Bowls, anyone? New covered green proposed in Upper Hutt

Justin Wong | The Post

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Maidstone Park in Upper Hutt could be the home of a new covered bowling green and new clubrooms for the local bowling club.

The Upper Hutt Bowling Club wanted take a long-term lease of an 11,295m² space inside Maidstone Park next to Maidstone Terrace and Railway Ave to build a new clubroom, two traditional outdoor greens and one covered green.

If their plans proceed, the Upper Hutt covered green would be the second indoor arena in the Wellington region, the other being in Naenae which opened in 2017.

The club's president, Tony Hewitt, said its current clubrooms on Exchange St, which also feature two outdoor greens, were earthquake prone and strengthening would cost members "too much".

A lawn bowls game between Upper Hutt and Silverstream bowling clubs.
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He hoped the new indoor green would attract more people to lawn bowling as the covered area meant the summer sport could be played year-wide regardless of weather.

"Hopefully, being able to do this ... will generate more interest and more membership," he said. "There are lots of younger ones playing and that's one of the target zones for most bowls clubs."

In a public consultation on whether to lease the space to the club, the Upper Hutt City Council said the land would be leased at a community rate, like other non-profit sports and community organisation.

A council report in December said the project's current estimated cost stood at $4.9 million, an amount that council officials considered "overly ambitious", but no rates were requested. The report also said the club intended to sell the Exchange St clubrooms to finance the project and find funding from grant providers.

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The club's current clubrooms are earthquake prone.
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The new clubrooms would feature a kitchen, bar, toilets, office, locker room, and a large open gathering area and the area would be fenced off with a steel fence with vertical bar. The covered green, with night lights, could open until 10pm.

The public consultation runs until February 24 and Upper Hutt councillors will make a decision in April.

A proposed timeframe estimated construction would begin in August 2026 and finish the following year.

Bowls Wellington, the governing body of lawn bowling in Wellington, backed the proposal.

General manager Blake Signal said having more available indoor facilities was important for the sport, as demonstrated by the multiple arenas in Auckland that were used for national games.

A proposed timeframe estimated construction of the new complex would begin in August 2026 and finish the following year, if plans go ahead.
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"Having more indoor facilities in Wellington will open up more windows for us to be able to have larger national events and potentially more international events," he said.

"We hosted the Australians at Naenae over the weekend, so those international and national events will probably come more to the region if