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Submission to Marlborough District Council's Long Term Plan (LTP)

Upgrade of facilities at Horton Park

Marlborough Cricket has made submissions previously concerning our plans to upgrade our playing and practice facilities. This submission references all these previous submissions.

In brief the primary areas identified in the Horton Park Master Plan are:

- Replacement or major upgrade of existing Pavilion which is no longer fit for purpose.
- Upgrades to outdoor practice nets, grass practice and match wickets, driveway entrance and parking.
- Construction of a multipurpose indoor training facility primarily for cricket, but with design provision to cater for other sports and community use.

We are pleased to see some firm Council support in the draft LTP with budget provision (\$2m) in the period 2026-2029 although it appears that this is only towards costs associated with a re-furbished pavilion. However we note that Council has also budgeted for a cost comparison report between a new pavilion and re-furbishing the current pavilion and fully support this approach. We ask that full consideration be given to meeting the needs of our community in any re-furbished design. We believe any new sports hub needs to be designed as a community hub that draws people in (something that the ageing and specialised design of the current building fails to do). We also need to ensure that the building meets the needs of our increasingly diverse membership and in particular female participants.

We hope that whatever the findings of the report that council are able to consider bringing funding forward if appropriate and that the amount of funding be re-considered if needed.

We also note that there currently appears to be no funding budgeted for any of the other facility upgrades identified. In particular the outdoor practice nets at Horton Park are in urgent need of an upgrade and we would like to prioritise that work ahead of next summer. Current estimate for total costs associated with this upgrade are \$200k. We ask that Council consider bringing forward some funding support into the next financial year as a contribution towards these costs.

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Our facilities committee has also identified the re-laying of the main wicket block at Horton Park as another priority item over the next 12 months, something that we hope to carry out at the conclusion of the 2021-22 season. We have some tagged funding already for this work and we are currently obtaining quotes with the hope that we can cover this work from these funds and reserves.

Marlborough Cricket has worked hard in recent years to maintain and grow our numbers, something we have referenced on previous submissions. This has resulted in increased numbers across a more diverse range of people with significant growth in our female cricket game. In this regard we would like to correct an error contained in the LTP consultation document that suggests playing numbers have been consistent but include a decrease in adult men playing. This is not the case. While our junior and female numbers have increased in recent years, the number of males playing in our afternoon grades has also increased - as a comparison from the past 3 years below shows.

Comparison of playing numbers across afternoon men's grades

(3rd, 2nd & Senior grades only)

<u>Season</u>	<u>Number of teams</u>	<u>Participants</u>
2018-19	16	237
2019-20	15	267
2020-21	16	290

*figures taken from CricHQ registration database
players who participated in competition games*

What we are seeing is an increase in the number of people involved but also a change in the way they participate. A typical team will use many more players across a season, with player availability (particularly at weekends) unpredictable. So while playing numbers have remained stable or increased, what has changed is how people are playing with a strong move towards mid-week and shortened modified formats rather than traditional weekend cricket.

We see this as a huge opportunity for our sport if we can engage further with this growing and diverse cricketing membership along with their family members. Having facilities that meet the needs of this membership is absolutely vital to our future growth and sustainability.

In summary

Marlborough Cricket supports the recommendations set out in the LTP for facility development at Horton Park and ask that Council:

- Prioritise the cost comparison report on the best option for the Horton Park Pavilion
- Consider bringing forward funding allocated for this in the LTP depending on the report findings
- Consider the amount of funding allocated in the LTP depending on the report findings
- Allocate funding in the next financial year towards costs of upgrades to the outdoor practice nets at Horton Park and to provide support if required towards the main no1 wicket block replacement

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We would like to thank Council once again for their continued support for our sport and for the funding backing you have already allocated in the LTP. We believe it is vital that we move forward with our facility upgrade plans if we are to sustain the gains we have made in recent years and if we are to serve the needs of our growing membership.

We would like to speak to the submission.

Yours sincerely,

Ed Gilhooly, General Manager
MARLBOROUGH CRICKET ASSOCIATION

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