

Report for Resolution

Report to Cabinet
30 March 2012
Report of Head of Citywide Services
Subject Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge

Item

19

Purpose

To seek approval to support the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge through the nomination of one park in each of the neighbourhood areas as a Queen Elizabeth II Field.

Recommendations

- 1) To agree the nomination of Eaton Park, Harford Park, Sloughbottom Park and Woodrow Pilling Park as Queen Elizabeth II Fields
- 2) To delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Development in consultation with the portfolio holder for Parks and Open Spaces to agree a Deed of Dedication to be placed on the land, for the sites which are selected as being appropriate for Queen Elizabeth II Field status by the Fields in Trust.

Financial Consequences

There are no financial consequences relating to expenditure as a result of nominating the sites. Should any of the sites be successful in attaining QEII status, there would be a maximum charge of £150 per site to register the Deed of Dedication, a minimal charge to install a plaque provided by Fields in Trust (FIT) at each site and any costs relating to an opening event if one was held. The existing management regime for each site will not need to be changed and will be covered by the existing grounds maintenance contract costs.

Queen Elizabeth II (QEII) status would make any future funding identified specifically for the support and development of QEII sites accessible, and would also provide additional weighting to funding applications to funding streams that are not exclusively for QEII Fields.

Risk Assessment

Designation as a QEII Field requires a Deed of Dedication to be placed on the land. A Deed of Dedication normally establishes protection in perpetuity, but can be time limited. FIT's preference is that it is in perpetuity. The likelihood of this being a problem restricting changes to land use in the future is low, as each which site selected for nomination is a key park in delivering health and recreational benefits to residents.

If a clear need to dispose of a site, or part of it, was identified it could be disposed of provided the disposal is of clear advantage, and in the best interests of the

community, from a recreational perspective. A replacement facility would need to be of at least equal size, better quality and serve the same community in terms of catchment area. The proceeds of any disposal would normally need to be re-applied to new sport, recreation and/or play facilities, with priority given to outdoor prior to indoor facilities.

Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority “Safe and healthy neighbourhoods – working in partnership with residents to create neighbourhoods where people feel secure, where the streets are clean and well maintained, where there is good quality housing and local amenities and where there are active local communities” and the service plan priority improving focus on our customers.

Cabinet Member: Cllr Gihawi – Parks and Open spaces

Ward: All

Contact Officers

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Report

Aim of the initiative

1. The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge is an initiative administered by Fields in Trust (FIT). It's vision is to ensure that everyone – young or old, able or disabled and whether they live in an urban or rural environment – has access to free, local outdoor spaces for all kinds of sport, play and recreation.
2. The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge aims to safeguard 2,012 outdoor recreational spaces in perpetuity, by the end of 2012 for future generations in celebration of the Diamond Jubilee and as a permanent tribute to Queen Elizabeth II. The initiative has particular pertinence given the other landmark event scheduled to take place in the UK in 2012: the London Olympics.
3. FIT want each Local Authority throughout the United Kingdom to nominate several recreational spaces in their area that they would be happy to protect as Queen Elizabeth II Fields. FIT will then target the public at large by putting these nominated areas on their website www.qe2fields.com to allow the general public to express their support by way of a vote for their favourite local field, to take place in April 2012. It is hoped that the public will be excited by the chance to be involved in creating a permanent and tangible legacy to benefit their community both now and in the future.

Public involvement

4. The public can support the challenge actively in a number of ways including by supporting their outdoor recreational space to be protected and encouraging their Local Authority to sign up to the initiative. Donations from the public to the challenge are also welcome. They will also be encouraged to volunteer on their local site via the QEII Field website.
5. The public will vote and indicate their support for their favourite outdoor space through www.qe2fields.com. All outdoor recreational spaces nominated by Local Authorities will be uploaded to this site so that people can search for their area and cast a vote for the field they would like to be protected as a Queen Elizabeth II Field. Voting will commence later this year.

Site ownership and management

6. Legal ownership of the land does not change, but there is a transfer of beneficial interest. However, under the Charitable Deed, the land is held on trust for the inhabitants of a specific area and is to be known as a 'Queen Elizabeth II Field'.
7. Where the land is registered at the Land Registry, a restriction is registered on the Register of Title. The deed of dedication just deals with the equitable title to the land, not the legal title, and so it will not count as a registered disposition. The restriction should therefore not be a problem. The owner not only has to consent to the Deed of Dedication, it is only the owner who can enter into the Deed and therefore the owner's consent is a first priority.

8. FIT does accept that on rare occasions communities change and land use changes accordingly. Parts of sites, or very rarely, whole sites can therefore be disposed of provided the disposal is of clear advantage, and in the best interests of the community, from a recreational perspective. The criteria which FIT applies to replacement facilities are that they should be of at least equal size, better quality and serve the same community in terms of catchment area. The entire proceeds of any disposal should normally be re-applied to new sport, recreation and/or play facilities, with priority given to outdoor prior to indoor facilities
9. All day to day decisions are the responsibility of the owner and/or managers. Fields in Trust will only need to know about any potential disposals, including wayleaves, leases, transfers and sales. Fields in Trust would also need to be consulted about any building works on the site that lie outside the agreed use of the site.
10. It is not necessary for the sites involved in the scheme to change their names. It is recognised that sites already have names that are instantly recognisable within the community through their long usage. The site would acquire Queen Elizabeth II Fields status, and receive any badging associated with this which would ensure there was no requirement for any actual name change.

Representations

11. Representations have been received by the council from Fields in Trust, The Football Association, a 'friends of group' and also a two residents of the city, requesting that the council makes a submission. Eaton Park and Sloughbottom Park have been named specifically in them.

Opportunities

12. It is an opportunity to be part of a high profile national campaign.
13. It demonstrates the council's commitment to the provision of outdoor recreational space both now and in the future.
14. It is a high profile and cost effective way to mark the Diamond Jubilee and the London 2012 Olympics.
15. It will contribute to achieving increasing physical activity, community involvement and promoting the sustainability agenda.
16. It has the potential to act as a catalyst to increase locally community involvement in the management of the park.
17. The ability to apply for improvement funds specifically for QEII Fields, such as the £1m SITA Trust, or an improved chance of securing funding from Sport England, which has announced a £10m funding stream for protected sites under its Places, People, Play funding that is planned as a legacy for the London 2012 Olympics.