

CABINET SUB-COMMITTEE (COUNCIL CHARITIES)

23 MARCH 2016

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

AGENDA ITEM No.

5

TITLE OF REPORT: PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO SMITHSON'S RECREATION GROUND, HITCHIN

REPORT OF THE PARKS & COUNTRYSIDE DEVELOPMENT MANAGER (as Lead Trust Officer for Smithson Recreation Ground, Hitchin Charity number 264311)

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To report to the Cabinet Sub-Committee on proposed improvements to Smithson's Recreation Ground
- 1.2 On the 24th September 2013 Cabinet adopted the Councils Green Space Management Strategy for 2014 – 2019. The strategy contains action plans for improvements to Smithson's Recreation Ground.
- 1.3 At its meeting on the 8th December 2015 the Cabinet Sub Committee resolved at 7 (1)

"That consideration of the proposed improvements to Smithson's Recreation Ground, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be deferred, pending a site visit and a further report being brought back to the Sub-Committee once the consultation period has expired and a design for the improvements has been put forward".
- 1.4 Based on the results of the first phase consultation undertaken in November 2015. The new design show at appendix A has been developed.
- 1.5 On the 27th January 2016 a site visit took place with the Sub-Committee Members to view the site and the new design proposals.
- 1.6 The new design went through a period of public consultation between February 15th – March 4th.
- 1.7 The table below summarises the results of the consultation.

Like the new proposals	Dislike the new proposals
8	3

1.8 The table at 1.7 above identifies that 72.73 % of responses were in favour of the proposals for the site.

1.9 Some proposals that people disliked included:

- Not enough seating
- Not enough litter bins

These can easily be incorporated in the design.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Sub-Committee:

2.1 agrees that the Council undertakes the proposed improvements to Smithson's Recreation Ground as set out in Appendix A.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 To allow the Council to provide improved facilities in accordance with the Council's adopted Green Space Management Strategy.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 None.

5. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

5.1 The Council's Area Committees were consulted on the proposed action plans contained within the Council's adopted Green Space Management Strategy.

5.2 Ward Members have been involved in the consultation process for the proposed enhancements for Smithson's Recreation Ground.

5.3 Between the 16th and 30th November 2015 Groundwork Hertfordshire undertook the first phase of public consultation.

5.4 Proposals were developed based on the results of the first phase of public consultation and these were consulted on between the 15th February and 4th March 2016.

6. FORWARD PLAN

6.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

7. BACKGROUND

7.1 Smithson's Recreation Ground

7.1.1 For 2015/16 the Council's Green Space Action Plans list £30,000 of improvements to Smithson's Recreation Ground. Funding for the works have been secured by the Council in the capital programme and is using £21,000 section 106 contributions to this project.

7.1.2 Groundwork Hertfordshire is currently working with NHDC officers involving local groups and apprentices that work on the site to develop plans for a new pathway, improved planting and signage. Appendix A details design proposals.

8. ISSUES

8.1 It is intended to undertake the work prior to the summer holiday period.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The Council acts as the Trustee for the above mentioned Charities/ Charitable Trusts and this Sub-Committee of the Cabinet is the managing committee appointed on behalf of the Council to manage them. The Trustees, when carrying out their duties, must act solely in interests of the charity. They do not promote the interests of a 3rd party (i.e. the Council), even if that 3rd party appointed them as a trustee.

9.2 The Sub-Committee's role and function under 5.10.4 (a) (b) and (e) of the Council's constitution is to act on behalf of the Council as a Trustee for all assets of the Council; consider all matters relating to those Trusts including to receive reports on any matter, including the property and financial implications concerning those trust's assets.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no financial implications for the Trusts. The proposed works as set out will be funded by the Council in accordance with paragraph 7.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

11.1 One of the trust objectives is to ensure the use and enjoyment of the fields by people. The Council's improvements will assist with the continuing achievement of that aim.

11.2 For the Council, failure to invest in green space would be in direct conflict with the expressed needs of the local community. The 2013 District Wide Survey demonstrated that satisfaction with Council Services that residents have used within the last year is generally high – 90% or more are satisfied with parks and open spaces. Around four fifths of residents have used parks and open spaces (79%) in the last year.

11.3 Without capital investment, infrastructure will deteriorate and eventually will not be fit for purpose.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The Equality Act 2010 came into force on the 1st October 2010, a major piece of legislation. The Act also created a new Public Sector Equality Duty, which came into force on the 5th April 2011. There is a General duty, described in 12.2, that public bodies must meet, underpinned by more specific duties which are designed to help meet them.

12.2 In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of its functions, give **due regard** to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 12.3 The opportunities derived from the proposals will benefit the community by improving the infrastructure of Smithson's Recreation Ground.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

- 13.1 The Public Services (Social Value) Act was passed at the end of February 2012; under the Act, public bodies in England and Wales are required to consider how the services they commission and procure might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area. 'Social Value' involves looking at what the collective benefit to a community is when a public body awards a contract. It applies to all public services contracts and those public services contracts with only an element of goods or works. It does not apply to public work contracts or public supply (goods) contracts. The Act requires public authorities at the pre-procurement phase of procuring services to consider how what is being procured might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of an area and how the authority might secure that improvement through the procurement process itself.
- 13.2 As the recommendations made in this report do not constitute a public service contract, the measurement of 'social value' as required by the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 need not be applied, although equalities implications and opportunities are identified in the relevant section at paragraphs 12. The proposal also has benefits to the social and environmental well being of the North Hertfordshire area and more specifically, Hitchin.

14. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 There are no human resources implications from this report.

15. APPENDICES

- 15.1 Appendix A – Proposals for Smithson's Recreation Ground.

16. CONTACT OFFICERS

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17. CONTRIBUTING OFFICERS

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

18.1 Green Space Management Strategy for North Hertfordshire 2014 – 19.

18.2 Cabinet decision 24th September 2013.

18.3 Cabinet Sub-Committee (Council Charities) report on 'PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS TO SMITHSON'S & KING GEORGE V PLAYING FIELDS' - 8th December 2015.

Appendix A:

SMITHSONS
RECREATION
GROUND

FINAL CONCEPT DESIGN



SEATING SUGGESTION

