

INFORMATION NOTE : BANCROFT RECREATION GROUND

THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF CUSTOMER SERVICES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the current situation for the delivery of incremental affordable improvements to Bancroft Recreation Ground based on the principles outlined in the most recent version of the master plan set out in the report to Cabinet on 28 January 2014 as attached at Appendix A.

2. STEPS TO DATE

- 2.1 In order to keep Members updated the Chairman of the Hitchin Area Committee has included an information note on Bancroft Recreation Ground as a regular item on the agenda for Hitchin Area Committee.

- 2.2 At its meeting on 16th December 2014 Cabinet resolved at Item 13:

BANCROFT RECREATION GROUND, HITCHIN:

- (1) *That a phased approach to deliver incremental affordable improvements to Bancroft Recreation Ground based on the principles outlined in the most recent version of the master plan set out in the report to Cabinet on 28 January 2014 be agreed, using Section 106 and other limited internal and external financial resources;*
- (2) *That, subject to the approval of a revenue growth bid of £15,000 per annum, the inclusion of a water splash park and associated toilet/baby changing provision for Bancroft Recreation Ground in the Capital Programme for 2015/16 be agreed; and*
- (3) *That the limited incremental improvements for Bancroft recreation ground be incorporated into the Green Space Management Strategy Work Programme and, in consultation with relevant Portfolio Holders, be managed by officers without the need of a Project Board.*

- 2.3 At the Hitchin Area Committee meeting on 29th January 2015 at Item 8, Members received an Information Note advising them that officers were developing a tender specification for the water splash park.

3. INFORMATION TO NOTE

3.1 Water Splash Park

- 3.1.1 Officers have produced the draft summary specification presented at Appendix B that when finalised will be used for public consultation.
- 3.1.2 It is intended to run the consultation for a four week period and comments received will be considered for inclusion in the final tender specification.
- 3.1.3 In order to prevent disturbance to users of the Recreation Ground in the busy summer period it is intended to commence works in September 2015 and open the facility in spring 2016. The anticipated operational season for the Water Splash Park will be from May – Sept.

3.2 Toilet / Baby Changing Facility

- 3.2.1 Officers are developing a specification to provide a new accessible toilet / baby changing facility in the disused wing of bowls pavilion. This will be open for use during the operational season of the water splash park.

3.3 Public Tennis Courts

- 3.3.1 A recent attempt to power wash the tennis courts identified that the surface has disintegrated to such an extent that the courts may no longer be in a safe condition for use. As a temporary measure the courts have been closed. An independent risk assessment has taken place and has made the following findings:

All areas are in a severe state of disrepair and large investment will be required to bring them up to scratch; the surfaces throughout the courts are breaking up and very weak – all of these will require replacement. On top of this the perimeter fencing is also in very poor condition around all courts and extensive remedial works would be required on these. In the inspectors' opinion the courts are beyond economic or viable repair and should be removed or replaced with new courts.

The inspection identified a moderate risk.

The full report is available on the Bancroft Recreation page of the Councils web site.

- 3.3.2 Officers are currently verifying the cost and other implications of either removing or repairing or replacing the courts and will make recommendations for consideration in accordance with the adopted master plan.
- 3.3.3 It should be noted that the principles outlined in the approved master plan for the Recreation Ground identified the removal of these courts and greater public use of the Hitchin Lawn Tennis Clubs Courts.

3.4 Hitchin Lawn Tennis Club

- 3.4.1 Talks are progressing with the club for a lease renewal which aims to re-establish adequate public use of the courts whilst still meeting the requirements of the club. Currently under the terms of the existing lease there is limited public access to the courts and for public bookings the club can be contacted on enquiries@hitchinlawntennisclub.co.uk or by leaving a text on 07580342622.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 These are described in Paragraph 3 of this report. If requested Officers will provide further Information Notes at future meetings of the Hitchin Area Committee.

5. APPENDICES

- 5.1 Appendix A: Approved Master Plan
- 5.2 Appendix B: Draft Water Splash Park summary specification

6. CONTACT OFFICERS

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7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 16th December 2014 Cabinet report & resolutions item 13. (Available on NHDC web site)

