

## UPDATE REPORT

BY THE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

ITEM NO. 8

PLANNING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE: 30 March 2022

Ward: Park

**Address:** Palmer Park Pavilion and associated building, Palmer Park, Wokingham Road, Reading, RG6 1LF

**Proposal:** To add Palmer Park Pavilion and associated building, Wokingham Road, Reading, to the List of Locally-Important Buildings and Structures.

### RECOMMENDATION

As per the main report.

## 1. PETITION

- 1.1 This update report provides further information not contained in the main report, which is to note that a petition was presented to Policy Committee by Kathryn McCann on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2021 (Minute 51 refers). The petition was to reopen the Palmer Park toilets and locally list the three heritage buildings (the pavilion, park keepers lodge and toilets). The petition remains live and had 188 signatures at the time of writing. The full text of the petition is below.

*Petition to re-open the Palmer Park Toilets and locally list the three Heritage Buildings*

*During Covid the toilets in the Café and Sports Stadium have been closed to park and play area users, leaving no public facilities in one of Reading's best parks.*

*Please save, restore, and re-open our Palmer Park toilet block.*

*The three buildings - the Park Keepers Lodge, the Pavilion (now Tutu's Ethiopian Café) and the toilet building were all present when the park was opened to the people of Reading in 1891, by George Palmer of Huntley & Palmers. Designed by nationally recognised local architect, William Ravenscroft, these heritage buildings are a focal point in the park and an East Reading landmark.*

*Please locally list, restore and re-open the Palmer Park toilet block!*

*\*The sports stadium toilets are now open again.*

- 1.2 Councillor Rowland responded to the petition in full at Policy Committee, and this including noting that the local listing would be considered at a future meeting of PAC. The other aspect of the petition, about re-opening the toilets, is not directly relevant to this consideration.
- 1.3 The recommendation of the report is to add the Pavilion and associated building and entrance gates to the Local List. This recommendation is unchanged by the petition, but this is being reported for completeness.

2. WARD COUNCILLORS RESPONSE

- 2.1 The main report should have reported that a response was received from Park ward councillors Rob White and Brenda McGonigle in support of the nomination, as follows:

*We would like to record our support for the application for local listing of the three heritage buildings in Palmer Park. They are landmark buildings in East Reading viewed from park and nearby roads and should be protected for future generations.*

*Their historical associations with George Palmer and therefore with Huntley and Palmers are the history of Reading itself. Designer, local architect William Ravenscroft, left his individual mark on much of Reading with buildings around the town and these are worthy of preservation.*

*Sadly, one of those heritage buildings, the original Victorian toilet block, has been left to rot. The process demanded of privately owned buildings has not followed by the Local Authority. Were it privately owned an internal inspection by officers would have been carried out and the urgent works needed to weatherproof and protect the building would have been enforced by law if required.*

*We hope that, whilst not providing powerful protection under the planning process, local listing will at least send a powerful message that we will respect and protect our heritage in Reading.*

*These three buildings also have valuable uses to the park and the people of East Reading as housing, café, and toilets.*

*We are very happy to support the call to locally list all three, and to reinstate as soon as possible the toilets as a well-managed and much needed toilet in one of Reading's best destination parks.*

- 2.2 The recommendation of the main report remains unchanged.