

## Report for Information

**Report to** Mousehold Heath Conservators  
11 December 2009

**Report of** Head of Community Services

**Subject** Report on minutes from the Mousehold Heath  
Conservators management sub group

---

7

### Purpose

To report on the discussions and actions agreed by the management sub group.

### Recommendations

The Conservators note the report

### Financial Consequences

Any works arising from this report have, or will be met from approved budgets.

### Strategic Priority and Outcome/Service Priorities

The report helps to meet the strategic priority Safe & Healthy Neighbourhoods, and the service plan priority to ensure Norwich has a clean and safe environment.

### Contact Officers

Paul Holley

01603 212343

### Background Documents

None

## **Notes from Mousehold Heath Conservators Working Group**

**Weds 28 October 2009**

### **Present**

Cllr David Bradford - Chair (DB)

Cllr Janet Bearman (JB)

Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton (JBC)

Chris Southgate (CS)

Malcolm Bryant (MB)

Paul Holley (PH)

William Stewart (WS)

### **Apologies**

There were apologies from Cllr Stephen Little and Cllr Jenny Lay.

### **Work Programme**

1. The new contract will start in April 2010 and MB felt that the Conservators should have more say in its running. There was a general consensus that the new contractor should be more flexible and communicative.
2. A draft work programme for 2010/11 was presented by with a request for comments. Capital items for the remainder of the 2009/10 budget and for consideration in the 2010/11 were discussed.
3. MB said that the sports income from Fountain Ground should go to the Conservators' budget; JBC pointed out that the Conservators benefited from the overall Council maintenance contract.
4. **ACTION** Officers to obtain the level of income received for the use of the Fountain Ground football pitch.
5. A possible replacement building for the Fountain Ground changing rooms block was discussed. DB said that options for extra functionality (e.g. public toilets, meeting or storage facilities etc) should be considered in any new design.
6. **ACTION** Property Surveyors to be requested to provide advice on building options.
7. CS said that the Conservators should put forward a capital programme for Mousehold, to include (for example) the refurbishment of the Pavilion public toilets and access track etc.
8. The hole in the access track was discussed. Asset and City Management had checked and found that it was not due to a water leak. Officers had also advised that a gas pipe existed in the car park which would clearly need to be considered during any repairs or refurbishment.
9. **ACTION** Officers to seek advice from property surveyors that the gas pipeline is safe.
10. DB and CS asked if restrictions could be placed on the size of lorries using the

access track in the car park

11. **ACTION** Officers to raise with asset and city management

12. Possible capital items for the 2009/10 budget were discussed as follows:

### **Off-road Cycling**

13. PH outlined options discussed with officers from the Forestry Commission, who had visited Mousehold with PH and the Wardens on 30<sup>th</sup> Sept.

14. There was a general consensus that off-road cycling might need to be accommodated in the vicinity. MB preferred re-locating the activity to an area adjacent to Beech Drive and outside the Mousehold Heath boundary. DB asked if leasing a designated off-road cycling area on a peppercorn rent might be feasible.

15. The options of allowing off-road cycling at the present site on Mousehold, but under a more formal arrangement with the users, and moving the cyclists to the suggested alternative site were discussed.

16. PH said that there was a risk that re-locating off-road cycling could result in the site eventually joining up with the existing area used on Mousehold, thereby attracting more users.

17. MB said that if the cyclists were re-located, the existing Mousehold site could be re-profiled and re-seeded. JB queried whether cyclists could be excluded from the existing area by fencing; PH confirmed that this could be done but would require budgetary provision. WS said that the Conservators would need to be clear that the by-laws could be enforced if the cyclists were to be physically excluded from the existing Mousehold site.

18. CS asked what support the police could give in enforcing the by-laws at the existing off-road cycling area. MB reported that the police had said they needed written authority from the Conservators in order to enforce the by-laws. JB said there was a need for a 'plan B' for dealing with the off-road cycling issue if the alternative option did not happen.

19. **ACTION** Information on the possible alternative site, including aerial photos and ecological information, to be provided. A report will be produced for the December meeting of the Mousehold Conservators' outlining the two options.

### **Notes from Mousehold Heath Conservators Working Group**

**Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2009**

#### **Present:**

Cllr David Bradford (Chairman) (DB)

Cllr Janet Bearman (JB)

Cllr Stephen Little (SL)

Chris Southgate (CS)

Malcolm Bryant (MB)

Bob Cronk (BC)

Simon Meek (SM)

Paul Holley (PH)

## **Apologies**

Cllr Julie Brociek-Coulton and Cllr Jenny Lay.

## **Matters arising from previous meeting**

### **Cycle racks**

20. CS noted that there was little reference to the discussion on cycle racks in the meeting notes, although this had been discussed at the meeting. PH reported that a quotation for the supply and installation of two cycle racks in each of the four main car parks had been requested.
21. Zak's access track: CS said that the reference in the meeting notes of a proposal to limit the size of lorries using the track should be amended to show that this had been agreed by the management sub-group under delegated powers.
22. PH reported that the Council had received a letter from the lessees raising concerns about the poor state of the track. MB said that further investigation was needed to find out why the track had subsided. DB said that lease should be checked for details of the size or weight of vehicles permitted to use the track. BC said that there was a need to find out the roles and responsibilities of the Conservators, the Council and the lessees regarding this issue.
23. **ACTION:** SM to contact Asset and City Management for clarification on the sites lease including the weight of vehicles permitted to use the track.

## **Matters discussed**

### **Off-road cycling**

24. This issue was discussed, including draft options provided by PH and is covered in a separate report.

### **Financial update**

25. SM confirmed that current budget information would be available at the Conservators' meeting on 11 December. In 2008-9 the Conservators to set their precept for the 2010/11 year in February 2009. BC said that the costs of the new contracts were not yet available and also indicated that the Conservators should be mindful of the Council's budgetary situation when setting their precept. DB proposed freezing the precept in line with the 2009/10 budget in view of the Council's financial situation.
26. MB raised the CityCare litter-picking contract. On at least twelve occasions in 2009, the regular litter-picking operative had been moved to another site, and no litter-pick had taken place at Mousehold on those days. MB said that CityCare should reimburse the Conservators for the missing days.
27. SM said that under the contract wording a litter-pick did not have to be undertaken every day. No complaints were received on the days that the operative was not present on Mousehold. Any complaints should be reported directly to CityCare. SM would raise the operator presence issue with

CityCare.

28. CS asked for more information on how much flexibility was built into the Mousehold budget to cover unforeseen spending and requested that information be made available in the finance report to show commitments as well as spend to date. SM advised that a budget monitoring sheet incorporating this would be produced for the 11 December Conservators' meeting. BC reminded the group that any underspend at year end was now rolled over into the new financial year.

**Date of next meeting:** to be arranged.