

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

16th October 2012

FIELDS IN TRUST QE 2 DEDICATION

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Luke Stephens
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	John Godwin
Wards Affected	Astwood Bank & Feckenham Batchley & Brockhill Greenlands Headless Cross & Oakenshaw
Ward Councillor Consulted	No
Non Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

Members are asked to consider as part of the Queen's diamond jubilee celebrations the dedication of the following key open spaces/playing fields for inclusion in the 'Fields in Trust' (FIT) programme. This will enable the purpose and title of these sites to be protected as local outdoor spaces specifically as playing fields for sport, play and recreation, whilst contributing to the overall legacy of this important occasion for the Country.

- a) Batchley Pond
- b) Greenlands
- c) Headless Cross Green
- d) Overdale Park

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Committee are asked to **RESOLVE** that

- 1) approval be granted for the four sites, listed above at paragraph 1 a) to e) to be formally dedicated for use as playing fields by way of a Covenant / Deed of Dedication under the Fields in Trust programme.
- 2) authority be delegated to the Heads of Leisure and Cultural Services and Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services to take the necessary steps to finalise the agreement with FIT in relation to the five sites and complete the Deeds of Dedication.

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3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications to the Council within this report however there are associated benefits from having sites within this scheme that will develop going forward through external funding and grant opportunities. Members should be aware that where sites bring income to the Council through formal recreation usage and applicable fees there is no impact within the proposal as RBC would keep all associated income.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Deed of Dedication safeguarding outdoor recreation and playing fields through FIT is a legal instrument approved by the Charity Commission and allows FIT to act as guarantor between the land owner and any future potential development, to ensure that the recreation value of open spaces is protected and maintained inline with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The deed provides both a formal declaration and indicates the designation of the site in perpetuity.
- 3.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) includes several recommendations made by FIT.
- 3.4 The new NPPF acknowledges the value of recreational spaces and advises that Local Green Space designations – affording protection equivalent to Green Belt status may be given in cases where the area is of recreational value to the local community and that this specifically includes playing fields.
- 3.5 Currently the Borough Councils green space provision, designation and management demonstrates that of a good practice model and these recommendations are designed to build on our excellent track record in this area and protect our most valuable sites accordingly.
- 3.6 This unique model does not involve or require a change of ownership but safeguards in the legal context the access to local outdoor space for residents.
- 3.7 RBC would continue to manage the stock as it currently does as ownership and operational responsibility does not change through the Deed of Dedication process.

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- 3.8 With reference to any intention for future disposal, there exists a set process for this occasion however Officers believe this to be of minimal concern as the selected sites are current designated Public Open Spaces, have status within the planning context and have been identified of value for local recreation through the authorities Open Space study

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.9 The Field in Trust programme began in 1936 commemorating King George. The current UK flagship programme in 2012 has seen an increased impetus with the dedication of many sites through the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge celebrating the Diamond Jubilee, both Olympics and Paralympics and the 2014 Commonwealth Games. Many sites throughout Worcestershire have benefitted by dedication.
- 3.10 The intention of the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge is for two thousand and twelve sites are dedicated in celebration of the Diamond Jubilee.
- 3.11 The dedication is an important safeguard for playing fields in Redditch Borough and brings positive 'kudos' to the Council providing quality playing fields in line with planning context at no cost to the Council

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.12 The dedication safeguards local recreational space and playing fields in perpetuity and will ensure future provision matches our sustainable requirement as demonstrated within the borough councils open space study and is a positive statement in regard to the provision and protection of important local amenity space.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

The identified risks are that the Council may not be able to provide development within any of these sites to cater for sustainable development and local need unless an alternative equivalent or better replacement is provided nearby to mitigate the loss. However given the key nature of these sites it is not Officer opinion that this situation will present itself. Should it, there is an agreed process to manage this situation that would need to be factored into the project design and arrangement stages.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Site description/inventory
Appendix 2 – FIT documentation

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6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

7. KEY

None

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