

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES AND CHIEF VALUER

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| TO: | MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS TRUSTEES SUB-COMMITTEE | | |
| DATE: | 9 JANUARY 2018 | AGENDA ITEM: | 6 |
| TITLE: | MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN | | |
| LEAD COUNCILLORS: | COUNCILLOR EDWARDS | PORTFOLIO : | MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS CHAIR OF TRUSTEES |
| SERVICE: | TRUSTEE OF CHARITY | WARDS: | MAPLEDURHAM |
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1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 Following the Mapledurham Playing Fields consultation in 2017, and with reference to the regulatory advice from the Charity Commission received on 20 November 2017 and set out in a report elsewhere on tonight's agenda, the feedback from the public consultation will be used to produce a landscape masterplan to determine how a premium from the Education Skills Funding Agency ("ESFA") could be used to enhance the amenity value of the Ground.
- 1.2 During production of the landscape masterplan, Officers will engage with the Ground's current principal sports user (Caversham Trents Football Club), the ESFA, the Mapledurham Playing Fields Management Committee and any other relevant stakeholders.
- 1.3 The landscape masterplan will be considered by a subsequent meeting of the Sub-Committee. This will provide information to enable consideration of both the ESFA proposal.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That Officers produce a costed landscape masterplan to enable consideration and evaluation of the ESFA proposal.
- 2.2 That Officers would engage with Caversham Trents Football Club, the ESFA, the Mapledurham Playing Fields Management Committee and other relevant stakeholders in relation to the masterplan.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Reading Borough Council holds the Ground in its capacity as charity trustee ("Trustee") of the Charity (the "Charity"). The Charity is registered with (and

therefore regulated by) the Charity Commission. The charitable object of the Charity is:

"the provision and maintenance of a recreation ground for the benefit of the inhabitants of the Parish of Mapledurham and the Borough of Reading without distinction of political, religious or other opinions."

The beneficiaries of the Charity, therefore, are the inhabitants of the Parish of Mapledurham and the Borough of Reading. The Ground is an asset of the Charity and is held "in specie" i.e. specifically in order to advance the Charity's object.

3.2 The Sub-Committee has delegated authority, with the support of the Officers, to discharge Reading Borough Council's functions as charity trustee of the Charity. The Sub-Committee has a duty to make all decisions in what it considers to be the best interests of the Charity and in order to advance the object referred to above and any such decision must be in line with all relevant charity law and other legal restrictions.

3.3 The policy context is set out in greater detail in the report on the outcome of the public consultation exercise, elsewhere on tonight's agenda, and is not represented here.

4. LANDSCAPE MASTERPLAN

4.1 The report on the outcome of the public consultation exercise, elsewhere on tonight's agenda, identified the responses to the Mapledurham Playing Fields consultation. Part of this consultation asked for people's views on which enhancements should be made to the playing fields.

4.2 The consultation (Question 1B) identified 13 areas that the £1.36m premium could be used to support should a decision be made to accept the ESFA proposal. These items were:

- A) Pavilion upgrade
- B) Footpath network (perimeter and across the site)
- C) Entrance improvements
- D) Small floodlit artificial turf pitch (ATP)
- E) New furniture (seats and bins)
- F) Tree planting (next to selected paths)
- G) Grass football pitch improvements
- H) Upgrade small ATP to full size
- I) Play area upgrade and relocate
- J) Fitness stations around perimeter path
- K) Relocate asphalt area
- L) Boundary improvements
- M) A sum reserved for future maintenance and capital investment

4.3 2,439 (74%) respondents identified that undertaking improvements A-G would enhance the Ground as identified in the analysis of consultation responses (attached to the report on the consultation, elsewhere on tonight's agenda).

4.4 A further opportunity was provided for people to identify alternative priorities for enhancement or exclusion from any changes. These are identified in the table below:

| | Should be included | Should be excluded |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| STRONGLY SUPPORTED | | |
| I. Upgrade play area and move | 256 | 69 |
| M. Maintenance sum | 198 | 72 |
| A. Pavilion upgrade | 170 | 10 |
| B. Footpath network | 108 | 22 |
| C. Entrance improvements | 77 | 24 |
| E. New furniture | 79 | 16 |
| F. Tree Planting | 76 | 27 |
| G. Grass football pitch improvements | 73 | 27 |
| NEUTRAL | | |
| J. Fitness Stations | 136 | 117 |
| D. Small floodlit artificial turf pitch (ATP) | 69 | 64 |
| H. Upgrade small floodlit ATP pitch to full size | 125 | 138 |
| L. Boundary improvements | 91 | 98 |
| NOT SUPPORTED | | |
| K. Relocate Asphalt area | 88 | 108 |

- 4.5 These results have been grouped into three broad areas - clear support for enhancement, similar numbers for and against, and where more people were opposed to the change.
- 4.6 These results provide further guidance on which elements should be included in the enhancement of the Ground.
- 4.7 A large proportion of the site is used for football. Work is required to establish how the key features of the proposed free school site may be incorporated into a new layout accommodating existing and anticipated sports use and broadening appeal to a wider range of people. Increased levels of use for football and loss of some space to the school is likely to necessitate an ATP of some description to support intensified use.
- 4.8 The costs of elements of work also need to be established to understand what is affordable.
- 4.9 The scale of work required to mitigate the impact of the proposed development has still to be determined through the planning process. This is likely to impact upon the amount of work that the Charity may choose to undertake to meet key objectives.
- 4.10 It is therefore proposed to produce a landscape masterplan, to establish budget costs for different elements of work, and how and where different features may be arranged on a re-landscaped Ground. This will also allow a more detailed assessment of the impact, both positive and negative, of the development.
- 4.11 The key features of the landscape masterplan will be:
- i. Accommodation of existing and anticipated future use (sport and recreation)
 - ii. Maximising the visual amenity
 - iii. Broadening use by improving accessibility and range of activities

- iv. Environmental sustainability
- v. Maintaining the character of the site
- vi. Upgrading the play area and improving access
- vii. Identification of maintenance costs of any changes
- viii. Upgrading the pavilion
- ix. Footpath network
- x. Entrance improvements
- xi. New furniture
- xii. Tree planting
- xiii. Football pitch improvements

4.12 This plan may also be used to evaluate the net benefit or otherwise of proposals and provide information to allow assessment of the proposal from the ESFA.

4.13 The production of the landscape masterplan will require dialogue with Caversham Treads Football Club as the main sports user of the grounds to confirm demand and required facilities. It will also be appropriate to liaise with the ESFA to establish the extent of mitigation proposals and affordability.

4.14 The landscape masterplan will be presented to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee in February 2018, prior to determination of the ESFA's planning application by the Planning Committee.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

5.1 The report elsewhere on tonight's agenda on the outcome of the public consultation exercise identified the methodology and extent of consultation leading up to the identification of landscape priorities above.

5.2 A draft landscape masterplan will be prepared using the results of the consultation identified above and comments sought from the Management Committee prior to consideration by the Sub-Committee.

6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 The report elsewhere on tonight's agenda on the outcome of the public consultation exercise has an equality impact assessment attached at Appendix 5. This concluded that the proposal will not have a negative impact on any of the groups protected by the Equality Act 2010 subject to the implementation of some elements of mitigation identified within the landscape masterplan.

7. LEGAL AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The reports elsewhere on tonight's agenda on the outcome of the public consultation exercise, and the regulatory advice from the Charity Commission, provide detailed advice on the legal and regulatory context in which the trustee must make a decision.

7.2 As mentioned above, the landscape masterplan will help the Sub-Committee to establish the budget costs for different elements of work, and to help determine how the £1.36M premium from the ESFA may best be used to enhance the amenity value of the Ground.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Results of Public Consultation (see separate report on tonight's agenda)