificial sportsfield is estimated to be \$1.625million. The \$500,000 shortfall will be funded from external sponsorship.

It is noted that the construction of the artificial sportsfield at Wakefield Park will be subject to geotechnical investigation, and regulatory, consultation and tendering processes being completed by January 2011 to facilitate construction in time for winter 2011.

Furthermore, it is noted that officers will be investing \$225,000 in an upgrade of the Kilbirnie Park turf during the 2010/11 financial year. This work will include secondary drainage and will improve the winter performance of the Park for the future.

Councillor Morrison has identified two potential opportunities for school partnerships with Wellington College and St Patrick's College (Wellington). Whilst this report does not propose an opinion on these opportunities at this time, officers intend investigating these options further and reporting back to the new Council in the early triennium.

A report will be presented to the new Council in early 2011 that will outline the remainder of the artificial sportsfield rollout programme recommended by Officers.

3. Recommendations

Officers recommend that Council:

1. *Receive the information.*
2. *Note that the cost of constructing the artificial sportsfield at Wakefield Park is estimated to be \$1.625million and that the \$500,000 shortfall will be funded from external sponsorship.*
3. *Agree to bring forward \$1.075million capex (Project CX507) from the 2012/13 financial year and \$50,000 from the 2011/12 financial year to the 2010/11 financial year to fund construction of one artificial sportsfield at Wakefield Park.*
4. *Note that \$225,000 will be allocated from a reprioritisation of existing capital funding to fund a full drainage upgrade at Kilbirnie Park in the 2010/11 financial year.*
5. *Request that Officers will report on the remainder of the recommended Artificial Sportsfield Rollout Programme for the remaining years of the LTCCP to the new Council at the beginning of 2011.*
6. *Note that Officers will recommend an increase in user charges to \$100 per hour for artificial sportsfields in a report to the new Council in 2011.*

4. Background

There has been significant media coverage in the last two months and anecdotal frustration noted within Football, Rugby and League codes of the inability to undertake training and competition games during the winter months.

Capital Football has advised that in one league alone during the 2010 winter season, of the 451 games scheduled for the full season, 173 (38.3 %) were cancelled due to poor ground conditions. Additionally many rugby and football teams were only able to train 3 or 4 times during the 2010 winter season on city sportsfields. This frustrates coaches, players, parents and administrators and means there are very reduced opportunities to develop skills.

That said, the new artificial fields at Nairnville Park (opened April 2009) and Wellington Showgrounds (opened May 2010) operated at capacity during the

winter months. All codes have been allocated games and they have contributed to a much lower cancellation rate than would have been the case without them. Council has previously agreed and allocated funding within the 2009/19 LTCCP for artificial sportsfields as follows:

Financial Year	Funding allocated in LTCCP	Site
2009/10	\$1.5M	Wellington Showgrounds/Te Whaea (opened May 2010)
2010/11	\$0	
2011/12	\$50k	<i>Planning work</i>
2012/13	\$1.5M	To be confirmed
2013/14	\$1.5M	To be confirmed
2014/15	\$1.5M	To be confirmed
2015/16	\$1.45M	To be confirmed
2016/17	\$50k	<i>Planning work</i>
2017/18	\$1.45M	To be confirmed

Note: The above programme in the LTCCP is in addition to \$750k in 2008/09 for Nairnville Park

5. Discussion

5.1 Why is there pressure on Sportsfields?

The main factors that are putting increased pressure on city sports fields are:

- Increasing demand from sports groups - particularly football. Between 2007 and 2010 the number of Capital Football junior football teams in Wellington City increased from 299 teams to 395 teams (32.1% increase). During the same time period, Capital Football senior football teams in Wellington City increased from 142 teams to 166 teams (16.9% increase).
- Population growth. According to 2006 Census data, Wellington City's population increased by 15,642 (9.5%) between 2001 and 2006. The 2006 population was 179,466 and is projected to increase to 204,460 by the year 2026.
- High annual rainfall with 1246mm on average annually (source: NIWA - 30 year average 1969 to 1998). Rainfall year to date as at 31 August 2010 was 19.6% above average.
- No new flat land available for new sports field development. This is particularly a problem as the city grows in the north and population increases along the growth spine.
- Many of the fields are on clay-based soil and have poor drainage (and lacking basic infrastructure such as irrigation).
- Traditional winter sports are now being played in summer (e.g. football), causing conflict between winter and summer codes, over use, and providing less time for ground preparation.
- As sport is changing we are seeing new sports emerging that also require access to playing space e.g. Lacrosse, Ultimate Frisbee and 5 aside football.

- The growth of professional winter sports – e.g. the Wellington Phoenix and the Hurricanes and Lions has seen 2 facilities dedicated to training for elite sport. Other sportsfields are also often needed to host visiting teams.
- An increase in training on the fields, which is lowering the quality of the sports fields for competition. Many fields are used for training and competition games

The combination of these factors along with the variance of the seasons mean that fields have little time to recover after summer sport. For example, this season started with a very dry autumn and corresponding poor grass growth, and then had almost constant wet weather. This resulted in a high level of negative comment from players, coaches, administrators, parents and the media about the non-availability of sportsfields.

5.2 *Wakefield Park Site*

Wakefield Park was identified by officers as a “preferred site” for an artificial sports field in a Briefing Paper which was presented to Councillors in March 2009. Council officers believe that Wakefield Park is well suited for two artificial fields.

It is noted that the time frame to construct an artificial sportsfield at Wakefield Park during the 2010/11 financial year is short. Construction of the field within the 2010/11 financial year will be subject to geotechnical investigation, and regulatory, consultation and tendering processes being completed by January 2011.

5.3 *Increased Use and Capacity*

The construction of an artificial sportsfield at Wakefield Park will add significant capacity to the city sportsfield network.

Artificial sportsfields can sustain far greater use than a natural grass field. During the 2010 winter the artificial sportsfields at Nairnville Park and the Wellington Showgrounds were each used for up to 60 hours per week for training and competition. Conversely, the best natural grass fields in the city could only be used for a maximum of 8 to 10 hours per week during the 2010 winter.

5.4 *School Partnerships*

Councillor Morrison has identified that Wellington College and St Patrick’s College (Wellington) has an interest in working with Council to install artificial sportsfields.

It is understood that the Colleges would fund 50% of the cost, Council would be asked to fund 50% of the full cost, and that 50% of Council’s investment would be recovered from increased user charges over a 10 year period.

It should be noted that the LTCCP contains no allowance for OPEX funding at this time.

Whilst it was always intended as part of the artificial turf programme to investigate school partnership opportunities, Officers have not had the time to undertake detailed discussions with the Colleges in regards to this proposal.

Officers will undertake more detailed investigation and discussion with the Colleges and report back to Council in due course and are aware of the Colleges' desire to continue to explore these partnership opportunities.

5.5 User Charges

As a separate piece of work, Officers have engaged an external consultancy, to explore with the three winter sport codes of Rugby, Football and Rugby League, their ability to support Council in the delivery of the artificial turf programme, through an increase in user charges.

The initial results of this work show a willingness from sports organisations to increase their contributions to user charges in return for increased availability to artificial turf for training and competition.

It is noted that Council's current Revenue & Financing Policy requires a 40% cost recovery from user charges, currently reflected as a hire charge of \$60.00 per hour. It is proposed that the hire fee will increase to \$100 per hour for this turf, reflecting the support from sports organisations.

The final report on this matter will be used to support subsequent recommendations to Council as part of the 2011/12 DAP process.

5.6 Advancing the Artificial Sportsfield Programme

Officers are very aware of the level of frustration in the sporting community about the sportsfields. They have also observed the relief that has been provided with the new Wellington Showground's turf that has opened this year.

Officers believe that it is feasible to build one new artificial sportsfield at Wakefield Park in the 2010/11 year. This could be done by bringing forward the \$1.125m CAPEX, currently funded in the LTCCP in the 2011/12 and 2012/13 financial years to the 2010/11 financial year.

The cost breakdown is summarised as follows:

Single Turf Install - Wakefield Park

Activity	Cost (m)	Notes
Turf, design,supply,install	\$ 1,500,000.00	LTCCP funded Cost
Cricket Pitch relocation	\$ 75,000.00	Relocation of cricket pitches to Martin Luckie and Miramar Park
Planning/ Resource consent costs	\$ 50,000.00	
Subtotal	\$ 1,625,000.00	
External Contribution	-\$ 500,000.00	
Net Build Cost	\$ 1,125,000.00	

A paper detailing the remainder of the artificial sportsfield roll-out programme will be brought to the new Council in early 2011.

Officers would also explore the partnership opportunities with Wellington College and St Patrick's College to determine whether these opportunities can be advanced and report this to Council at the same time.

5.7 Kilbirnie Park

Poneke Rugby Club in particular has heavily criticised the condition of Kilbirnie Park turf during this winter. Their frustration has been publicised widely.

As part of normal asset management renewals some drainage work is being installed across the park this spring.

In order to deliver a significant improvement in field quality and performance in the eastern suburbs for next winter, officers propose that we extend this drainage work to include secondary drainage or "gravel banding" along with the addition of sand, to the soil playing surface across the entire park.

This drainage system will ensure faster egress of water from the playing surface into the drainage system. This will enable the playing surface to become playable more quickly following rain and generally sustain more hours of weekly use than a soil field.

The cost of this additional work is \$225,000 and funding will be allocated from a reprioritisation of existing capital funding.

5.8 Financial Considerations

The recommendations within the paper primarily represent a reallocation or re-phasing of existing LTCCP funding.

The key funding changes are the addition of the external funding for the construction of the artificial turf at Wakefield Park, and the operating cost increases for the improved surface at Kilbirnie Park.

The table below reflects the financial impacts across the period of the 2009-19 LTCCP.

Project Component	Operating expenses \$000									
	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
<i>Kilbirnie Park operating expenditure</i>	\$7k	\$110k	\$110k	\$110k	\$110k	\$110k	\$110k	\$110k	\$110k	\$110k
<i>Operating movement for re-phasing of artificial turf</i>	\$48k	\$116k	\$58k							
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$55k</i>	<i>\$226k</i>	<i>\$168k</i>	<i>\$110k</i>	<i>\$110k</i>	<i>\$110k</i>	<i>\$110k</i>	<i>\$110k</i>	<i>\$110k</i>	<i>\$110k</i>

Project Component	Capital expenses \$000									
	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19	19/20
<i>Kilbirnie Park upgrade</i>	\$225k					\$100k				
<i>Reallocate existing funding</i>	(\$225k)									
<i>Artificial turf re-phasing</i>	\$1,625k	(\$50k)	(\$1,075k)							
<i>External capital funding</i>	(\$500k)									
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$1,125k</i>	<i>(\$50k)</i>	<i>(\$1,075k)</i>	<i>\$0k</i>	<i>\$0k</i>	<i>\$100k</i>	<i>\$0k</i>	<i>\$0k</i>	<i>\$0k</i>	<i>\$0k</i>

These decisions will need to be reflected and agreed in both the 2011/12 Annual Plan and the 2012/22 LTCCP

5.9 Climate Change Impacts and Considerations

Park and Gardens Business Unit manage the artificial turfs to date and will take over the maintenance of these fields as they come out of warranty period.

While artificial fields still require regular physical maintenance to clean and de-compact the turf, they do not require application of fertiliser, water, grass seed, topsoil and agrichemicals. Artificial sportsfields provide considerable hours of utilisation that could only be achieved on numerous natural turf fields with a significant amount of material and labour inputs.

5.10 Long-Term Council Community Plan Considerations

Should the recommendations in this paper be approved, it will result in a reallocation of capital funding within the LTTCP. Additional operating costs will be required to provide for the improved surface at Kilbirnie Park.

6. Conclusion

Officers support bringing forward funding for the construction of one artificial sportsfield at Wakefield Park to meet demand and community expectation. The development of this artificial sportsfield will provide significant capacity and benefits for sports codes. This will clearly demonstrate to the sporting community that Council has recognised their concerns in respect of access to playable sportsfields for next winter.

The opportunity identified by Councillor Morrison for school partnerships provides a further positive outcome in recognising the sports community concerns. This opportunity will be further investigated and reported back to the new Council in 2011.

Contact Officer: *Neville Brown, Director, City Services.*

Supporting Information

1) Strategic Fit / Strategic Outcome

This paper supports Council activities as a facilitator of recreation partnerships and provider of recreation services. Agreement to the policy will contribute to Council meeting the outcome of offering a diverse range of quality recreation and leisure activities.

2) LTCCP/Annual Plan reference and long term financial impact

The artificial turf project is contained in the LTCCP is # CX507. The changes indicated in this paper here will lead to an increase in capital expenditure in the current financial year but no change to the overall LTCCP expenditure for this project.

3) Treaty of Waitangi considerations

There are no Treaty of Waitangi conflicts within the recommendations within this paper.

4) Decision-Making

This is not a significant decision. The report sets out a number of options in answer to the Standing Order question posed. There is wide support for these recommendations from sport codes and clubs.

5) Consultation

No specific consultation relative to the recommendations within this paper have been required. However, PNBST have been advised of the recommendations being proposed.

6) Legal Implications

There are no legal implications to the recommendations within this report.

7) Consistency with existing policy

There no conflicts with existing policy.