

Wednesday 16 December 2015

COUNCIL VOTES FOR SYNTHETIC TURF TO EASE SOARING DEMAND FOR SPORTING FIELDS

ELS Hall Park No. 1 and Christie Park Nos 1 and 2 will be developed with all-weather synthetic playing surfaces to meet the soaring demand for sporting fields in the City of Ryde.

Councillors voted unanimously in favour of the staff recommendation for a 10 year Synthetic Surfaces Program as part of the draft Sport and Recreation Strategy that will go on public exhibition in February 2016.

City of Ryde Mayor, Cllr Jerome Laxale, said the decision was a good outcome for the sporting community. "I am glad that the Council has put years of delay and indecision behind it and voted to immediately build synthetic facilities in our City. With the likely forced amalgamation of Ryde around the corner, it was vital that we reached a decision last night.

"Our sporting facilities are in high demand and use is already well over capacity. Coupled with wet-weather issues, our fields just are not up to standard to cope with our growing population.

"This plan is an investment in the future of sport in our area. It also deals with the short term demand for fields, particularly for winter sport, through a combination of new synthetic turf surfaces, additional lighting and redesign, so we can address the current over-use of playing fields."

Council staff will now continue planning for:

- Construction of synthetic surface fields at Christie Park 1 and 2 and relocation of grandstand by 2017
- Construction of a synthetic surface field at ELS Hall Park No 1 (requiring relocation of the turf cricket wicket to Marsfield Park and possible relocation for rugby user group) by 2016.

"I will be working closely with the General Manager to ensure these deadlines are met or bettered. It has taken Council too long to get where we are today, if there is any way that we can get these fields built more quickly, then we'll do it," the Mayor said.

Consultation with sporting groups and residents will be undertaken as part of this planning and this will commence in 2016.

Funding for the works will be sourced from the Asset Replacement Reserve and repaid from S94 developer funds when the new Section 94 Plan is adopted (anticipated in 2016).

PHOTO OPPORTUNITY:

Thursday 17 December 2015, 4.00PM (TBC), ELS Hall Field No. 1, Mayor Cllr Jerome Laxale with representatives of local sporting associations including the NWS Koalas, Ryde Panthers Soccer Club.

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