

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	MAPLEDURHAM PLAYING FIELDS TRUSTEES SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	15 OCTOBER 2019		
TITLE:	LANDSCAPE UPDATE REPORT		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	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 To update Trustees on the programme of works to implement the approved Landscape Master plan.
- 1.2 To update the Trustees on the works by the Department for Education (DfE) to the MPF community carpark.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the works to implement the landscape plan and DfE works to the MPF community car park are noted.

3 POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 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.

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.

4. CURRENT POSITION

4.1 Landscape plan

4.1.1 The landscape plan was approved unanimously by members of the Trustee Sub Committee in February 2019 and the plan gained planning permission on 16th April 2019. Contractors were then procured for these works.

4.1.2 The sports pitch regrading and drainage works started as planned on 17th June 2019 and is continuing with the aim to re-provide improved sports pitches by the start of the 2020 football season. This work is in two phases; the 1st phase is to re-grade and the soil, install primary drainage, and re-seed the area by the end of October; the 2nd phase is then to install secondary sand grooves drainage next April 2020. This work is heavily dependent on suitable weather conditions. A number of days have been lost due to strong winds and intermittent bouts of heavy rain. The contractor, Agripower, is also using a finer mesh stone screener to remove sufficient stone to provide a higher quality topsoil meeting Sport England playing pitch standards. This has slowed down completion of this part of the operation. However, Agripower has reviewed the remaining elements of their programme and is still aiming to complete the 1st phase of works, weather depending, by the end of October as planned. The fencing will then remain on site until the grass has fully established and has had a first cut.

4.1.3 Agripower will also be looking to install the new drainage lines during September to the new playing area which will include stone deliveries to back fill the drainage runs. Currently these deliveries are arriving through the existing Mapledurham car park but this is dependent on Kier's work in the car park entrance road and the car park section to the playing fields. As Kier will still be working on the carpark during September, then there may be times when we will look to use the access route at the top of Hewett Avenue across footpath 43 for these deliveries until the carpark entrance is available for access. This will mean the temporary closure of footpath 43 and a temporary traffic order on the bend of this road at those times when a delivery is made. We will look to keep these operations to a minimum.

4.1.4 During this summer period, the Council's parks service installed the gravel footpaths on the western side of the playing fields.

4.1.5 Agripower have also started work to install the new children's play area with the aim to open it for use by the October half term holidays.

4.1.6 Whilst the playing pitch works take place Caversham Trent FC are being accommodated between Mapledurham and Christchurch meadows playing fields

and we thank them for their on-going cooperation.

4.1.7 Programme of other works:

November / December 2019: Trees planting and boundary fence to the Hewett Avenue side of the playing fields

April / May 2020: Central avenue footpath and lighting, trim trail, and secondary sand grove drainage to the new sports pitch area.

The proposed small overflow parking area adjacent to the existing car park is currently being used as a site compound by Kier, the DfE contractor, carrying out the car park improvement works and building the school. Once these elements have been completed and Kier has decanted from the site, the overflow parking area can be constructed.

4.2 School Development

4.2.1 Kier started work on the MPF car park on 2nd September 2019 and have informed Officers they are looking to complete this initial phase of car park works in 11 weeks. Kier are looking to carry out the final phase of works to the car park, the finished surface of block paviours once the main works to the school has been built. Due to the nature of laying the interlocking block paviours, Kier are exploring closing the car park for a very short period whilst this work takes place to ensure it is completed in the quickest time with the least inconvenience to users. Once Officers have more details on the timing and duration of these works we will report to the Trustees on the details.

4.2.2 The DfE / Kier have informed Officers that works on the school build itself will follow once the initial car park works are complete.

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. This was used as the basis for developing the landscape plan

5.2 A further round of consultation was undertaken as part of the decision making process by planning when determining the application for the landscape works.

5.3 Once the works started on site, regular update letters have been provided to neighbouring residents with the same information provided on the contractor's heras fencing and posted on the Council's webpage. A meet the Kier contractor drop-in session was also held on 14th August with Officers in attendance for informal discussions on the landscape works.

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) for the Landscape Plan was undertaken and reported to the June 2018 Sub-Committee. There has been no material change to the proposals being made and the EIA remains valid.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The following contracts were approved at 7th May 2019 Trustee Committee from the enhancement and mitigation funds:

Cost	Description
£ 681,815	Agripower contract for sports pitch and children's play area works
£ 191,869	Parks landscape works (footpaths, trees, lighting, trim trail, benches)
£ 138,000	Fees on the landscape mitigation and improvement works
£1,041,684	Total

As of September 2019, current expenditure on the above works is £253,208.

7.2 At the 7th May 2019 Trustees meeting the enhancement funding available for the landscape improvements and refurbishment of the pavilion was £1,445,000. The DfE lease payment subsequently increased from £1,360,000 to £1,361,039 due to interest accrual on the original payment terms. All funding from the DfE and s106 funds have been received. The updated enhancement funding available is:

Funding	Funding source
£1,361,039	DfE lease payment
£ 85,000	s106 pavilion works
£1,446,039	Total

7.3 At the 20th June 2018, 22nd October 2018 and 7th May 2019 Trustees meetings the following budget spending commitments were approved:

£ 232,000	Landscape enhancement works including fees consisting of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sport pitch improvements (£94k) • Children play area improvements (£25k) • Hewett Avenue boundary fence (£12k) • Specimen tree planting (£2k)
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trim trail units (£18k) • Fees (£40k) • Extra benches and bins (£11k) • Entrance improvements (£5k) • Landscaping around the pavilion (£25k)
£ 30,000	Central path lighting
£ 35,000	Small overflow parking area north of the new school
£ 100,000	Maintenance on capital works
£ 825,000	Pavilion refurbishment
£1,222,000	Total

From the £1,446,039 enhancement funds available, the approved enhancement expenditure of £1,222,000 detailed above, left £224,039 of unallocated enhancement funds for a future grant or match funding for further capital schemes.

7.4 From the £1,446,039 enhancement funds the following enhancement items have currently been procured or committed expenditure:

Cost	Description
£ 87,281	Agripower sport pitch enhancement portion of £576,755 total works
£ 20,206	Children play area enhancement portion of £112, 654 total works
£ 43,048	Fees on all enhancement portion of £873,684 total external works
£ 27,416	Central path lighting - 12 columns incl ducting
£ 1,450	Specimen trees - english oaks
£ 5,815	Boundary fence - Hewett Avenue side
£ 24,797	Trim trail - 6 units including safety surfacing
£210,013	Total

7.5 The following items detailed in item 7.3 are yet to be procured:

Budget	Description
£ 11,000	Extra benches and bins (8 benches and 4 bins are to be installed as part of the mitigation works)
£ 5,000	Entrance improvements
£ 25,000	Landscaping improvements around the pavilion
£ 35,000	Small overflow parking area north of the new school
£100,000	Maintenance on capital works
£825,000	Pavilion refurbishment including fees and contingency
£1,001,000	Total

It is proposed to seek authority from Trustees to procure a contractor for the pavilion refurbishment works within the £825k budget.

On current forecasts, from the original enhancement budget of £1,446,039 with committed expenditure of £210,013 and £1,001,000 of future commitments detailed above gives a total spend of £1,211,013.

This currently leaves £235,026 of unallocated enhancement funds for future

grant or match funding for future capital schemes

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Sub-Committee has been delegated the power by the Council acting in its capacity as sole corporate Trustee of the Charity to act in the best interests of the Charity and its beneficiaries.
- 8.2 These works are classified as a 'Works' contract and the cost falls well below the threshold which would require an OJEU advertisement for a 'Works' contract. The procurement of these works has been conducted in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee - 9th January 2018.
- 9.2 Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee - 20th June 2018.
- 9.3 Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee - 22nd October 2018.
- 9.4 Papers prepared for Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee 30th January 2019.
- 9.5 Mapledurham Playing Fields Trustees Sub-Committee - 7th May 2019