

5th September 2016

Community, Health and Leisure Committee

Open Space Protection Measures

Report of: *David Carter*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council owns and maintains large areas of public open spaces, ranging from common land to parks and recreation fields within the Borough.
- 1.2 A Motion was made to full Council recommending additional protection for land to reduce the risk of unauthorised incursions, which have increased in recent years and have resulted in cost to remove vehicles and persons from land, and to clear up sites following an incursion.
- 1.3 Members approved expenditure on the work to a number of sites identified including King George's Playing Fields, Hutton Recreation Fields and the Brentwood Centre.
- 1.4 This report seeks to update Members on works completed to date and to request approval for further work identified as a result of damage caused to existing protection measures and on additional sites that have been used for unlawful incursions this year.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members agree to the programme of proposed works identified in the report to be carried out.**

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 Brentwood Borough Council has had an increase in unauthorised incursions onto public open space in the Borough in 2015 and 2016, much of which is managed by the Council.
- 3.2 Following a motion approved by Ordinary Council in September 2015, a report was made to Policy, Finance and Resources Committee on 18th September 2015 recommending expenditure up to £150,000 on works to protect key sites from further unauthorised incursions where possible.
- 3.3 The key sites that were initially identified were the Brentwood Centre, King George's Playing Fields, Hutton Recreation Ground, Larkins Playing Field and Warley Playing Fields.
- 3.4 The following works have so far been undertaken:

Brentwood Centre, Doddinghurst Road

- New height restrictor to main entrance
- Openable barrier for Brentwood Community Transport vehicles, deliveries and similar vehicles
- One-way plates on exit route
- Height restrictor and gates to rear access to Brentwood Centre
- Height restrictor and gates to Doddinghurst Road field entrance
- Improved padlocks to all gates
- CCTV to main entrance access

Hutton Recreation Ground, Wash Road

- Height restrictor from car park
- Additional fencing around car park

King George's Playing Fields, Seven Arches Road

- New fencing installed along access road from Ingrave Road car park to main pavilion car park
- Fencing to prevent access to rugby pitches and open area from Ingrave Road entrance

The cost of the above works equates to £137,000.

- 3.5 Following recent incursions this year, further work has now been proposed to improve protection at the locations below:

Alexander Lane

- Height restrictor to field entrance

Seymour Field, Ingatestone

- Height restrictor gate, new shroud to lock of existing gate and reinstatement of 3 concrete bollards plus one additional bollard

Bishops Hall Park

- Upgrading of fencing being carried out by Housing
- Height barrier gate and additional railings

Brentwood Centre

- Additional height restrictor to rugby field and new gate with lock shroud.
- Removal of entrance to rugby field from Doddinghurst Road
- Reduction of bridge to rugby field to allow pedestrian access only
- Replacement gate to Doddinghurst Road access to main field

Hutton Poplars, Bannister Drive

- Height restrictor barrier in front of existing gate and new gate with lock shroud to field entrances

Larkins Playing Field

- Height restrictor to field access

Little Warley Common

- Replacement of height restrictor to entrance

All gates to be fitted with padlock shields/shrouds and padlocks with FB1 fire brigade key access to be replaced with security combination locks.

The cost of the above works equates to £27,500.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

- 4.1 In order to ensure that the Borough's public open spaces remain accessible for local residents and to reduce costs to the Council in dealing with unauthorised incursions and cleanup of sites the additional works proposed are recommended to be implemented.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

- 5.1 To continue to maintain and protect open spaces in the Borough.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Consultation with Brentwood Leisure Trust has been undertaken to discuss proposals to improve site security and to ensure that protection measures are properly used.

7. References to Corporate Plan

- 7.1 Community and Health – Support our most vulnerable residents to feel safe
Work with partners to reduce anti-social behaviour and ensure that Brentwood is a safe place to live

8. Implications

Financial Implications

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- 8.1 A capital budget of £150k was approved for the additional protection for land to reduce the risk of unauthorised incursions. £137k has been spent on the works as outlined in paragraph 3.4 and the works in paragraph 3.5 have cost £27.5. This implies that the budget will be overspent by £14.5k.

Legal Implications

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- 8.2 Council's have a number of different statutory powers in relation to parks and open spaces, including the Public Health Act 1875, the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and Open Spaces Act 1906.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

- 8.3 Asset management
The improved security as a result of these measures should help to reduce the impact and likelihood of unauthorised incursions onto our land.

- 9. Background Papers** (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

None

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