

**6<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

**Environment and Enforcement Committee**

**Open Space Protection Measures Update**

**Report of:** *David Carter*

**Wards Affected:** *All*

**This report is:** *Public*

**1. Executive Summary**

1.1 At the meeting of the Environment and Enforcement Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> October Members approved officers to investigate additional security measures on Council land.

1.2

1.3 This report recommends that actions are taken over the winter months where possible – as estimated costs are not yet available it is recommended that authority is delegated to the Chair and Vice Chair in consultation with officers to determine appropriate works and approve costs from within existing 2017/18 budgets to undertake works before the financial year end.

**2. Recommendation(s)**

**2.1 Members authorise officers in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of Environment and Enforcement to agree a maximum of £25k of additional expenditure to the existing 2017/18 capital programme to improve security in identified areas of land owned by Brentwood Borough Council**

**3. Introduction and Background**

3.1 Open Space Protection Measures

Whilst measures to improve security of Council land have in general been successful in preventing entry onto sites, unauthorised incursions did occur onto Council land over the spring and summer of 2017.

3.2 Whilst these were primarily at the Brentwood Centre and Warley Country Park, additional measures are being investigated to improve security at these and other sites.

- 3.3 Works to protect the exit from the main car park at the Brentwood Centre are being considered following an unauthorised incursion onto the car park where access was enabled through the exit plates. Damage was also caused to a field entrance from Doddinghurst Road allowing the height restrictor barrier to be accessed.
- 3.4 Further incursions at Warley Country Park also resulted in damage to entrance gates and enabled access to the land. Improved entrance gates and further fencing to the site are proposed to reduce the risk of a recurrence.
- 3.5 In addition, it is proposed to improve gate entrances where height restrictors have been used by installing posts to supplement the existing gates at sites including Alexander Lane Shenfield, Seymour Field Ingatestone, Bishops Hall Park, Bannister Drive Hutton, Larkins Playing Field, Little Warley Common and the Brentwood Centre.

#### **4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options**

- 4.1 The Council has the option of taking further measures to improve security of land owned or to potentially leave sites vulnerable. In order for these measures to be most effective they should ideally be implemented within the current financial year.
- 4.2 Improving security of sites will hopefully reduce the risk of incursions onto the land in question but may also increase the likelihood of other land being targeted which may be in a more sensitive location or in private ownership.
- 4.3 The ECTU will deal with unauthorised incursions on Council or Parish Council land, but the legal process takes several days to complete.
- 4.4 Measures to improve security will have budgetary requirements and will also potentially require future repair and maintenance expenses but this is balanced against the costs of removal, clearance of sites and the impact on residents in the vicinity of the site.

#### **5. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 5.1 To continue to effectively reduce the likelihood of unauthorised incursions onto Council and Parish Council land in the Borough and to reduce the impact of additional expenditure, particularly on-site clearance.

## 6. References to Corporate Plan

Environment and Housing Management

Develop effective partnership arrangements with key agencies to deliver services

Community and Health

Make Brentwood a Borough where people feel safe, healthy and supported

Work with partners to reduce anti-social behaviour and ensure that Brentwood is a safe place to live

## 7. Implications

### Financial Implications

**Name & Title: Jacqueline Vanmellaerts Financial Services Manager (Deputy Section 151 Officer)**

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There are in the medium term sufficient Capital receipts available in order to fund this additional Capital Expenditure of £25k to the existing 2017/18 Capital programme as the work is required before the end of the financial year. However a longer term plan for Open Space Protection Measures will need to be considered for the 2018/19 Budget setting process.

### Legal Implications

**Name & Title: Daniel Toohey, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer**

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While the Council has a broad duty to residents to ensure the safekeeping of its assets, which will include a robust but proportionate response to trespassing on Council property, it is also required to have appropriate regard to statutory requirements including human rights issues.

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

None identified

## 8. Background Papers (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

None

**9. Appendices to this report**

None

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