



**Sobraon Barracks, Burton Road Cricket Ground**

**Facility Development Plan**

**Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd**

**October 2024**

## **Appendix 1**

### **Contents:**

- 1. Background and Context**
  - 1.1. History**
  - 1.2. Current situation**
- 2. Delivering Impact**
  - 2.1. Concept**
  - 2.2. Need**
  - 2.3. Priority areas**
- 3. Bringing the Barracks ground back to life**
  - 3.1. Phase 1.**
  - 3.2. Phase 2.**
  - 3.3. Phase 3.**
- 4. Projected annual usage**
- 5. A home for Lincolnshire Cricket**
  - 5.1. Pitch and outfield**
  - 5.2. Pavilion**
  - 5.3. Affordability**
- 6. Use of Pavilion and Car Park**
  - 6.1. Pavilion**
  - 6.2. Car Park**
- 7. Consultation**
  - 7.1. Approach**
  - 7.2. Feedback**
  - 7.3. Long term commitment**
- 8. Car Park Management Plan**

## Appendix 1

### 1. Background & Context:

#### 1.1 History:

The Sobraon Barracks Cricket Field is an area at the side of the Territorial Army barracks that has been used to stage cricket matches for over 70 years. Originally the site was home to the now defunct South Cliff Cricket Club and had on it a small wooden pavilion, which was eventually destroyed by fire.

In the summer of 2012, the City of Lincoln approved the development of the site which included ground works to the cricket square and outfield along with the build of a new pavilion in the south-west corner of the field.

It was agreed that the University of Lincoln would hold a 25-year lease and assume responsibility for the day-to-day management and maintenance of the site. It was envisioned that the cricket ground would become a permanent home to university cricket teams in addition to accommodating local recreational cricket and County Age Group Cricket.



A new pavilion was built and opened in 2013 using funding secured from the City Council, the University of Lincoln and the ECB.



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## Appendix 1

playing surfaces gradually deteriorating. In the early stages of this period, university cricket, recreational cricket and county age group cricket regularly took place on site. Over the past 2 summers however (2023, 2024) there has been no cricket played on site and it has become evident that the University of Lincoln do not have access to the necessary expertise or resource to adequately maintain the playing facilities.

### 1.2 Current situation:

Due to commercial pressures and a lack of income generated via the external hire of the cricket ground, the decision was taken by the University to sell all grounds maintenance equipment on site and effectively 'mothball' the site and pavilion, undertaking only basic maintenance of both.

At present the cricket facilities (outfield and square) are unfit to accommodate cricket. Whilst the pavilion has excellent facilities (changing rooms, kitchen, communal area etc) the site is unused, dormant and with no plans for any future usage by the University or any other team.

Through discussion between the University of Lincoln and Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd, the concept of transferring the ownership of the lease (with extension) from the University of Lincoln to the National Governing Body for cricket in the county (Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd) was explored. These discussions led to a joint approach being made to the City Council to consider a change in approach with regards to the future usage and management of the site.



### 2.1 Concept:



## **Appendix 1**

This facility development plan centres around a transfer and extension of the current lease (min 25 years) from the University of Lincoln to Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd. This change in approach would create opportunities for Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd to leverage strategic facilities funding via the ECB (England & Wales Cricket Board) and create a sustainable business plan that enables the continued development and maintenance of the site, delivering a high quality, centrally located cricket facility that has the capacity to deliver significant impact across a number of areas.

### **2.2 Need:**

As highlighted in Lincolnshire Cricket's Facilities Strategy (2023-2032), there is clear need to develop a centrally located performance hub within the Lincolnshire to ensure the performance pathway is accessible to those living within our county. Currently, all county representative cricket and participation activity delivered by Lincolnshire Cricket is staged at recreational cricket clubs and school sites within Lincoln and Lincolnshire, placing increased pressure on existing facilities already struggling to meet demand. Between 2019 and 2022, participation in cricket in Lincolnshire has grown, fixtures completed in the recreational game have increased from 604 – 640 whilst participants have increased from 1225 to 1345 in addition 1800, 5–11 year-olds now taking part in national, introductory programmes at clubs (All Stars Cricket & Dynamo Cricket).

### **2.3 Priority areas:**

The future usage of the Sobraon Barracks Cricket Ground would be prioritised around:

#### **1. Women and Girls Cricket:**

The Sobraon Barracks Ground would become home to the Lincolnshire Women's and Girl's performance programme, providing a venue for practice sessions and games for the 3 County age Group girls representative teams (U13/15 & 18). In addition, the site would be the recognised home of the Lincolnshire senior women's county team, who from 2025 will be competing in Tier 3 of the national domestic women's cricket competition.

Currently, representative practice sessions and games take place on existing recreational cricket grounds, placing increased stress on a network of facilities already struggling to accommodate demand. Over the last 5 years Lincolnshire has gone from 5 – 27 women's sections and in the girl's environment, from 0 – 10 sections. Within the county there are only 2 clubs (of 80) who have dual pitch sites and the growth in female cricket is resulting in significant pressure being placed on existing facilities, with many clubs finding access at peak times a significant challenge. Relocating a significant number of county representative fixtures would free up space within the recreational network, easing pressure and enabling clubs to service the uplift in demand experienced over recent years.

In addition to becoming a performance centre for women and girls' cricket, the Barracks ground would also host a number of recreational women and girl's activities/initiatives including:

- Women's softball activity – becoming the recognised home for the Lincolnshire Women's Softball League (established in 2024)
- Centrally located Girl's softball festivals
- Female coach education programmes

## Appendix 1

### 2. Community Activity:

The Barracks ground would become home to several centrally located community initiatives focused on participation and growth. Such activity would be focused on reaching new audiences via introductory activity using national and other recognised programmes as the vehicle to engage predominantly young people. Such activity would feature:

- School holiday activity via All Stars Cricket (5-8 yr olds) & Dynamos Cricket (8-11 yr olds) delivered in Easter and Summer school holidays.
- Home to a Lincoln disability 'Super 1's' programme
- Home to a Lincoln 'Street' project engaging young people from the local area not currently engaged in 'mainstream' cricket provision

In addition, the pavilion space would be used as a base from which to deliver a variety of training opportunities that will benefit the volunteer network within the county. Such activity would include:

- Safeguarding training
- Coach education
- Umpire/scoring courses
- Club consultation/engagement events

### 3. Boys County Age Group Programme:

The ability to accommodate a number of county age group boy's fixtures, in particular amongst the younger age groups (U13/U15), would further reduce the pressure on the recreational network to stage county representative fixtures. Whilst staging women and girls' cricket would be the priority there will be capacity to stage an amount of boys' county representative cricket on the site.

### 4. A home for Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd:

The intention would be for the Lincolnshire Cricket workforce to relocate to the site and create a hybrid working space for its team of officers.

## **3. Bringing the Barracks Ground Back To Life – A Phased Approach**

This development plan features a phased approach to rejuvenating and reinstating the Sobraon Barracks cricket ground in a sustainable manner.

Phase 1 – Cricket (Outfield, square, ancillary facilities)

## **Appendix 1**

Phase 2 – Practice facilities

Phase 3 – Pavilion

Phases 2 & 3 represent opportunities to add value to the project through further enhancing the facilities on site. They are not essential to the completion of the project and would be realised at a time when Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd were in a financial position that supports its delivery and completion .

### **3.1 Phase 1 – Cricket:**

Phase 1 is built around the principle of delivering a high-quality cricket facility capable of staging junior and Women's county representative cricket. The dimensions of the playing area allow for boundary sizes beyond the minimum recommended distances ensuring that this site is suitable for this type of activity and poses minimal risk to neighbouring properties.

Funding would be sought to complete phase 1 of the project from the ECB strategic facilities and Grass Pitch Improvement Fund (GPIF). Estimated costs (source Appendix 1 – Pitch Power) to complete stage 1 are in the region of 100 - 120K. Potential funding available totals 100 – 120k.

More detail on the work required to complete the necessary groundworks and the ongoing maintenance of the site is included in the Cricket Assessment Report generated by Pitch Power (appendix 1). The below is a summary of the key stages within each phase:

Phase 1:

- Outfield renovation
- Renovation of cricket square
- Purchase of machinery required to maintain site
- Purchase of roll on/off covers
- Installation of scoreboard
- Installation of NTP on square (non turf pitch)
- Installation of 1 x Hybrid cricket wicket
- Early maintenance handover programme
- Roll out net cage

It is estimated that for cricket to take place on site in the summer of 2026, work would need to start on site in late summer 2025.

### **3.2 Phase 2 – Practice facilities:**

- Installation of twin net bay practice area
- Approx cost 40K
- Timing within 3 years

Funding to complete phase 2 would need to be sourced by Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd through applications to funders and/or any surplus generated by the organisation.

### **3.3 Phase 3 – Pavilion:**

## **Appendix 1**

- Any modifications that may be needed to the building (additional changing rooms, office annex etc)
- Approx cost and timeframe – unknown.

Funding to complete phase 3 would need to be sourced by Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd.

**Total project cost (Phase 1 & 2) totals 140K – 160k**

### **4. Projected Annual Usage**

Having conducted a recent site visit we predict the cricket square being an 8/9 wicket square with the addition of a non turf pitch. The priority for usage would be as stated in the 'Priority areas' section of this document and the below provides a realistic estimate of what an annual programme of usage could look like:

(note – 'Practice' includes all non-match play activity and would take place on the outfield or using the NTP. 'Games' indicate occasions when matches would take place using grass pitches)



## Appendix 1

Participant group	Activity type	Per annum	When (April – Oct)	No. of unique participants
Girls U13	Practice/match days	3 x practice 6 games	Midweek/Sundays	80
Girls U15	Practice/match days	3 x practice 6 games	Midweek/Sundays	80
Girls U18	Practice/match days	3 x practice 6 x games	Midweek/Sundays	80
County Women	Practice/match days	3 x practice 6 games	Midweek/Sundays	80
Boys U13	Practice/match days	3 x practice 6 games	Midweek/Sundays	80
Boys U14	Practice/match days	3 x practice 6 x games	Midweek/Sundays	80
Boys U16	Practice/match days	3 x practice 6 x games	Midweek/Sundays	80
MCC Foundation Hub (boys & girls)	Practice/match days	12 practice 6 games	Midweek/Sundays	36
Disability*	Practice	22 x practice	Midweek	12
Community usage**	Practice	20 x practice	Midweek	500
Other***	Matches	12 games	Saturdays	150
Womens Softball	Matches	8 matches (NTP)	Midweek/Sundays	128

**Total**

**81 x practice  
68 x  
matches**

**1386**

\*Disability Super 1's programme would provide a cohort of local young people (aged 12-25) with a disability providing the chance to play regular cricket. This programme will feature weekly practise sessions and occasional games. All activity would take place on the outfield/NTP and would follow the model of our flagship Super 1's centre in Grimsby

\*\*Community usage would be as outlined in the priority usage section

\*\*\*'Other' relates to the capacity to stage a small number of senior men's recreational matches, as has previously been staged on this site prior to 2022. This would be prioritised around those clubs who do not have access to their own pitch. This could be on Saturdays or midweek as part of the Lincoln Midweek league. This would be a useful source of income in addition to further reducing the pressure within the network.

## Appendix 1

### 5. A Home for Lincolnshire Cricket - Long Term Sustainability

Upon the completion of Phase 1, Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd would look to employ a cricket grounds person with the relevant skills, knowledge and expertise required to undertake the maintenance and upkeep of the cricket facilities.

Approximate annual maintenance costings associated to both the pavilion and pitch and outfield:

#### 5.1 Pitch and Outfield:

Winter (off season maintenance programme):

Duration	Hrs/week (average)	Duties
12 Weeks	4	General maintenance

## Appendix 1

Spring/Summer/Autumn maintenance programme:

Duration	Hrs/week (average)	Duties
40 Weeks	16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 6/7 hours grass cutting</li><li>- 6/7 hours wicket preparation (rolling/watering/marking)</li><li>- 2/3 hours general maintenance</li></ul>

Total hours = 688 @ £17.50 p/hr = £12,040

Ground related materials, estimated annual costs (pitch and outfield):

Item	Cost (p/a)
Fuel/line marker & other ground related materials	£1500
End of season renovation inc: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Loam</li><li>- Seed</li><li>- Fertiliser</li></ul>	£2000
Upkeep of outfield including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Spraying</li><li>- Machine hire</li></ul>	£2000

Total materials cost = £5,500

**Total annual maintenance costs for pitch and outfield = £17,540**

### **5.2 Pavilion maintenance:**

Item	Cost (p/a)
Business rates	
Electricity	
Water	
Security	
General maintenance	

**Total pavilion maintenance costs =**

### **5.3 Affordability:**

Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd will be looking to offset a number of existing costs incurred by the organisation, coupled with a newfound ability to generate income as the source to meet the running costs associated with the Sobraon Barracks ground.

Below is a realistic summary as to the financial framework that demonstrates how Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd would meet the annual financial demand associated with running the site:

(note: 'cost saving' indicates existing costs that would be saved via utilising the facilities on site, 'income generation' indicates income generated via activity hosted on site)

## Appendix 1

Item	Cost saving/income generation	Value
Office Rent	Cost saving	£7,200
Room hire (meetings/training)	Cost saving	£4,500
County Age Group match hosting fee	Cost saving	£4,800
Pitch Hire	Income generation	£2,200
Community usage	Income generation	£3,360
Commercial partnership/sponsorship	Income generation	£5,000
Coach education facility hire	Cost saving	£1,500
County Women's hosting	Cost saving	£2,500
<b>Total</b>		<b>£31,060</b>

### 6. Use of Pavilion & Car Park:

#### 6.1 Pavilion:

Lincolnshire Cricket would look to relocate its business operations to the Pavilion on site, creating a hybrid working space in the communal area in the centre of the pavilion. Lincolnshire Cricket would look to utilise the building between normal office hours 2-3 days per week on a year-round basis.

In total, Lincolnshire Cricket employ 11 members of staff. 6 members of staff are regionally based meaning that under normal circumstances up to 5 employees would use the pavilion on 2-3 days across Mon – Fri.

Staff would enter the premises via the main gates and park any vehicles in the car park. Employees would be responsible for closing and locking the gate upon leaving the site.

Lincolnshire Cricket would assume full responsibility for maintaining the pavilion and all associated costs incurred.

Occasionally the pavilion would be used to host meetings and training events. Meetings held on site would feature local partners, stakeholders and others involved in the recreational

## **Appendix 1**

game in Lincolnshire, in addition to Lincolnshire Cricket director meetings. Training events that would be delivered on site include:

- Safeguarding
- Mental Health first aid
- Umpire & scorer training
- Coach education

Many of the meetings and training events held on site would be delivered on weekday evenings, owing to the fact that most attendees will be volunteers. On such occasions, the number of attendees would not normally exceed 20 due to the capacity of the building, and all staff/visitors would park in the car park on site. Noise would be kept to a minimum and Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd would be responsible for closing and locking the gate.

Enabling the use of the building is critical to the facility development plan as the ability to offset current office rent and costs incurred through renting facilities would enable running costs of the facility to be met.

### **6.2 Use of Car Park**

Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd would promote and make available the car park on site for all staff and visitors. During non-match days the circa 45 bay car park will provide ample space to meet demand.

On match days, again the car park will be promoted, and all visitors will be encouraged to use the space available. On the rare occasion that the car park becomes full, additional parking will be made available around the outfield with access through the car park.

At all times, all visitors will be communicated to, prior to arriving on site instructing them to park in the car park, accessible via the main entry gates.

## **7. Consultation**

### **7.1 Approach:**

Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd would look to consult with residents, particularly those residents with properties on Aisne Close, Somme Close and Arnhem Close, all properties on Breedon Drive (both sides), all properties on Cambria Close, Sid Wilson Court and those sharing a boundary with the site on Burton Road (Breedon Drive down to Dunkirk Road).

Consultation will provide an opportunity to share the ambition for the development of the site and present the headline information included within this facility development plan.

Lincolnshire Cricket will provide opportunities for local residents to raise any concerns they may have about this project and share feedback so that this can be considered during the initial stages of this project.

Lincolnshire Cricket will look to do this by conducting a leaflet drop to residents which provides an overview of the development plan and the key information within this document. This will also include an invitation to attend an open evening in the Pavilion at which Lincolnshire Cricket CEO and Chair will deliver a presentation providing full details of the plan.

## **Appendix 1**

### **7.2 Feedback:**

A key feature of the consultation will be around seeking feedback and allaying concerns. Residents will have the opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions, either in person through attendance at the open evening and/or in writing, in response to receiving the information leaflet. Following the open evening a working group at Lincolnshire Cricket and invited local city councillors will meet to review and consider feedback/questions raised during consultation and make amendments to the development plan if necessary.

### **7.3 Long term commitment**

Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd are committed to working with the local residents to the site throughout the duration of occupancy and would look to establish a 'local residents' group.' This group would meet a minimum 2 times per year following the assignment of the lease. At this forum, concerns can be raised, discussed and managed on an ongoing basis. The City Council would also be invited to attend these twice-yearly meetings. This sub group would be included within the governance structure of Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd and reports would feed directly into the full board of directors of Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd.

## **8. Car Park Management Plan**

### **8.1. Introduction:**

This plan has been prepared by Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd following consultation with local residents to the Sobraon Barracks cricket ground, in particular those residents whose properties are in close proximity to the cricket ground on Aisne Close, Somme Close, Arnhem Close, Breedon Drive, Cambria Close, Sid Wilson Court and those sharing a boundary with the site on Burton Road (Breedon Drive down to Dunkirk Road).

The car park on site will operate as a car park for the staff of Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd and visitors to the Sobraon Barracks cricket ground. Visitors are likely to be players, spectators and others who may be invited to visit the site for meetings or to receive training.

### **8.2. Objectives:**

The primary objective of this plan is to provide off-street parking for those individuals visiting the site to take part in activities organised and managed by Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd.

### **8.3 Site Location:**

The car park is located off Aisne Close via a gap between properties 4 and 6 (Aisne Close).



## Appendix 1



### 8.4. Site details:

The existing car park comprises of a surface level car park of approximately 437sqm of hard standing parking area.



### 8.5. Parking provision:

## Appendix 1

The total car park provision on the surface car park is 33 car park spaces. This figure is calculated using the recommended average car parking space (2.6m by 5m), as specified by the Institution of Structural Engineers and the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation. This figure also takes into account the requirement not to park vehicles in front of the two resident garages located along the perimeter wall of the car park:



Currently, there are no clearly marked disabled car park spaces on site.

### Car Park Operation

#### 8.6. Access gate:

The car park can only be accessed by entering through the access gate. Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd will be responsible for the upkeep/maintenance of the gate and ensure the gate is securely locked at all times when there is no outdoor activity taking place at the site. When outdoor activity is taking place, Lincolnshire Cricket will be solely responsible for opening/unlocking the gate and closing/locking the gate once activity has concluded.

#### 8.7. Vehicle management signs:

Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd will erect signage that clearly informs users of the car park:

- Individuals park cars at their own risk
- Individuals must park in the marked parking bays
- Once the car park is full, individuals must park in the overspill parking area or along the boundary edge, a min of 10 meters back from the playing area, along the Aisne Close side of the ground only.



## Appendix 1

- Individuals must not park on side streets

### 8.8. Disabled parking:

Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd will clearly mark 2 disabled parking spaces accounting for approx. 6% of the total available car park spaces (Inclusive Mobility guidance). Disabled car park spaces will be located as close as possible to the playing field.

### 8.9. Overspill area & boundary parking:

Lincolnshire Cricket will create and maintain an overspill parking area for use once the car park is full. This area will be located in front of the car park on the grass area, accessed via the drop-down curb. This space will be 31.2 meters in length and 5 meters wide, enabling an additional 12 vehicles to be parked (indicated in blue rectangle below).

Cars will also be permitted to park on the grass outside of the playing area. This must be a minimum of 10 meters away from the boundary line/rope. Boundary parking will only be permitted along the Aisne Close side of the ground. Lincolnshire Cricket will be responsible for managing this and ensuring this guidance is adhered to.

Estimated parking provision along the boundary edge is approx. 20 vehicles

Total car parking space available on site at any time = 65 vehicles.



## 9. Communication:

Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd will clearly communicate ahead of games the car parking requirements for visitors to the Sobroan Barracks Cricket Ground. This will include:

- Arrival/opening times
- Encourage users to car share if possible
- Clearly stating that visitors are not permitted to park on side streets

## **Appendix 1**

### **9.1. Maintenance:**

Lincolnshire Cricket Ltd will be responsible for the maintenance of the car park and gate, ensuring any repairs are made efficiently and to a high standard.