

Ellis Park / Tampawardli (Park 24) Sports Facilities

Tuesday, 6 February 2024
City Community Services and Culture Committee

Strategic Alignment - Our Community

Program Contact:
Jennifer Kalionis, Associate
Director City Culture

Public

Approving Officer:
Ilia Houridis, Director City
Shaping

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for an upgrade to facilities in Ellis Park / Tampawardli (Park 24) by the Adelaide Comets Football Club Inc ('the Club') to enable the hosting of National Premier League (NPL) and Women's National Premier League (WNPL) games. These proposed works are fully funded by the Club.

The proposed use of Park 24 as an NPL and WNPL venue is consistent with the Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy (APLMS) as it would strengthen the role of the Park Lands as a regional destination for competitive sport and a variety of active and passive forms of recreation (Strategy 1.6). NPL and WNPL competitions are established in each state of Australia and involve community soccer clubs participating in their respective state competitions.

A facility must meet Football South Australia's (FSA) Venue Requirements Policy to host Premier League games. The facilities at Park 24 are currently non-compliant with FSA Venue Requirements Policy, and the Club's top-tier men's and women's teams now host 'home' games of the NPL and WNPL at other venues, including Santos Athletics Stadium (Mile End) and State Sports Park (Gepps Cross).

The proposed facility upgrades are at no capital cost to Council. As part of a pre-election commitment, the Club was granted \$1.75 million from the State Government to upgrade facilities at Park 24 to enable the Club to meet FSA minimum requirements for NPL and WNPL games., through the Office of Recreation, Sport and Racing. Approximately \$500,000 of that grant has been allocated to the works proposed in this report.

The upgrades include the installation of fencing and nets in accordance with minimum FSA requirements. The Club seeks Council approval to install a permanent 1.1 metre high black mesh fence and ball stop nets. As per the APLMS, it is desirable to limit fencing in the Park Lands and to provide fencing only for safety purposes. The Club is also seeking a 1.8 metre wide perimeter path around the main pitch in Park 24, which is not an FSA requirement.

The remainder of the elements needed to meet FSA minimum requirements will be temporarily installed on game days and the area will remain accessible to the public with the exception being when matches are scheduled.

On 23 November 2023, Mr Daniel Raschella, representing the Club, made a deputation to the Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority Board (Kadaltilla) on this matter. At the same meeting, Administration presented a report to Kadaltilla, who supported the Club's proposed facility improvements to Park 24 subject to measures that limit the alienation of the Park Lands for community access or other purposes 24 hours before a game and within 24 hours following the conclusion of the final scheduled game to ensure public access is optimised.

To date, facility upgrades approved by the Administration include new sports lighting across the Club's licensed playing fields and upgraded turf and irrigation on the main pitch in Park 24.

RECOMMENDATION

The following recommendation will be presented to Council on 13 February 2024 for consideration.

THAT THE CITY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND CULTURE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL THAT COUNCIL

1. Approves the Adelaide Comets Football Club ('the Club') undertaking facility improvements to Ellis Park / Tampawardli (Park 24) as shown in Attachment A to Item 9.6 on the Agenda for the meeting of the City Community Services and Culture Committee held on 6 February 2024, subject to:
 - 1.1. The permanent 1.1 metre high fence around the main pitch incorporating double gates without locks is open on non-game days. There is no permanent signage except for information relating to public access. The recommendation for double gates to be open on non-game days will signal to the public that the playing field is accessible. Further, signage approved by Council detailing information of when the lessee utilises the grounds and, therefore, is not accessible for public use.
 - 1.2. The temporary outer spectator fence to be installed no earlier than 24 hours before the first scheduled game and removed within 24 hours following the conclusion of the final scheduled game, and only displaying wayfinding signage and stored off-site on non-game days.
 - 1.3. The use of exposed aggregate concrete for new pathways along the northern and western boundaries of the main pitch and no pathways on eastern and southern boundaries.
 - 1.4. Accessible parking accommodated within the internal roadway.
 - 1.5. Tree planting along the northern, western and southern boundaries of the Club's licensed area with species selection informed by the Administration.
 - 1.6. Detailed landscape plans, including emergency/maintenance access and storage on the western side of the building, submitted to the Administration for approval.
-

IMPLICATIONS AND FINANCIALS

City of Adelaide 2024-2028 Strategic Plan	Strategic Alignment – Our Community This proposal supports the Outcome of 'An interesting and engaging place to live, learn and visit.' Addresses the Key Action of 'Enable community-led services which increase wellbeing, social connections and participation in active lifestyles, leisure, recreation and sport
Policy	This proposal aligns with the Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy (APLMS). It strengthens the Park Lands' role as a regional destination for competitive sport and various active and passive forms of recreation (Strategy 1.6). The Adelaide Park Lands Community Land Management Plan supports the provision of sporting fields in Ellis Park / Tampawardli (Park 24).
Consultation	Not as a result of this report
Resource	The management of this project will be resourced by the Adelaide Comets Football Club ('the Club').
Risk / Legal / Legislative	The installation of a permanent fence will require Development Approval. The Park Lands Lease Agreement between the City of Adelaide and the Club outlines in clause 8.7 the requirement of the Lessee to obtain Council consent for any alteration or addition to the Leased Area (including improvements).
Opportunities	Hosting National Premier League and Women's National Premier League games will attract more visitation to the Adelaide Park Lands and support the APLMS target of growing Park Lands utilisation.
23/24 Budget Allocation	State Government funded proposal. No cost to Council.
Proposed 24/25 Budget Allocation	Not as a result of this report
Life of Project, Service, Initiative or (Expectancy of) Asset	Aligned to the lease term, which expires in 2039.
23/24 Budget Reconsideration (if applicable)	Not as a result of this report
Ongoing Costs (e.g. maintenance cost)	As per the lease agreement, repairs and maintenance are the Lessee's responsibility.
Other Funding Sources	The Lessee will fund this project via a State Government grant of \$1.75 million, of which approximately \$550,000 is allocated to works proposed in this report. There is no capital cost to Council.

DISCUSSION

1. The Adelaide Comets Football Club ('the Club') is an amateur soccer club with over 600 playing members, making up over 40 senior and junior men's and women's teams. To accommodate their teams, the Club holds lease agreements with the City of Adelaide for facilities in Ellis Park / Tampawardli (Park 24), expiring in 2039, and Pelzer Park / Pityarilla (Park 19), expiring in 2026.
2. The Club leases a two-level clubroom, licences multiple playing fields at Park 24, and leases changerooms and two soccer pitches at Park 19.
3. The facilities at Park 24 are currently programmed year-round and are used by a range of other organisations, including:
 - 3.1. Western Athletics Club (sub-lessee who shares the building and playing fields)
 - 3.2. Saint Mary's College (sub-licensee who uses the playing fields during the day)
 - 3.3. One Culture Support Services (not-for-profit disability service provider who runs powerchair football (soccer) programs)
 - 3.4. ACH Group (not-for-profit aged care organisation that runs walking football (soccer) programs for people living with neurological conditions or who have had a stroke)
 - 3.5. Adelaide Rugby Union
 - 3.6. Australian Blind Football
 - 3.7. Adelaide High School
4. The Club's growth has led to five of its 40 teams participating in the National Premier League (NPL) and Women's National Premier League (WNPL).

Football SA National Premier League Minimum Requirements

5. A facility must meet Football South Australia's (FSA) Venue Requirements Policy to host Premier League games.
6. The Club can currently meet most of the minimum requirements needed to host NPL and WNPL games at Park 24, except for the following key criteria:
 - 6.1. A permanent fence or fencing as approved by FSA fully enclosing the field of play and that is a minimum of two metres in distance from the sidelines and goal lines. The fence must be in good condition and safe.
 - 6.2. A players' race that leads directly from the dressing room of the players and match officials to the field of play.
 - 6.3. Two covered coaches/substitutes benches/dugouts or as approved by FSA, with adequate seating for at least 13 people, six substitutions and seven team officials.
 - 6.4. Spectator amenities that are fully enclosed with perimeter fencing ensuring admission into the ground is controlled.
 - 6.5. A media area that provides unobstructed views of the playing field and scoreboard.
 - 6.6. A fully functional scoreboard (including the names of each participating team), which is clearly visible to spectators and the media/ press box.
7. Due to the current non-compliance of the Park 24 facilities with this Policy, the Club must hire alternative venues for its home games. The majority of the Club's home games are at Santos Athletics Stadium (Mile End) and State Sports Park (Gepps Cross).

Grant Funding

8. As part of a pre-election commitment, the Club was granted \$1.75 million from the State Government to upgrade its facilities in Park 24. State Government funding and this proposal are at no cost to Council. The funding was provided to the Club for:
 - 8.1. Replacing the existing sports lighting with new LED lighting across all the playing fields in Park 24 (approximately \$800,000).
 - 8.2. Installing new turf and irrigation of the main pitch (approximately \$400,000).
 - 8.3. Purchasing and installing various elements around the main pitch to enable the hosting of NPL and WNPL games (approximately \$550,000).

Works to Date

9. The Club has completed turf and irrigation improvements to the main pitch, increasing the quality of the playing surface and its capacity to withstand regular use by senior men's and women's teams. Due to its proximity to the clubrooms, the main pitch is heavily programmed.
10. The Club has received Development Approval for new sports lighting and will complete this work by February 2024. The new lighting will be more energy efficient and meet community soccer training and competition standards.

Works Proposed

11. The Club has developed a facility upgrade concept plan to meet the FSA National Premier League minimum requirements and host NPL and WNPL games at Park 24 (see **Attachment A**).
12. The concept plan includes:
 - 12.1. Proposals to meet FSA requirements:
 - 12.1.1. a permanent 1.1 metre high black mesh fence around the main pitch
 - 12.1.2. temporary spectator fencing
 - 12.1.3. retractable sports netting behind each goal
 - 12.1.4. a retractable players' race
 - 12.1.5. moveable shelters for players and officials
 - 12.1.6. a moveable media/press box
 - 12.2. Other proposals for the venue
 - 12.2.1. a portable electronic scoreboard
 - 12.2.2. irrigated turf viewing mounds
 - 12.2.3. 1.8 metre wide accessible path
 - 12.2.4. enhancements to the western side of the clubrooms with additional open area storage (not enclosed built form)
 - 12.2.5. two accessible parking spaces and emergency vehicle access driveway
 - 12.2.6. paving between the clubrooms and the main pitch
 - 12.2.7. in fill tree planting along the western edge of the main pitch for increased shade and weather protection
 - 12.2.8. landscape improvements along the Park Lands roadway (to the north of the clubrooms)

Programming

13. The Club aims to host:
 - 13.1. NPL and WNPL senior games on Friday evenings, with typical crowd sizes of 250 to 500 people, up to a maximum of 1,000. As per the City of Adelaide's Adelaide Events Guidelines, an event of less than 1,500 people is considered a minor event.
 - 13.2. NPL and WNPL reserves and under 18s on Saturday afternoons, with spectators traditionally friends and family.
14. In 2023, there were 22 NPL and 18 WNPL rounds. It is envisaged that games would be scheduled at Park 24 on at least 11 weekends each year and up to a maximum of 20 weekends.
15. The scheduling of these games will not displace any existing use of the playing fields in Park 24.

Kadaltilla / Adelaide Parks Lands Authority

16. This matter was considered by [Kadaltilla on 23 November 2023](#), in which the Club was present at this meeting and presented their proposal to Kadaltilla, and the Authority resolved the following:

That the Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority:

1. *Supports the Adelaide Comets Football Club ('the club') proposed facility improvements to Ellis Park / Tampawardli (Park 24) as shown in Attachment A to item 6.1 on the Agenda for the Meeting of Kadaltilla / Adelaide Park Lands Authority held on Tuesday 23 November 2023, subject to:*

- 1.1. *Permanent 1.1m high fencing with double gates without locks to remain open on non-game days with no permanent signage except wayfinding.*
- 1.2. *The temporary outer spectator fence to be installed no earlier than 24 hours before a game and removed within 24 hours following conclusion of the final scheduled game, and only displaying wayfinding signage and stored off-site on non-game days. Public notices be installed, consistent with other areas in the Park Lands indicating accessibility be installed to the satisfaction of the Council.*
- 1.3. *The use of exposed aggregate concrete for the pathways along the northern and western boundary only and the eastern and southern pathway omitted.*
- 1.4. *Driveway addition is not supported and existing internal road reviewed to accommodate additional DDA parking if required.*
- 1.5. *Species selection of new trees on the northern, western and southern boundaries of the park to be informed by consultation with Administration.*
- 1.6. *Detailed landscape plans submitted to Administration for approval.'*

17. A copy of the Kadaltilla report from 23 November 2023 can be viewed [here](#).

Administration's Assessment

18. The table below is Administration's assessment of the concept plan against the Adelaide Park Lands Management Strategy (APLMS) and following the advice of Kadaltilla.

Concept Plan	Administration Comment	Administration Recommendation
<p>Permanent 1.1 metre high black mesh fence around main pitch with eight various sized gates.</p> <p>FSA requirement of permanent fencing for the safety of players and officials on game days.</p>	<p>It is desirable to minimise fencing in the Park Lands. However, the proposed permanent fence will be low scale and have multiple openings on non-game days.</p> <p>The secondary spectator fence will only be in place on game days and stored off-site at other times.</p> <p>There are multiple precedents of playing facilities fenced in the Park Lands.</p> <p>This is consistent with the APLMS and fencing provided for safety reasons rather than security purposes (Strategy 1.6).</p>	<p>Support installation of a permanent fence around the main pitch as per the concept plan, subject to all gates being double gates open on non-game days and containing no permanent signage except information relating to public access.</p>
<p>Temporary spectator fencing.</p> <p>FSA requires that spectator amenities be fully enclosed with perimeter fencing, ensuring admission into the ground is controlled.</p>	<p>The APLMS seeks to investigate methods to minimise temporary event fencing and deliver temporary fencing options that retain visual amenity, visual permeability and public accessibility (Strategy 1.5).</p>	<p>Support game day temporary spectator fencing as per concept plan, subject to installation no earlier than 24 hours before the first scheduled game and removed within 24 hours following conclusion of the final scheduled game, only displaying wayfinding signage and stored off-site on non-game days.</p>
<p>1.8 metre wide path around the main pitch to facilitate access for spectators.</p> <p>Three material options proposed – exposed aggregate concrete (preferred option) / compacted sand / permeable pavers.</p>	<p>The new paths will enhance accessibility and reduce turf maintenance around the main pitch.</p> <p>This is consistent with the APLMS's goal of providing internal path networks accessible to users and designed with a 'light touch' to complement each park setting (Strategy 2.4).</p>	<p>Support installation of path network only on the northern and western boundaries using exposed concrete aggregate.</p>

Concept Plan	Administration Comment	Administration Recommendation
Retractable mesh sport netting behind each goal.	This is consistent with APLMS of fencing provided for safety reasons rather than security purposes (Strategy 1.6).	Support the installation of retractable sport netting as per the concept plan.
In-fill tree planting along the western edge.	This is consistent with APLMS, and sport and recreation areas typically consist of large areas of irrigated open space partially bounded by copses of trees providing a visual backdrop and shade for spectators (Landscape Types – Sport and Recreation).	Support new tree planting along the licenced area's northern, western and southern boundaries, subject to tree selection determined by Administration.
Two accessible parking spaces on the western side of the clubrooms.	The internal roadway currently incorporates one accessible parking space, with the capacity for another accessible space to be added. Provision of car parking on and adjacent to the Park Lands only where the need has been demonstrated and no reasonable alternative exists, is consistent with APLMS (Strategy 2.8). The Club will direct all visitors to use street parking and public transport.	Accommodate an additional accessible parking space within the extent of the roadway that enables access into Park 24 from West Terrace.
Irrigated turf viewing mounds on the western side of the main pitch.	This is consistent with APLMS and upgrading playing areas, buildings, viewing areas, exercise equipment and other facilities to support sport and recreation (Strategy 1.6).	Support installation of turf viewing mounds as per concept specifications.
Landscape improvements around the clubrooms.	This is consistent with the APLMS and establishing a range of natural, ornamental, and cultural landscapes celebrating the diversity of the Park Lands (Strategy 3.3).	Support landscape improvements, including the western side of the building, to facilitate storage and emergency/maintenance access, subject to detailed landscape plans approved by Administration.

19. The Club's proposal is consistent with Strategy 1.6 of the APLMS and strengthening the role of the Park Lands as a regional destination for competitive sport and various active and passive forms of recreation.
20. Further, consistent with the APLMS and incorporating the advice of Kadaltilla, Administration will, through its lease and licence agreement with the Club, monitor the measures outlined in this report to measures that limit the alienation of the Park Lands for open space, community access or other purposes including public recreational use.

Next Steps

21. Subject to Council approval, which is a requirement for any alteration by the Lessee under clause 8.7.1 of the Park Lands Lease Agreement, Administration will write to the Club advising of the approval conditions and the requirement for the Lessee to adhere to these conditions imposed by Council as per clause 8.7.2 of the Lease Agreement.
22. The Club seeks to implement these improvements to host NPL and WNPL games in the latter half of the 2024 season (June to August).

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Adelaide Comets Football Club – Facility Upgrades Concept Plan

- END OF REPORT -