

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
18 JULY 2017**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

12

TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE : GREEN SPACE STRATEGY

INFORMATION NOTE OF THE HEAD OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

EXECUTIVE MEMBER: COUNCILLOR JANE GRAY

At the 15 February 2017 Overview and Scrutiny meeting the following was resolved: ***‘That the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services be requested to produce a report detailing the steps taken and the progress made in identifying interested groups and organisations to safely provide facilities and present it to this Committee at the meeting due to be held on 18 July 2017’***

This information note details the steps taken and the progress made in identifying interested groups and organisations to safely provide facilities. A communication plan has been produced and is shown at appendix A. It lists agreed actions between Jan 2017– April 2018.

As per the agreed actions in the Councils adopted Green Space Management Strategy 2017-2021 pavilions identified as being beyond economic repair have now been closed. (Bakers Close, Baldock, St. Johns Road, Cadwell Lane and Walsworth Common, Hitchin.) Prior to removing pavilions there is a period of time until 1st March 2018 for interested parties to put forward sustainable proposals.

Also as per the agreed actions in the Councils adopted Green Space Management Strategy 2017-2021, Local neighbourhood play areas identified as lower usage shall have until 1st March 2018 for interested parties to put forward sustainable proposals. (13 sites)

SUMMARY OF STEPS TAKEN

Pavilions

Date	Action
Feb 2017	All current users of football pavilions contacted seeking expressions of interest for asset transfer.
Feb 2017	Received expression of interested from interested party for use of Bakers Close pavilion as venue for beer festival. (later withdrawn)
Feb 2017	Contacted Hertfordshire Football Association for interest in asset transfer of pavilions
Feb 2017	Met with Hitchin Sunday Football League. Provided detailed information on maintenance and repairs required to pavilions.
Feb 2017	Expression of interest received from Hitchin Town Youth FC. Provided detailed information on maintenance and repairs required to pavilions.

Feb 2017	Received outline business case from community group for use of Bakers Close pavilion. (detailed business case to follow in late summer)
April 2017	Followed up Sunday Football League for proposals for pavilions
April 2017	Followed up Hitchin Town Youth for proposals for pavilions (No response)
April 2017	Complaint received from Sunday Football League re closure of pavilions. Currently referred to Local Government Ombudsman.
May 2017	Received expression of interest from St. Johns FC to take on St. Johns pavilion. Provided detailed information on maintenance and repairs required to pavilion.
June 2017	Received expression of interest from Albion FC to take on Cadwell pavilion. Provided detailed information on maintenance and repairs required to pavilion.

Appendix B details letter sent to existing users.

Play Areas

Date	Action
Jan 2017	Article in Mercury paper requesting asset transfer of play areas.
Feb 2017	Contacted 38 residents who expressed an interest in play areas for expressions of interest for asset transfer.
Feb 2017	Contacted 46 PTA's and 85 community groups seeking expressions of interest for asset transfer.
Feb 2017	Play area information sheet on Web site (see appendix C)
Feb 2017	Contacted Royston Town Council and North Herts Homes seeking interest in asset transfer.
Feb 2017	Met with Gt. Ashby Council re options for play area. (They are undertaking residents survey results due in July)
Feb 2017	Tweeted offer of support for community groups.
Feb 2017	Provided Royston Councillors maintenance cost of play areas.
Mar 2017	Article in Comet paper requesting community groups to run play areas.
Mar 2017	Article in Royston Crow paper requesting community groups to run play areas.
Mar 2017	Article in Comet online requesting community support for Rosehill play area.
Mar 2017	Contacted Town Centre managers for funding for play areas.
Mar 2017	New sponsorship page on web site (see appendix D) Emailed link to Town Centre Managers & NHDC Business development officer to include in business newsletter.
Mar 2017	Met with planning to discuss future options for new play areas.
Apr 2017	Community management signs erected in 13 play area (see appendix E)
Apr 2017	Royston Town Council resolved not to fund play areas.
May 2017	Met with Community group who expressed interest in taking on Jackmans Recreation Ground play area.
May 2017	Petition received to save Rosehill play area. (with Committee section)
June 2017	Community Development working on a business plan with Community group who expressed interest in taking on Jackmans Recreation Ground play area.

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS MADE

Pavilions

Site	Progress
Bakers Close Pavilion, Baldock	Outline business case received from community group to develop as social club with retained changing rooms and additional community use.
St. Johns changing rooms, Hitchin	Expression of interest received from St. Johns FC to take on building. Provided detailed maintenance cost and condition survey. Community Development to work with St. Johns FC on business case.
Cadwell Lane changing rooms, Hitchin	Expression of interest received from Albion FC to take on building. Provided detailed maintenance cost and condition survey. Community Development working with Albion FC on business case.
Walsworth changing rooms, Hitchin	No expressions of interest received for existing building. Aiming to secure section 106 money for new build in 2020/21.

Play Areas

Site	Progress
Generic	Seeking sponsorship of some of our larger play area sites, which may generate additional income to offset the cost to help retain some of the smaller sites. We are also seeking opportunities for alternative play provision in the locality of our existing play areas through negotiations with landowners and stakeholders.
Betjeman Road, Royston	No interest from Royston Town Council. Royston District Councillors seeking options for alternative funding.
Farrier Court, Royston	No interest from Royston Town Council. Royston District Councillors seeking options for alternative funding.
Ivel Road, Baldock	No expressions of interest received.
Dacre Road, Hitchin	No expressions of interest received.
Rosehill, Hitchin	Large amount of community support to retain play area. No offers of funding.
Symonds Rd, Hitchin	No expressions of interest received.
Jackmans Recreation Ground, Letchworth	Expression of interest received from community group to fund play area. Shortly due to meet with group to finalise details.
Linnet Close, Letchworth	Some community support to retain play area. No offers of funding.
Oaktree Close, Letchworth	No expressions of interest received.

Chilterns, Gt. Ashby	Gt. Ashby Community Council have taken an interest in play areas. They are currently consulting with residents on future options.
Cleveland Way, Gt. Ashby	Gt. Ashby Community Council have taken an interest in play areas. They are currently consulting with residents on future options.
Fairfield Crescent, Gt. Ashby	Gt. Ashby Community Council have taken an interest in play areas. They are currently consulting with residents on future options.
Merrick Close, Gt. Ashby	Gt. Ashby Community Council have taken an interest in play areas. They are currently consulting with residents on future options.