

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY HEAD OF ECONOMIC & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

<b>TO:</b>	<b>MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS TRUSTEES SUB-COMMITTEE</b>		
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>22 OCTOBER 2018</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>TITLE:</b>	<b>MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS LANDSCAPE UPDATE REPORT</b>		
<b>LEAD COUNCILLORS:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR EDWARDS</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS CHAIR OF TRUSTEES</b>
<b>SERVICE:</b>	<b>TRUSTEE OF CHARITY</b>	<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>MAPLEDURHAM</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>BEN STANESBY</b>	<b>TEL:</b>	<b>0118 937 3276</b>
<b>JOB TITLE:</b>	<b>LEISURE AND RECREATION MANAGER</b>	<b>E-MAIL:</b>	<a href="mailto:ben.stanesby@reading.gov.uk">ben.stanesby@reading.gov.uk</a>

#### 1. PURPOSE AND SUMMARY OF REPORT

1.1 At Minute 5 of your meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2018, it was resolved that a number of actions should be taken including those outlined below:

- (5) That with regard to the remainder of the ESFA's consideration payment, the Sub-Committee adopt Option B for the improvement of the Pavilion, as set out in paragraph 4.9 of the report;
- (6) That the following further improvements be funded and undertaken as identified in paragraph 4.12 [of the report]:
  - (a) installation of pedestrian lighting along the main path from Chazey Road towards the Pavilion;
  - (b) extension of the car park to support use of both the Pavilion and Ground by extending into the area north of the School site with reinforced turf/Grasscrete to allow the area to be used for occasional overflow parking;
  - (c) extension of the Pavilion to provide two additional changing rooms to support use of the second adult pitch;
- (7) That any unspent funds be allocated to support funding applications to improve facilities by either the Council as Trustee or partner organisations; this could include new changing rooms, an artificial turf pitch, changing facilities or other recreational facilities and would allow further funding to be levered into improving facilities;
- (8) That the preparatory works set out in paragraph 4.20 of the report be agreed and undertaken. This included carrying out site investigations from June 2018 onwards to help inform and de-risk the cost issues relating to the site eg: archaeological investigations.

1.2 In this connection:

- (1) Oxford Archaeology has undertaken a series of archaeological investigations to inform the development of the Landscape Master Plan and planning application.

- (2) Preparatory work has commenced on the development of plans for the Pavilion including identification of architects and dialogue with Caversham Treants FC identifying their needs.
- 1.3 Judicial Review Proceedings were commenced on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2018 in regard of the school planning permission issued 14<sup>th</sup> August 2018. The Judicial Review Hearing is set for 20 November 2018.
- 1.4 This report updates the Sub-Committee on progress made.

## **2 RECOMMENDED ACTION**

**2.1 That work to date be noted;**

**2.2 That following representations from Caversham Treants, as identified at point 4.2.1 the inclusion of two additional changing rooms be omitted from the proposed scheme. The monies saved to be allocated to contributory/match funding for future grant applications by the Trust and its partners.**

## **2. POLICY CONTEXT**

2.1 Reading Borough Council holds the Ground in its capacity as charity trustee ("Trustee") of 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.

2.2 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. CURRENT POSITION**

### **Archaeology**

4.1.1 A geophysical survey was undertaken across Mapledurham Playing Fields to identify features that may contain archaeology. This is illustrated in Plan 4.1.2 below.

4.1.2 A series of 30 trenches approximately 30m in length, 1.8m wide and 0.5m deep were dug across the site by Oxford Archaeology to investigate the features identified in the geophysical survey. These are also identified in Plan 4.1.2.

Plan 4.1.2: Geophysical survey with 30no archaeology trenches



Figure 2: Caversham Playing fields, Mapledurham. Proposed Trench plan with geophysical interpretation

- 4.1.3 Following these trenches, further deep excavations were undertaken at locations across the site again by Oxford Archaeology to establish whether or not any Palaeolithic archaeology is present. These test pits, identified in Plan 4.1.3 below, were 2m\*2m\* 3m deep in size and were located off the football pitches.

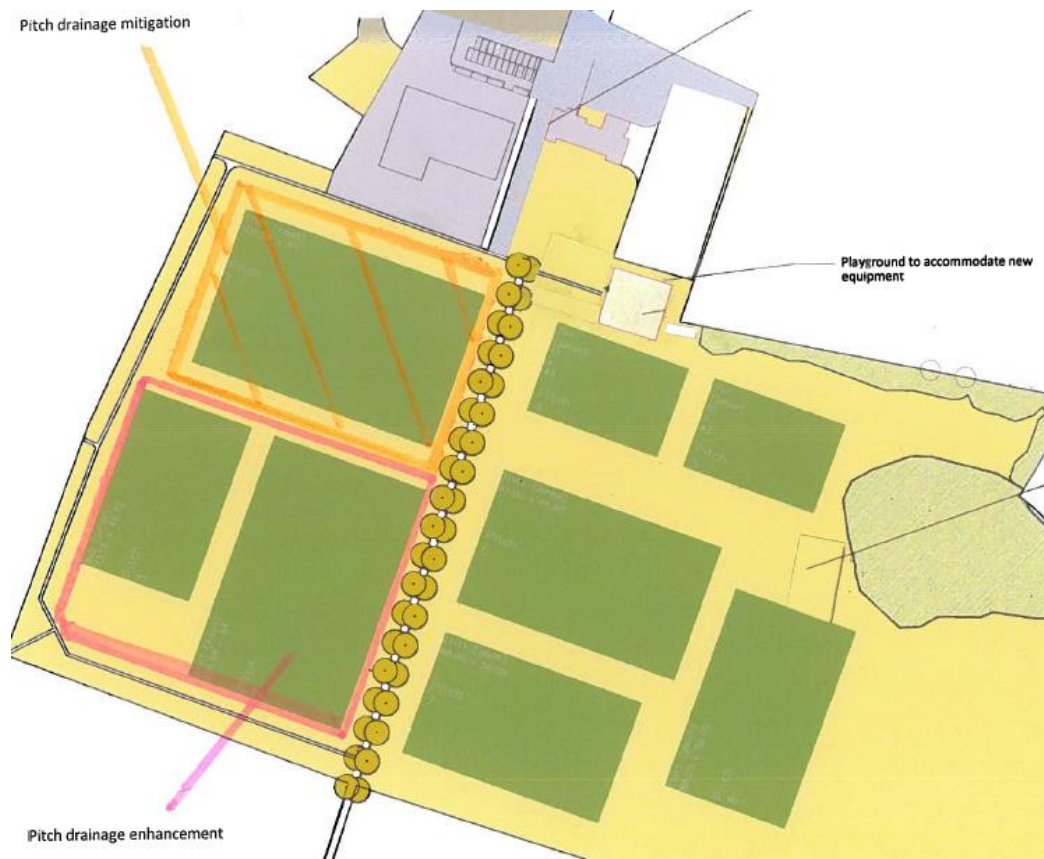
Plan 4.1.3: 8no Palaeolithic test pit locations



- 4.1.4 The geophysical survey indicated there might be a number of features on the site of archaeological interest and these were investigated by the 30 trenches and most found to represent variations of natural geology. Archaeological features were found in trenches 1,3,7,10,11,20, and 25. Towards the centre and eastern side trenches 20 & 25 contained late 19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century field boundary ditches and to the northeast the site also contained four NE-SW aligned furrows. Towards the northwest side of the site within trenches 1,3,7, and 10 a large D-shaped Roman enclosure was found. The area within the enclosure was also tested in trench 7 and two post holes were found measuring 0.45-0.48m in diameter and contained later Iron Age pottery. The enclosure ditches also contained pottery dating from 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> Century and were dated later than the post holes. The presence of a samian ware mortarium fragment suggests a date c.AD 170. The D-shaped enclosure may have been associated with several phases of occupation and potential industrial activity. In 1998 similar Roman features were discovered c 250m northwest of the site and rectangular cropmarks suggest this area could be part of a substantial late Iron Age / Roman rural settlement. Additional deeper test pits were dug across the site to check for anything of palaeolithic archaeological interest in the deeper gravel layers. Nothing of significance was found.
- 4.1.5 The Landscape Master Plan will now be amended to protect the Roman archaeology found to the northwest corner of the sports fields. This work is ongoing and will be reported to a future meeting. It is likely that the drainage will be moved from the western side of the main axial path to the eastern area. The full range of mitigation and enhancement previously reported is still believed to be deliverable within the budget identified.

Plan 4.1.5 June 2018 location plan of drained pitches

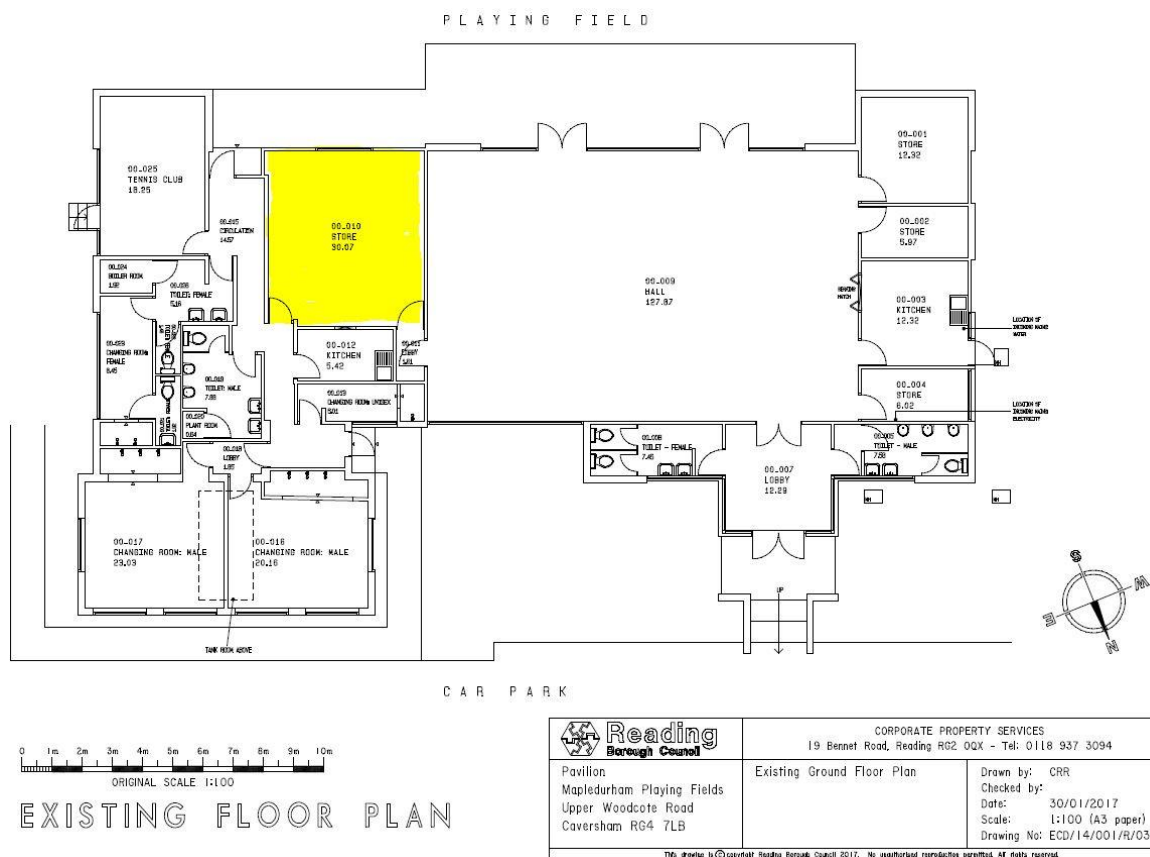




- 4.1.6 The digging of the 30 trenches was undertaken in the summer as soon after the June Sub-Committee as possible to reduce the impact on football. Where possible, trenches were sited off football pitches but given the geophysical survey, it was necessary to disturb some pitches.
- 4.1.7 Where pitches were affected, the disturbed ground was seeded, dressed and irrigated to promote re-establishment of turf as quickly as possible. On areas which were not within sports pitches, less intense work and no irrigation was undertaken. These areas will re-establish naturally. An ongoing programme of stone removal from affected areas of pitches is being carried out. We are grateful for the co-operation from Caversham Trent's FC in temporary reconfiguration of pitches and training areas.
- 4.1.8 Archaeological investigations within the school site are still to be undertaken by the EFSA. They have agreed to undertake these in November onwards, after the turf on pitches has re-established and activity displaced from these areas to the school site can revert back to their original location. This work will be organised and funded by the EFSA.

#### Further options

- 4.2.1 Since the Trustees Sub-Committee meeting in June 2018, Caversham Trent's FC has written to the Trustees and met with officers stating that match funding towards the provision of an artificial turf pitch and other improved facilities would be more beneficial to the club than the inclusion of additional changing rooms within the Pavilion during the rebuild.
- 4.2.2 The Pavilion should therefore be refurbished throughout, retaining the existing layout as per the decision of the Sub-Committee on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2018 but omitting the additional changing rooms. This will still allow for subsequent addition of changing room provision in the future to the south of the tennis club room and store (highlighted) below. The highlighted store may also be converted to changing in the future.



4.2.3 There are likely to be minor amendments to meet building control regulations and ensure adequate provision of disabled facilities.

4.2.4 The cost savings from excluding the additional changing rooms will be allocated to a fund for match/contributory funding by the Trust or partner clubs for improvement to facilities on the playing fields such as an Artificial Turf Pitch.

### Next steps

4.3.1 In light of the archaeology investigations an updated landscape masterplan including the location of the children’s play area would be presented to Committee in early December 2018. This will include the June 2018 committee approved additions of lighting the central avenue and providing a small overflow ‘grasscrete’ carpark area to the north of the proposed school.

4.3.2 The external works to the playing field including a new children’s play area requires planning approval. In order for the external works to start in the summer 2019 for the pitches to be playable September 2020, a planning application would be submitted in early January 2019 for planning committee review in late March 2019. During this same period January-March 2019 procurement of a main contractor for the external works would take place. Please note the above dates for the planning application submission and contractor procurement for the external works would not take place until the outcome of the Judicial Review of the planning permission issued 14th August for the EFSA school is known and thus these dates could be further delayed.

4.3.3 The design work and contractor procurement for the pavilion refurbishment and the associated costs have been put on hold until after the outcome of the above Judicial Review is known and therefore progress has been slowed.

## 5. CONSULTATION

5.1 A comprehensive consultation exercise was undertaken in the summer of 2017 to establish the views of beneficiaries, which generated 3,313 valid responses. This was

reported in detail to the Sub Committee on 9 January 2018.

- 5.2 A further round of consultation will be undertaken as part of the planning application for the Landscape Master Plan.

## 6. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, Section 149, a public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

- 6.2 In this regard you must consider whether the decision will or could have a differential impact on: racial groups; gender; people with disabilities; people of a particular sexual orientation; people due to their age; people due to their religious belief.

- 6.3 An updated equality impact assessment (EIA) was undertaken and reported to the June 2018 Sub-Committee. There has been no material change to the proposals being made and further review is not required at present. On completion of the review of the Master Plan, the EIA will also be reconsidered.

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Legal implications of the Judicial Review are identified elsewhere in reports to the Sub Committee.

## 8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The 20<sup>th</sup> June Sub Committee approved the proposal from the Council to spend the £375k of S106 mitigation funding for works to the playing field to mitigate the presence of the proposed school on the site.

- 8.2 The exclusion of the additional changing rooms from the pavilion refurbishment will result in a sum of £138,000 being allocated to use as contributory or match funding for grants or similar funding. This may be used by either the Charity or partner organisation(s) to lever in further monies to provide new or improve the facilities within the playing.

- 8.3 Archaeology investigation costs of £43,091 and £7,492 of drainage investigations have been expended to date as part of the approved pre-planning preparatory works. These costs totalling £50,583 are allocated equally between mitigation/enhancement (Council Section 106/Trust) funding basis. The expenditure is currently at risk and has been funded by the Council pending the outcome of the Judicial Review and receipt of the £1.36m premium.

## 9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee - 20<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee - 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

Oxford Archaeology report - August 2018